

# Complaints procedure



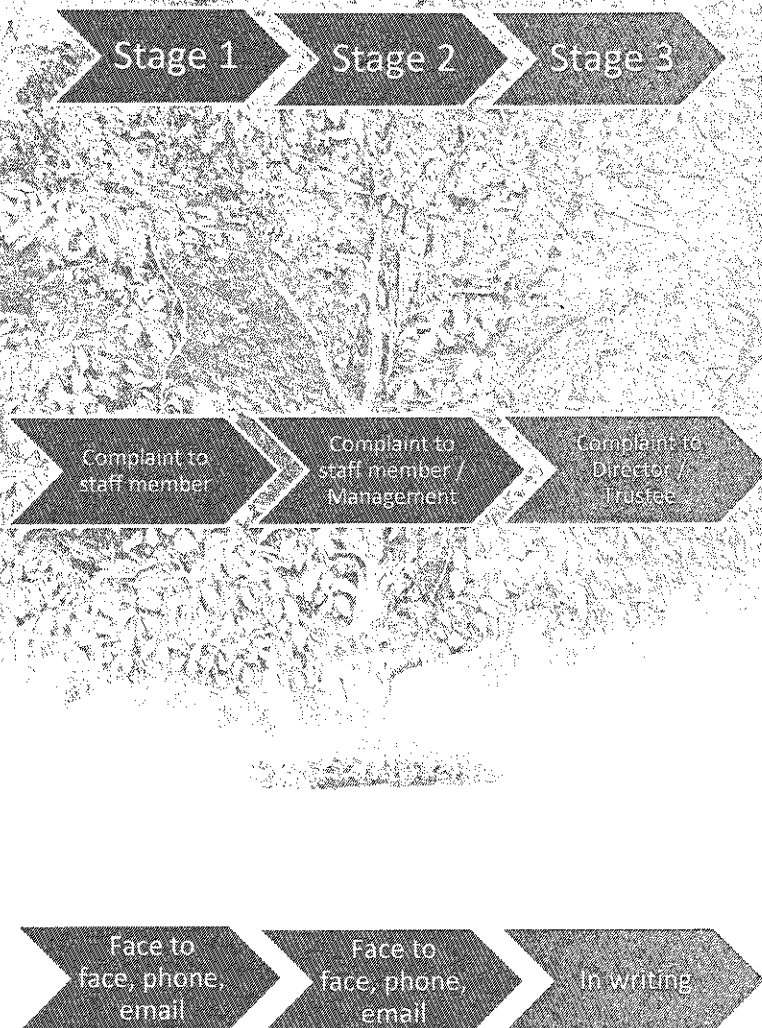
# Roots *and* Shoots

2020-21

**WALNUT TREE WALK, KENNINGTON, SE11 6DN**

**Charity number: 1064070**

# Complaints Procedure Flow Chart



# Complaints Procedure

The Trustees and Director are committed to providing the best educational experience they can for every learner attending Roots & Shoots.

We value the good relations with parents and the community, and recognise that they are based on mutual respect and a willingness to listen to other points of view. We also recognise the value to everyone concerned of dealing fairly, speedily and effectively with any complaint against decisions, actions or omissions, which a pupil or parent or other aggrieved person may have. All staff are happy to deal quickly with any day-to-day concerns you may have, and it is therefore rare that a concern becomes a complaint.

From time to time, however, parents, carers and others connected with the schools will become aware of matters that cause them concern. To encourage resolution of such situations, the governing body has adopted the following complaints procedure. It explains how you can raise concerns, with clear guidance at each stage. It acts as a framework for our educational communities to ensure all issues are dealt with fairly and effectively.

The procedure and policy guidance and has been devised with the intention that it:

- encourages resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- is easily accessible and publicised;
- is simple to understand and use;
- is impartial;
- is non-adversarial;
- allows swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress;
- ensures a full and fair investigation by an independent person or people (not a member of staff) where necessary;
- respects people's desire for confidentiality;
- addresses all the issues and provides an effective response and appropriate resolution where necessary; and
- provides information to the schools' senior management teams so that services can be improved;
- ensures the procedure is without prejudice, with all equality and disability rights being respected.

