



# Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedure

Review date	Reviewed by	Amendments	SGT review of amendments
13/9/24	EH	Full review of policy	MH by email
1/9/25	EH	Full review and amendment to 3.5	SGT vote 8th May 2025

**Date for next review:** August 2026

**References**

- This policy has been written with reference to:
- Independent Schools Standards Wales 2024
  - The Education Act 2002

**1. Context**

The Steiner-Waldorf movement seeks to recognise that each human being is an individual to be valued. The following concerns and complaints procedure enables the school to fulfil both its legal responsibilities and compliance with the Independent School Standards as well as uphold the dignity of the human being.

This policy is for:

- Parent/guardian concerns
- Pupil concerns
- Employee concerns – would usually be handled through the school’s Grievance Policy, but there may be circumstances where this policy is also appropriate
- Employers – concerns about an employee are usually dealt with through performance management review and Capability/Disciplinary procedures, but there may be circumstances where this policy is also appropriate.

**2. Introduction**

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This policy aims to support the core ideals and values of the school; namely to uphold the dignity and unique identity of each individual. Our core purpose is to offer high quality Steiner-Waldorf education and to continuously improve and develop our work.

### 3. Aims and scope

3.1 As well as meeting the regulatory requirements, this policy aims to support evaluation and ongoing review of practices.

3.2 The school aims to uphold the following through the Concerns and Complaints Policy:

- To ensure concerns and complaints are dealt with in a transparent and fair manner.
- To provide clarity about the procedures for lodging informal and formal complaints
- To resolve concerns and complaints in a positive and constructive manner
- To respond to and resolve concerns and complaints in a timely and appropriate manner.
- To keep effective records that lead to development of our practices and provision.

3.3 The definition of a complaint is: 'an expression of dissatisfaction in relation to the school, member of its staff or aspect of its service that requires a response and/or action from the school.'

3.4 The stakeholders involved in this process include pupils, parents/guardians, a member of the public or a member of staff.

3.5 This policy does not cover:

- Any aspect of the process of admissions
- Complaints involving the misconduct of a pupil are not within the scope of this policy unless it is alleged that the school failed, within a reasonable timeframe, to take any reasonable steps to address the misconduct or to mitigate harm to any affected party. Disagreement with the school's judgement or detailed process shall not, on its own, constitute grounds for complaint.
- Complaints from parents/guardians of former pupils of the school or ex-pupils. For the purposes of this policy, a pupil shall be considered a 'former pupil' from the date of notice of withdrawal or removal from the school, or in all cases where fees remain unpaid. Where a parent has withdrawn a child without paying outstanding fees, the school shall not be obliged to process any further complaint until such financial obligations are resolved.

### 4. Procedures

4.1 The procedure for lodging a complaint is formed of three stages:

- **Informal:** usually a verbal or informally written complaint made to a member of staff at the school.
- **Formal:** a complaint made in writing to the School Manager or Management Team.
- **Review Hearing (panel):** the final stage of a formal complaint where a panel consists of at least three members not directly involved with the complaint and one member who is independent of the school.

#### 4.2 Informal complaints

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Informal concerns about the education of your child should be addressed, where possible, with a pupil's Class or Kindergarten Teacher. Where this is not possible, the School Manager should be approached.

Informal complaints should be dealt with by the member of staff in the first instance, with the support of the School Manager where necessary.

Staff will record informal complaints and inform the School Manager.

#### **4.3 Formal complaints**

Where a satisfactory resolution is not reached following an informal complaint, the following procedure should be followed:

- I. The complaint should be made formally in writing to the School Manager or Management Team.
- II. The complaint should be made using the [online Complaint Form](#) or in writing by email to the School Manager.
  - a. The complaint should contain as much detail as possible about the nature of the concern and events leading up to the concern arising
  - b. The complaint should contain details of any informal concern or complaint that has been made to date.
  - c. The complaint should detail why the responses received to date are not satisfactory.
- III. Where the complaint is about the School Manager or Management Team, the formal complaint should be sent directly to the Board of Trustees (SGT).
- IV. Responsibility**
  - a. The Management Team will ensure that the complaint is acknowledged within 48 hours of receipt.
  - b. The Management Team will ensure that the complaint is appropriately discussed and investigated.
  - c. The complaint will remain confidential except where investigation requires that members of staff are involved.
  - d. Evidence collected as part of an investigation will be recorded in writing on a Complaints Report Form.
- V. Time Frame**
  - a. Formal complaints will be investigated and evidence collated and presented on the Complaints Report Form within two weeks of receipt of the complaint.
  - b. On completion of the Complaints Report Form, the party that made the complaint will be invited for a meeting to discuss the findings.
  - c. The Complaints Report Form will also be sent to the complainant by email following the review meeting.
- VI. Procedure**
  - a. On receipt of the formal complaint, evidence will be gathered and recorded in writing from all relevant parties, including the complainant and, where appropriate and with parental permission, pupils.

