



POLISI CWYNIION

COMPLAINTS POLICY

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CADARNHAWYD gan ByC RATIFIED by BoD	Mehefin 2024/June 2024
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**Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain
London Welsh School**

Complaints Policy

Introduction

Open, constructive and frequent communication with parents/carers is an important part of the ethos and culture of Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain. We welcome comments and suggestions from parents and we take seriously any complaints or concerns that parents/carers may wish to raise.

This policy is a statutory requirement and is made available to all parents/carers. The Education Act 2002 and Regulations made under the Act made changes to the statutory requirements for Independent Schools which came into effect on 1 September 2003 (*Schedule of Education [Independent School Standards [England] Regulations 2010*).

Policy aim and statement

1. **Aim:** Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain aims to ensure that a concern or complaint is managed sympathetically, efficiently and at an appropriate level, and resolved as quickly as possible. We will aim to resolve every concern or complaint in a positive way and put right a matter which may have gone wrong and, where necessary, review our procedures in the light of the circumstances. The school will always promote a culture that is open and welcoming where parents/carers and pupil opinions are valued.
2. **Policy statement:** A complaints policy serves to clarify procedures to diffuse problems and provide the school with helpful information. Every cause for dissatisfaction should be brought to our attention quickly. A difficulty which is not resolved quickly and fairly can become a cause of resentment, which would be damaging to both the relationships and to the school's culture and ethos.
This policy distinguishes between a concern or difficulty which can be resolved informally, and a formal complaint which will require investigation.

Compliance

This policy complies with government guidance and advice, and written with reference to the following documents:

- Disability Act 2010
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019)
- YG Llundain Anti-Bullying Policy
- YG Llundain Safeguarding Policy
- YG Llundain Whistleblowing Policy
- YG Llundain Allegations made against staff Policy

- YG Llundain Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion Policy
- YG Llundain Data Protection Policy
- GDPR 2018

Management of complaints

If a parent/carer is concerned about anything to do with their child's education, they should, in the first instance, arrange a meeting to discuss the matter with the child's class teacher. In our experience, most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way. If matters are not resolved, and the concern is sufficiently serious, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Headteacher as the Complaints Officer. If the Headteacher is the subject of the complaint, the duties will be carried out by the Chair of Governors.

If the complaint, concern or incident regards any element of whistleblowing, refer to YG Llundain Whistleblowing Policy. The Board will be informed of any incidents as appropriate, dependent on the level of confidentiality needed and/or whether external agencies are involved.

The main responsibilities of the Complaints Officer are to:

- Be the first point of contact while the matter remains unresolved and to keep records
- Ensure that all Staff are aware of the procedure and arrange training where appropriate
- Monitor the keeping, confidentiality and storage of all records in relation to complaints, including whether they proceeded to a Panel hearing
- Report regularly to the Chair about all complaints

Stage 1: concerns and difficulties

1. Ysgol Gymraeg Llundain expects that most concerns can be resolved informally. The complainant will notify the class teacher, and if necessary, the class teacher will inform the Headteacher. We will aim to respond with written notification within three working days by telephone, email or letter. Written complaints and complaints raised orally will be recorded and filed. If any concerns or difficulties need to be discussed with the Headteacher, the complainant is expected to arrange a mutually convenient time for a meeting.
2. Any complaint against the Headteacher, Directors or the Board of Directors should be referred to the Chair who will take the Complaints Officer role. Complaints directed against the Chair will be referred to the Board Secretary and then the Directors at a full meeting of the governing body. Chair to use discretion to update Board of any significant complaints received and actions taken to resolve the issue.
3. A concern which has not been resolved by informal means within 15 working days should be notified in writing as a formal complaint which will be dealt with in accordance with Stage 2 below.

Stage 2: formal complaint

1. **Notification:** An unresolved complaint under Stage 1 or a complaint which needs investigation, or there is dissatisfaction with some aspect of the school's policies, management or administration, should be set out in writing with full details and sent with all relevant documents and full contact details in an envelope addressed to the Headteacher. The complaint will be acknowledged by telephone or in writing within three working days during term time, indicating the action that is being taken and the likely timescale.
2. **Investigation:** The Headteacher may ask an appropriate person to investigate. The investigator may request additional information and will probably wish to speak to the complainant personally and to others who have knowledge of the circumstances. The outcome of the investigation will be reported to the Headteacher, who will notify the complainant in writing of his/her decision and the reasons for it. Written records will be kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
3. **Outcome:** The Headteacher's aim will be to inform any complainant of the outcome of an investigation and the resolution of the complaint within 28 working days from the receipt of the complaint. Please note that any complaint received within one month of the end of term, or half term, is likely to take longer to resolve owing to the school holidays and unavailability of staff.

