



## 1. Introduction

The school believes that children and parents are entitled to expect care, courtesy, respect and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the setting. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

## 2. Procedures

- The present policy is reviewed regularly by the HT according to the DfE and CSCB requirements. It is approved by the proprietor and the governors as and when required.
- A Complaints Log Book is maintained by the HT and is available for third parties to consult upon request and according to SIS – LPEBL KT Sharing information procedure (cf. **Data Protection Policy**).
- Any member of the school community (families, staff, contractors, any member of the public having to deal with the school) can log a complaint.

The complaint procedure is detailed below:

### 1. Making a complaint

#### a. Stage 1 – Informal: Raising a concern/ difficulty to a member of staff, orally or in writing

- Any parent/staff/contractor/member of the public who has a concern about an aspect of the school's provision generally first discloses his/her concerns with the Class Teacher or Head Teacher.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

#### b. Stage 2 – Formal: Making a complaint in writing to the Head Teacher

- If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent/staff/contractor/member of the public moves to this stage of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the Head Teacher or the proprietor.
- For parent/staff/contractor/member of the public who are not comfortable with making written complaints, there is a template form for recording complaints (cf. Annex 1); the form may be completed with the person in charge and signed by the parent/staff/contractor/member of the public.
- The school stores written complaints from parents securely.
- If the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the Head Teacher may wish to store all information relating to the investigation in a separate file designated for this complaint.
- Parent/staff/contractor/member of the public must be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of making the complaint.



- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the Head Teacher meets with the parent/staff/contractor/member of the public to discuss the outcome.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

b. Stage 3 – Formal: meeting with the Head Teacher and the Proprietor

- If the parent/staff/contractor/member of the public is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he/she requests a meeting with the Head Teacher and the Owner of the school. The parent/staff/contractor/member of the public should have a friend or partner present if required and the Head Teacher should have the support of the Proprietor and vice-versa. An agreed written record of the discussion is made and any decision or action to take as a result is recorded. All of the parties present at the meeting sign the record and receive a copy of it.
- This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record.

c. Stage 4 – Formal: Reference to the Complaints Panel

**Composition:**

- The Panel hearing Complaint will consist of at least three independent members none of whom have any connection with the management and running of the School. They are people who have held a position of responsibility and who are used to analysing evidence, for example, civil servants, legal professionals and retired members of the Police Force.
- The plaintiff may ask the Complaints Co-ordinator to tell who has been appointed to sit on the Panel.

**Chair:**

- The hearing will be chaired by one member of the Panel (chosen by themselves) and will be conducted in an informal manner. It is not within the powers of the Panel to make any financial award, nor to impose sanctions on staff, pupils, or parents. The Panel may make recommendations on these or any other issues to the Head Teacher or to the Proprietor as appropriate.

**Notification:**

- To request a hearing before the Complaints Panel please write to the Complaints Co-ordinator within 5 working days of the decision complained of. The hearing request will usually only be considered if Stages 1 and 2 procedures have been completed beforehand.
- The Complaints Co-ordinator has to be provided:
  - A copy of all relevant documents and the parties' full contact details
  - A letter from the parties stating the outcome they desire and the grounds of the complaint



- A list of the documents the plaintiff believes to be in the School's possession and wish the Panel to see

- The Complaints Co-ordinator will acknowledge the request in writing within 2 working days of receipt. If the plaintiff requires assistance with their request, for example, because of a disability, they have to contact the Complaints Co-ordinator who will be happy to make appropriate arrangements.

### **Convening the Panel:**

- The Complaints Panel will be convened as soon as reasonably practicable, but the Panel will not normally sit during half terms or school holidays.

- A Complaints Panel (the Panel) hearing is a review of the decisions taken by the Head Teacher and the Proprietor of the school.

- The Panel will not consider any new areas of complaint which have not been previously raised as part of the complaints procedure.

- The Panel's task is to:

- establish the facts surrounding the complaint by considering the documents provided by both parties and any representations made by the different parties and the Head Teacher
- To reach a decision on a balance of probabilities

### **Notice of hearing:**

- Every effort will be made to enable the Panel hearing to take place within 10 working days of the receipt of your request.

- As soon as reasonably practical and in any event, at least 7 working days before the hearing, the Complaints Co-ordinator will send both parties written notification of the date, time and place of the hearing, together with brief details of the Panel members who will be present.

- The hearing will normally follow the procedure set out as follow.

### **Attendance:**

- The plaintiff will be invited to attend the hearing and may be accompanied by one other person such as a relative, teacher, or friend.

- If the plaintiff wish to be accompanied by a legally qualified person, acting in their professional capacity, please notify the Complaints Coordinator at least 3 working days before the hearing.

- Copies of any additional documents you wish the Panel to consider should be sent to the Complaints Co-ordinator at least 3 days prior to the hearing.



### **Hearing:**

- All statements made at the hearing will be unsworn.
- All present will be entitled, should they wish, to write their own notes for reference purposes.
- The Complaints Coordinator will take a handwritten minute of the proceedings.
- The Panel will not consider any new areas of complaint unless these matters could not reasonably have been known previously. The introduction of new areas of complaint will be at the discretion of the Chair.
- All those present at the hearing shall have the opportunity of asking questions and making comments in an appropriate manner.
- The hearing is not a legal proceeding and the Panel shall be under no obligation to hear oral evidence from witnesses but may do so and / or may take written statements into account.

### **Conduct:**

- All those attending the hearing are expected to show courtesy, restraint and good manners or, after due warning, the hearing may be adjourned or terminated at the discretion of the Chair.
- If terminated, the Chair has the discretion to hold that the original decision will stand.
- Any person who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the way the hearing is conducted must say so before the proceedings go any further and his / her comment will be recorded.