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- b. Within two weeks, a Complaints Meeting will be arranged including the member of staff who has investigated, an impartial note taker and the complainant. Complainants may bring an appropriate person with them if they wish.
- c. Following the Complaints Meeting, the agreed results will be communicated verbally to the complainant by the nominated member of staff and confirmed in writing. The aim is that such a letter should be issued within two working weeks of the written formal complaint being received. If for any reason (i.e. because of holidays or complexity of the complaint) there is a delay, a letter will be sent by the nominated member of staff explaining the reason for the delay and giving a revised date for a formal response.
- d. The written response will include full reasons for the conclusions reached at the Complaints Meeting and what action, if any, will be taken to address the matter.
- e. The complainant will be advised that if they remain dissatisfied, in order to progress the complaint further, they must write to the School Governance Team (SGT) within two weeks. They will be offered the opportunity of taking the complaint to a Review by a Complaints Panel detailed below.

#### **4.4 Review Hearing**

Where the outcome or response of the formal complaint procedure is not satisfactory or the party wishes to make a complaint about the manner in which the formal complaint was dealt with, the complaint will be referred to the Board of Trustees.

The complaint can be referred to the Board by the Management Team or by the party that made the original complaint. The complaint should be made in writing.

#### **I. Responsibilities**

- a. The School Governance Team will review the process followed by the Management Team in dealing with the formal complaint.
- b. The School Governance Team will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 48 hours or receipt.
- c. The School Governance Team will ensure that the complaint remains confidential except when members of staff are interviewed as part of the investigation.

#### **II. Time Frame and procedure**

- a. The School Governance Team will appoint a panel to hear the complaint that consists of:
  - i. At least three members who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.
  - ii. At least one person who is independent of the management or running of the school.
- b. Formal receipt of the request for a Review Hearing will be given within 48 hours, acknowledging that:
  - i. A panel will be assembled in line with the criteria outlined above in II, a, i and II, a, ii.
  - ii. Inform the complainant of the right to submit any further documents other than the Stage 2 Formal Complaint Form. Further information must be submitted within one week of the letter being received.

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- iii. The right to call witnesses to the meeting (which is subject to the approval of the Chair of the review hearing).
  - iv. The right of the complainant to be accompanied by a companion of their choice, will also be explained in this initial letter.
- c. Once appointed the Panel Chair will contact the complainant and all relevant staff who may need to attend, within 48 hours to inform the complainant of the procedure and composition of the panel, this will include:
- i. The date and time and location of the hearing.
  - ii. The process and aim of the hearing.
  - iii. Members of the panel will review the complaint confidentially and objectively.
  - iv. The panel will make themselves familiar with the procedure and information relevant to the complaint.
  - v. The panel will hear the concerns and may call for the staff members against whom the complaint has been made.
- d. The findings of the panel will be distributed to the School Management Team, the complainant and the Board of Trustees.
- e. The panel will make recommendations as a result of the hearing and distribute these to the Management Team, the complainant and, where appropriate, the person/people complained about.
- f. The decision of the Panel will be final. The school offers no further appeal to the decision of a Review Panel.

Form A3 at the end of this document details guidelines for the conduct of a Review Hearing.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

Details of how to lodge a complaint or concern at each of the three stages can be found in the Appendices of this document.

### Key contacts

Contact	Role	Email
Class or KG Teacher	Receipt of <b>informal concerns</b> and complaints normally verbally. Meetings with your child's teacher can be arranged by emailing the office.	<a href="mailto:info@nant-y-cwm.co.uk">info@nant-y-cwm.co.uk</a>
Management Team	For <b>formal complaints</b> , the online form or paper copy can be used. Alternatively, an email can be addressed to the Management Team. Where the complaint is about a member of the Management	<a href="mailto:smt@nant-y-cwm.co.uk">smt@nant-y-cwm.co.uk</a>

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	Team, the complaint should be addressed to SGT (below).	
School Governance Team	For complaints that reach the third stage of a <b>Review Panel Hearing</b> , the member of SGT responsible for complaints should be contacted.	<a href="mailto:sgt@nant-y-cwm.co.uk">sgt@nant-y-cwm.co.uk</a>

## 6. Record Keeping

We keep the following records of the complaint:

- The complaint will be listed with the date first raised.
- The nature of the complaint.
- Dates of meetings, communications and those attending them.
- The outcome.
- Copies of all documentation.
- Complaint records will be kept confidential and secure.

## 7. Other ways to lodge a complaint

Parents can contact the Welsh Assembly Independent School Department direct, quoting our school number - 6696008.