No formal complaints were made during 2022-23

Stage 3: referral to Complaints Panel

The role and composition of the Complaints Panel

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response under Stage 2, the matter can be referred to a Complaints Panel. A Panel Hearing is a review of the decisions taken by the Headteacher. The Panel will not consider any new areas of complaint which have not previously been raised as part of the complaints procedure.

The Chair of Directors will appoint a Complaints Panel to include a minimum of three people. One person on the Panel will be independent of the running and management of the school. The Panel will determine a timetable for its work and inform the complainant and the governing body. The Panel can hold an oral hearing where everyone will be given an opportunity to make a representation. Written statements should be sent to the Panel at least 5 days before the meeting. The procedures allow for the complainant to be accompanied if they wish to attend the Panel meeting.

The role of the Panel is to consider the documents provided by both parties and any representations made by the Complainant or the Headteacher.

If, after establishing the facts, the Panel considers that the complaint is made out, they will uphold the complaint. If the Panel considers that the complaint is not made out, they will dismiss the complaint. They will make these decisions on the balance of probabilities.

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 Headteacher and Board of Directors.

The Panel must make available its findings and recommendations. It can do so by email or otherwise to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about and the whole must be available for inspection on the school premises by the Board and the Headteacher.

Notification

To request a hearing before the Complaints Panel, please write to the Chair within five working days of the decision you wish to be reviewed. The request will only be considered if Stages 1 and 2 have been completed. The complainant needs to provide all relevant documents, full contact details and the outcome you desire and all the grounds for the complaint. The Chair will acknowledge your request within five working days.

Convening the Panel

The panel will meet as soon as is reasonably practicable. It will consist of a minimum of three people, one of whom will be an independent member.

Notice of Hearing

Every effort will be made to enable the Panel hearing to take place as soon as possible, and in any event, within 15 working days of the receipt of the request. As soon as reasonably practicable and in any event, at least five working days before the hearing, the Chair will send you written notification of the date, time and place of the hearing, together with brief details of the Panel members who will be present.

Attendance

The complainant will be invited to attend the hearing and can be accompanied by another person, such as a relative, teacher or friend. It is not necessary for that person to be legally qualified but if the complainant wishes to be accompanied by a legally qualified person, acting in their professional capacity, please notify the school at least seven working days prior to the hearing. Any additional document the complainant wishes the Panel to consider should be sent to the school at least three clear working days before the hearing

Chair: The chair will usually be the independent member of the panel. The hearing will be conducted in an informal manner. 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 Clerk to the Board will take handwritten notes of the proceedings.

Evidence: The Chair will conduct the hearing in such a way that all present have the opportunity of asking questions and making comments in an appropriate manner. The hearing is not a legal proceeding and the Panel is 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 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 comments will be minuted.

Adjournment: The Chair may, at his/her discretion, adjourn for further investigation of any relevant issues. This may include an adjournment to take legal advice.

Decision: After due consideration of the matters discussed at the hearing, the Panel shall reach a decision. The Panel's decision, findings and any recommendations may be notified orally at the hearing or subsequently and shall be confirmed in writing by e-mail, a copy of which will be posted to everyone. The decisions, findings and any recommendations will be made available to the Board and the Headteacher. Reasons for the decision will be given. The decision may include recommendations and will be sent to the complainant, the Board, the Headteacher and, where relevant, any person about whom the complaint was made. The decision of the Chair of the Panel will be final except in the case of serious misconduct where complaints will be referred immediately to the police or Department for Education.

Private proceedings: A hearing before the Panel is a private proceeding. No notes of 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.

Confidentiality: A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at Stage 1 or proceed to Stage 2 and 3. The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year will be supplied to parents on request. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential to the Board except to the extent required under paragraph 7(k) of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards)(England) Regulations 2003, where access is requested by the Secretary of State or where disclosure is required as part of the school's inspection of under other legal authority. In accordance with data protection principles, details of individual complaints will be destroyed following each school inspection. In exceptional circumstances, some details will be retained for a further period as necessary.

Complaints by staff: The procedure for issues and complaints from staff is outlined in a separate grievance procedure policy.

The named contact for this policy is Ms Julie Katherine Watkins, Headteacher
Reviewed and Ratified by the Board 11.06 2024
Next Review Date (annually) **May 2025**