### **Adjournment:**

- The Chair may, at his / her discretion, adjourn the hearing for further investigation of any relevant issue. This may include an adjournment to take legal advice.

### **Decision:**

- The Panel will reach a decision on a balance of probabilities unless there is an agreed position. Reasons for the decision will be given.
- The decision may include recommendations and will be sent to you, the Complaints Coordinator, the Head Teacher and, where relevant, any person about whom the complaint has been made.
- The decision shall be confirmed in writing to all parties by email normally within 7 working days of the hearing.
- If one party does not wish to receive the decision by e mail, a copy will be handed or posted.
- The decisions, findings and any recommendations will be available for inspection on the School premises by the Governing Body and the Head.



**Private proceeding (cf. Data Protection Policy & Code of Conduct):**

- A hearing before the Complaints Panel is a private proceeding. No notes or other records or oral statements about any matter discussed in or arising from the proceeding shall be made available directly or indirectly to the press or other media. This would form a breach of the school's Code Of Conduct, Safeguarding & Child Protection and Data Protection policies.

**Confidentiality:**

- A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they were resolved at Stage 1, Stage 2 or proceeded to a panel hearing.

- The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year will be supplied to parents, governors, LEA or authorised inspectors upon request.

**Record Keeping:**

- Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where access is requested by the Secretary of State or a body conducting an investigation under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 or where disclosure is required in the course of a school's inspection or under other legal authority.

- In accordance with Data Protection principles, details of individual complaints will normally be destroyed following each school inspection. In exceptional circumstances, some details will be retained for a further period as necessary.

**2. Timetable of Procedure**

a. Stage 1 – Informal: Complaint raised informally with the appropriate member of staff

- The complaint has to be acknowledged within 2 working days during term time or 8 days during the holidays.

- If the complaint is not dealt with satisfactorily within 15 working days, it will have to be raised formally in accordance with stage two.

b. Stage 2 – Formal: Complaint raised formally in writing with the Head Teacher

- The complaint has to be acknowledged within 2 working days during term time or 8 days during the holidays.

- The complainant has to be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 28 working days of the complaint being formally raised.

c. Stage 3 – Formal: Meeting with Head Teacher

- The complaint has to be raised formally in writing with the HT and/or Proprietor within 2 working days during term time or 8 days during the holidays.

- The complaint has to be acknowledged within 28 working days of the complaint being formally raised.



d. Stage 4 – Formal: Complaints Panel

- The plaintiff has to write to the Complaints Co-ordinator to request a hearing within 5 working days of the decision to which they object.
- The plaintiff's request has to be acknowledged in writing within 2 working days of receipt of the request for a hearing.
- The hearing will (normally) take place within 10 working days of receipt of the request for a hearing.
- The parties will be sent written notification of the date, time and place of the hearing and brief details of the Panel members to be present at least 5 working days before the hearing.
- The plaintiff should notify the Complaints Co-ordinator of any additional documents for the Panel to consider at least 3 working days before the hearing.
- The plaintiff should notify the Complaints Co-ordinator if they will be legally represented at the hearing at least 3 working days before the hearing.
- The plaintiff, the Head Teacher and (if relevant) the person about whom the complaint was made have to be notified of the Panel's decision within 8 working days of the hearing.
  - Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaints procedure. In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the setting's registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.
  - The number to call Ofsted with regard to a complaint is: 03000 123 4666
    - ADDRESS:** *Ofsted, National Complaints Team*
    - Ofsted Early Years, The National Business Unit*
    - Picaddilly Gate, Store Street*
    - Manchester M1 2WD*
    - EMAIL:** [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)
- These details are displayed on our school's notice board.
- If a child appears to be at risk, our school follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board in our local authority.
- In these cases, both the parent and setting are informed and the Head Teacher works with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.



### **3. Records**

A record of complaints against the school and/or the children and/or the adults working in our setting is kept, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.

The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the Summary Complaints Record which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors upon request.



## STEWART INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL – LPEBL KT / COMPLAINT POLICY

### APPENDIX 1 – COMPLAINT FORM

Please complete and return to the school office marked Private & Confidential to the Head Teacher or the Proprietor who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Email:

Please give details of your complaint.

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.

Who did you speak to and what was the response?

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

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#### Official use only

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date:



## STEWART INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL – LPEBL KT / COMPLAINT POLICY

### APPENDIX 2 – COMPLAINT PROCEDURE TIMETABLE

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE TIMETABLE	
Acknowledgement of Informal Complaint Deadline	Acknowledgement of Formal Complaint Deadline
2 Days Term Time 8 Days Holidays	
If no Acknowledgement, Raise to Formal Complaint Deadline	
15 Days	
Meeting with The HT following Investigation	Investigation result formal communication
By 28 Days from the acknowledgement	
Complaint Panel Request following Investigation result	Acknowledgement of Complaint Panel request Deadline
BY 5 Days following 1 <sup>st</sup> Decision	By 2 days following request
Complaint Panel Hearing Organisation	Complaint Panel Hearing Convocation Notification
By 10 days following request	Max 5 days before hearing
Plaintiff's Deadline to send extra documents for the Hearing or Notify of a Legal Representation for the Hearing	
Max 3 days before Hearing	
Communication of the Complaint Panel Result to all Parties Deadline	
Max 8 days after the Hearing	

The Present policy has been drawn under:

DfE Best Practice advice for School Complaints:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/489056/Best\\_Practice\\_Advice\\_for\\_School\\_Complaints\\_2016.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/489056/Best_Practice_Advice_for_School_Complaints_2016.pdf)

DfE Complain about a Private School procedure:

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school/private-schools>

Charlotte BEYAZIAN 04/11/2019 (Review date: 11/2020)