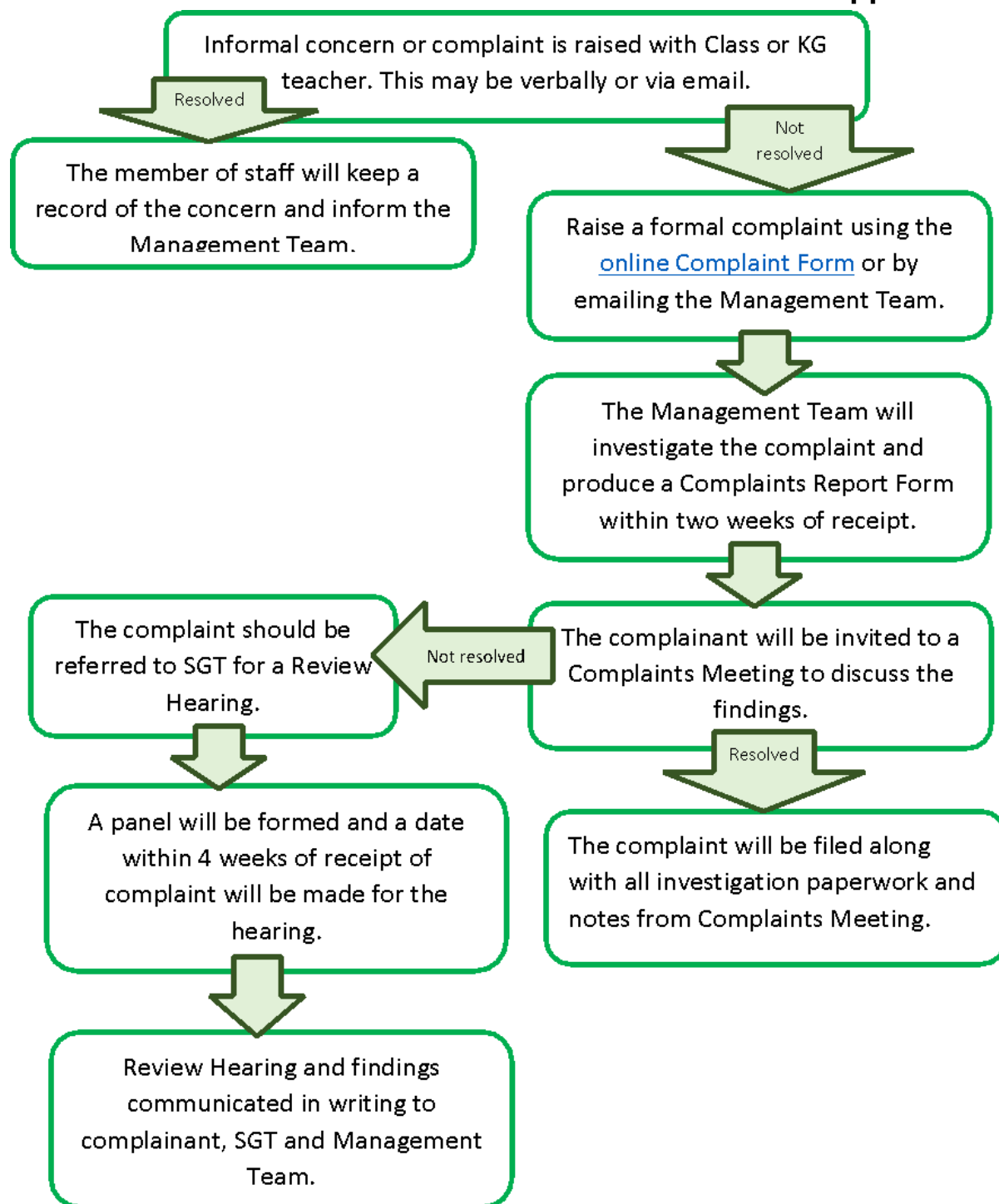
In the first instance the Welsh Assembly cannot consider complaints about independent schools. However, once the School's own Complaints Procedure has been followed and exhausted, a parent can send their complaint in writing to Julie Webster, Cathays Park, Welsh Assembly, Cardiff. CF10 3N.

Care Inspectorate Wales may also be contacted with regard to complaints on 0300 7900 126

**The above policy and procedures have been agreed by:**

<b>The School Management Team</b>	<b>The School Governance Team</b>
Signature	Signature
EMILY HOPFINGER	MICHAEL HARGREAVES
Date: 2/09/2024	Date:

## Appendix A



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## APPENDIX B

### Record of informal concern or complaint

Following a conversation with a member of staff, this form will be completed and signed by both parties.

<b>Date Concern was reported:</b>		<b>Staff member recording concern:</b>	
<b>Person/s expressing the concern:</b>			
<b>Nature of concern (in brief):</b>			
<b>Details of the concern (please record all relevant dates, people involved etc. and continue overleaf if required.)</b>			
<b>Action agreed:</b>			
<b>How actions were, or will be, communicated to person/s expressing the concern.</b>			
<b>Signed by staff member recording the concern</b>			
<b>Signed by person/s expressing the concern</b>			

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## APPENDIX C

### Formal complaints form

To lodge a formal complaint, use the [online Complaint form](#) or the paper form below.

Date complaint was reported:	
Person/s submitting the complaint:	
Staff member acknowledging complaint:	
Please detail the specific nature of your complaint.  Please be as specific as possible, giving dates, sequence of events:	
Are you attaching any documents?  If so, please list it here.	
What do you feel needs to be done to resolve this matter?	
Signed by person/s making the complaint	
Date:	

Please hand this completed form to the School office for action, review, and filing.  
The School Administrator will inform the Chair of Trustees that a formal complaint has been lodged.  
We recommend that you keep a copy of this form for your own records.

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