



## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY

*The Courtyard offers a tailored educational and social provision with a holistic approach. We aim to equip our students with the skills and experiences needed to discover and thrive with increased independence in their next stage of life.*

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE - POLICY STATEMENT

|                                        |                              |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Approval Committee:</b>             | <b>Full Governing Body</b>   |
| <b>Author:</b>                         | <b>Head of The Courtyard</b> |
| <b>Last reviewed:</b>                  | <b>May 2024</b>              |
| <b>Next review date:</b>               | <b>May 2027</b>              |
| <b>Required to publish on website?</b> | <b>Yes</b>                   |
| <b>Statutory?</b>                      | <b>Yes</b>                   |

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Courtyard takes pride in the provision of a professional and high quality standard of service to its stakeholders (including students, parents/carers and those who work at the Courtyard). If, however, any stakeholder has any concerns, these should be brought to our attention as quickly as possible, to enable us to resolve the matter.
- 1.2 Please note that there is a difference between concerns and complaints:
  - 1.2.1 concerns ought to be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures.
  - 1.2.2 complaints should be dealt with in accordance with this policy.
- 1.3 It is the policy of the Courtyard to try to resolve issues, concerns and complaints promptly through informal discussion with the Headteacher or relevant member of staff.

## **2. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Any problem or concern should be raised promptly with the Headteacher/Key Worker or member of staff responsible for the area or action about which the complainant is concerned. This may be done by speaking to, meeting with or writing to the relevant member of staff.

If the concern is more serious, an appointment may be made to discuss it with the Headteacher.

### **2.1 Stage one (informal stage) – Teacher/Key Worker**

- 2.1.1 We expect all our staff to be able to respond to general concerns expressed by students, parents or carers. If a student, parent or carer wishes to speak to a Teacher or Key Worker, they should feel able to contact the member of staff in person, by telephone or by letter and expect a response within three working days. A particular member of staff may not be available immediately but, if necessary, will arrange a meeting at an appropriate time.

### **2.2 Stage two (formal stage) – Headteacher**

- 2.2.1 If a complainant is not satisfied with the Courtyard's response under Stage one (informal stage), he/she should write to the Headteacher, setting out the grounds for complaint. The Headteacher will investigate the complaint and provide a written response. This will normally be within 10 school days of the receipt of the letter by the Headteacher,

but a complainant will be kept informed if, for example, more time is needed to complete the investigation.

- 2.2.2 If the original concern was about an action by the Headteacher personally, and the complainant has already discussed it at the informal stage, then he/she should put the complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors, in accordance with Stage three below.

## **2.3 Stage three (formal stage) – Chair of Governors**

- 2.3.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with the Headteacher's (or his/her representative's) response, he/she may write to the Chair of Governors, setting out the grounds for complaint. The Chair's contact details are available from the Courtyard office.
- 2.3.2 The Chair will investigate the complaint and, in most cases, seek to resolve the matter through discussion with the complainant and the Headteacher. At the end of this stage the Chair will provide a written response. This will normally be within 10 school days of the receipt of the complaint by the Courtyard, but the complainant will be kept informed if more time is needed.

## **2.4 Stage four (formal stage) – Governors' Panel**

- 2.4.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with the Chair's response, he/she may write to the Clerk to the Governing Body (whose contact details are available from the Courtyard office). The Clerk will convene a panel of three Governors to investigate the complaint. Neither the Headteacher nor the Chair of Governors can be members of the panel as they will have already been involved in handling the complaint. At least one panel member will be independent of the management and running of the Courtyard.
- 2.4.2 A panel hearing will normally be arranged within 15 school days of the complaint under Stage three being received by the Courtyard, depending on the availability of all concerned. The complainant will be invited to attend and speak to the panel at the hearing. If the complainant wishes to attend the hearing, he/she may be accompanied at the hearing by a friend or representative.
- 2.4.3 After the hearing, the complainant will be advised in writing of the panel's findings and recommendations. This will normally be within 10 school days of the panel hearing.
- 2.4.4 The Courtyard is a school independent of Local Authority control, and therefore the decision of the Governors' Panel is the last step in the procedure and this decision is final.

## **2.5 Stage five (formal stage) – Secretary of State for Education**

Complaints about the maladministration of the Courtyard or about the Courtyard acting unreasonably in exercising its powers may be made to the Secretary of State for Education.

How to make a complaint to the Secretary of State:

- provide as much detail as you can to help investigate your complaint:
- say what the problem is
- say what you want to happen
- provide information on any relevant communication on the subject, including, for example, any reference numbers on letters or emails, and the times and dates of any conversations
- Address:
  - Ministerial and Public Communications Division  
Department for Education  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD
  - Telephone 0370 000 2288

### **3. STAFF DISCIPLINE**

If the complaint amounts to or includes an allegation against a member of staff, details relating to staff discipline and capability must remain confidential to the Headteacher. The complainant should be informed that the Courtyard has taken appropriate follow-up action, but should not be informed of any further details in this regard.

### **4. CONTACT DETAILS**

|                         |                      |               |
|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Courtyard Office:       | Mrs Deborah Shepherd | 0203 859 6350 |
| Chair of Governors:     | Mr Tom Livesey       | 0203 859 6350 |
| Clerk to the Governors: | Ms Brigid Donoghue   | 0203 859 6350 |