

# Esland North Limited

## ED0018S - Complaints

# Purpose

At an Esland Shropshire School we value and promote honest and open communication between staff, pupils and parents/ carers/ guardians. The creation and maintenance of this open style of communication and 'listening' to our stakeholders is one of the chief means by which we seek to influence our young people, and lies at the heart of our commitment to help and support them through the use of appropriate intervention strategies.

One aspect of crucial importance in this lies our complaints procedure and ensuring this is easy to follow by all and enables key stakeholders to make representations and formal complaints which can then be fully dealt with. We have a duty to empower young people wherever possible and maintain a positive caring environment in which they feel safe and free from any form of oppression. We also have a statutory duty to make clear our procedures for dealing with complaints under The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 Part 7. This policy is aimed at meeting all the requirements of Part 7. Additionally, the policy seeks to ensure that all elements are fully implemented, monitored and enables young people, staff and parents to raise any concerns with us. A young person's guide to the complaints procedure is also available on request.

# Scope

This policy assumes that it is a parent/ carer/ guardian making a complaint on behalf of their young person. However, the policy is also directly open to pupils themselves. Should a third-party complaint fall outside of the education remit, they will be referred to our complaints procedure, a copy of which is available on request.

# Procedure

In most circumstances, any concerns or worries that a parent or pupil or other interested party has about school can be discussed with their mentor or relevant member of school staff. It is hoped that most issues can be readily resolved in this way.

There may be times when a parent or young person is unsure about approaching a teacher and should feel free to discuss the issue with any other member of staff in whom they trust who will guide them as to an appropriate course of action.

## **Informal Resolution**

The parent and pupil are also free to seek advice from their social worker. This is known as an '**informal resolution**' and should be the first method adopted in the case of a complaint.

### Stage 1 – Informal Complaint

However, there may be occasions when a parent, carer or the pupil are not happy with the way their concerns were dealt with, or the matter is of a nature that requires more in-depth scrutiny or formal action.

In these instances, the following procedure must be followed:

A full written record of the representation or complaint at stage 1 will always be kept and made available to authorised people (such as inspectors).

It will be the aim to resolve all issues at stage 1 within **14 working days**

If a delay is anticipated because of holidays or absences, then a revised timescale will be agreed with the complainant.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint at Stage 1, they are entitled to take their concerns to Stage 2, which is the **formal stage**.

### **Stage 2 – Formal Complaint**

If a solution or agreement cannot be reached by talking things through, there is the option of making a 'formal complaint'.

At stage 2, we will arrange to conduct a formal investigation into the concerns raised. This may be undertaken by a member of the senior leadership team or equivalent.

If preferred, the pupil, parent or carer can make a complaint in writing and send it to Esland Head Office:

Suite 1, Riverside Business Centre  
Foundry Lane  
Milford  
Belper  
DE56 0RN

Tel: 01773 823989

The Investigating Officer will speak to the complainant as soon as possible and within a maximum of **7 working days** of receipt of the formal complaint.

We will record the complaint and ensure that all elements are fully captured in consultation with the complainant.

They will also ensure the complainant is given support through the Complaint's procedure. Within **21 working days** of initial contact, and clear feedback will be provided to the complainant on their findings and how any identified issues will be resolved. A full record of the investigation at Stage 2 will be maintained.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation and response at Stage 2, they are entitled to take the matter to Stage 3 of the complaints process, which is a hearing.

The hearing will be held by someone not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. This individual will also be fully independent of the management of the school or the running of the school.

### **Stage 3**

If the complainant wishes to pursue their complaint to Stage 3, the Chief Operating Officer from Esland will contact the complainant to advise them of the process **within 48 working hours**. The Head/Senior Manager will arrange for the complaint to be examined in depth by an independent representative from the school.

This hearing will be arranged for a mutually convenient date. Every assistance will be provided to the complainant to enable them to present their case including the provision of advocacy and support.

The complainant will be invited to discuss the complaint and may also be accompanied by an independent person of their choice.

Having heard all the representations and considered all the reports, feedback on the findings will be provided and any actions or recommendations arising.

All matters associated with Stage 3 will be fully recorded in writing and sent to the complainant and be available on the school premises for inspection by authorised personnel only.

All complaints are recorded by the school and stipulate whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or panel hearing, and the action taken by the school as a result of the complaint.

All records, correspondence and statements relating to individual complaints are kept confidential with the exception of where the Secretary of State or a Body conducting an inspection under Section 109 of the 2008 Act require access to them.

### **Final outcome**

Following feedback, a written response will be provided to the complainant including the findings and any proposed actions or recommendations.

This is the final stage of the complaints process.

**Should a complaint be received at the end of a term period then the complaint will be acknowledged with confirmation of the timeline which may differ to the policy**

## Recording and Confidentiality

The written records of all representations at stage 1 and formal complaints at Stages 2 and 3 will be kept confidentially on record within ClearCare and made available for inspection purposes.

## References

The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014.