## Glossary of terms

### Definition of complaint

A complaint is any communication received from a person or persons with a legitimate interest in the school who expresses dissatisfaction about the standard of teaching of

members of the teaching staff, or about the conduct of pupils, or about actions or omissions of members of the teaching or non-teaching staff employed at the school.

### **Definition of complainant**

A complainant is the person making the complaint; this could be a parent or carer of a learner at the schools, a learner, or a person who wishes to complain about the actions, behaviour or omissions of a pupil or member of the staff at this school and will henceforth be referred to as 'you'.

Where a complainant is a pupil under the age of 18 years, the complaint may only be pursued by, or on behalf of, the child's parent or carer. Where someone other than a pupil or their parent/carer is pursuing a complaint on their behalf, this can be done only with the express consent of the pupil or parent concerned.

### **STAGE 1 - Informal: complaint heard by staff member**

At this early stage it is expected that the complainant (a parent or a carer of a learner) would communicate directly with the member of staff concerned. In some circumstances this may not seem to be appropriate and another member of staff may be approached (a member of the leadership team). This may be by letter, email, telephone or in person by appointment. If you wish to make an appointment, then the Office will make the arrangements.

If you are not a parent or carer of a pupil at one of our schools, but you have a complaint which concerns us, then this Complaints Procedure will also meet your needs. You should telephone the Office (020 7587 1131) leaving your name and telephone number if no reply.

Most concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information and it is anticipated that the majority of complaints will be resolved at this informal stage. If, however, you feel that the concern is too serious for a chat with the Tutor, or that your talk with the teacher or member of the management team has not settled the issue to your satisfaction and you want to discuss it more formally, then you may take your complaint to the Director.

### **STAGE 2 - Formal: complaint heard by Director**

If the complaint is not resolved at the informal Stage 1 (or Stage 1 does not apply), you must put the complaint in writing. This is then a formal complaint and it will be passed to the Director, who will be responsible for its investigation.

You should include details that might help the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events and copies of relevant documents. Contact details should also be given so that the Office can make the appointment for you with the Director, which will be within five working days of receiving your formal complaint.

The Director may meet you to clarify the complaint or, if more convenient, it may be dealt with by telephone. You may wish to be accompanied by a friend at any such meeting. If necessary, an interpreter could be present to help with communication.

The Director will collect all other evidence that they think is necessary. Where this involves an interview with a member of staff who is the subject of the complaint, a friend or representative may accompany that member of staff if they wish. The investigation by the Director will begin as soon as possible and when it has been concluded, you and the member of staff concerned will be informed in writing of the outcome. This may be to the effect that

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so the complaint cannot be upheld.
- The complaint is not substantiated by the evidence.
- The complaint was substantiated in part or in full. Some details may then be given of action the school may be taking to review procedures, but details of the investigation or of any disciplinary procedures will not be released.
- The matter has been fully investigated and appropriate procedures are being followed which are strictly confidential (for example, where staff disciplinary procedures are being followed).

If you consider that the decision of the Director is unreasonable, or that the Director has acted unreasonably in considering the complaint, then you may bring a complaint against the Director. At this stage the complaint will be heard and fully investigated by the Chair of Governors together with a Complaints Panel (usually between three and five Trustees in total). A Minute Taker will also be present at the meeting to take formal notes so that the meeting is accurately recorded. This meeting will be confidential and no details of the discussion will be given outside the meeting.

### **STAGE 3 - Formal: complaint heard by Trustee Panel**

In the unlikely event that you remain dissatisfied with the way in which the process has been followed, or the outcome, you may make a formal request that the Trustee Panel reviews the process followed by the Director in handling your complaint. Any such request must be made in writing within two weeks of receiving notice of the outcome from the Director and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure.

At this stage, the complaint will be fully investigated by the Chair of the Trustees.

020 7587 1131

[www.rootsandshoots.org.uk](http://www.rootsandshoots.org.uk)

Signed by the Director:

Linda Phillips

Date: 9/11/20

Signed by the Chair of Trustees:

V. a. Kaptel

Date: 9/11/20