



DIAMOND FAMILIES

COMPLAINTS POLICY

	<u>Written By</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Review Date</u>
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Introduction

At Diamond Families we all work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents, carers and professionals. Our aim is to deal with issues and problems before they become a 'complaint'. However, there is a clear protocol to follow if necessary and the steps to follow and their outcome are outlined in this document.

1. If any parents, professionals or staff are unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or have any concerns relating to the Centre, we encourage them to talk to the young person's key worker immediately. There is no doubt that if a concern is shared with the key they can either reassure worried parents or together devise steps to take to address the concern. Parents must never worry about sharing their concerns with the class teacher. They will always be taken seriously, and due consideration given to a mutually agreeable resolution.
2. We promise we will always be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint and to deal with them as swiftly as possible. Our focus will always be on the child and what is best for them.

The complaints process

Stage 1. Informal expression of concern made to the Centre.

In the first instance, the matter should be discussed with the young person's key worker. In our experience most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way with apologies where necessary. Members of the Centre's senior leadership may be involved at this stage.

Stage 2. Discussion and investigating.

We expect most complaints to be resolved by this stage. However, if the matter has not been resolved and needs further investigation parents must make an appointment with the key worker. The key worker will need time to fully investigate the matter and will respond with 7 Centre days.

Stage 3. Trustees

Complaints rarely reach this formal level, but should you need to you should make a formal complaint to the Trustees.

Complaints at this stage should be written and received within 10 Centre days of the issue. Your letter should be addressed to the Manager and marked "private and confidential". The letter should say why you remain unhappy and what you wish to see happen. The Manager will let you know when your complaint is to be considered. If a meeting with you and others involved is considered necessary, you will be given adequate notice to prepare. You will be informed of the outcome of the Manager's investigation and decision on what further action will be taken within 10 Centre days.

Stage 4. Trustees

You may take your complaint to the Centre Trustees within 2 months of the Managers' response.

If the complaint is not resolved, and all previous stages have been explored, a parent may make representation to the Trustees. A letter addressed to the Trustees marked "private and confidential" can be left at the office. If the Trustees consider from your letter that the complaint warrants further investigation they may ask you to explain your case in person before a specially appointed panel. The panel will include the proprietor and two members of the Trustees plus an impartial member of the Local Authority. (one to take minutes) . The parents/ carers are welcomed to the panel if they so should wish and can choose to be supported by advocacy teams such as Parent Partnership. However, it is also possible that, following investigation, they may make a decision without needing you to appear. A decision will be provided within 15 days where possible.

2 Further representation.

If you remain dissatisfied, you may make further representations.

You may approach the Secretary of State for Education or the *Ombudsman if you are unhappy with the process or outcome. This would normally only be appropriate if you believe that the Centre, the Trustees and the LEA have acted illegally or arbitrarily.

* Please note the Ombudsman does not investigate internal Centre management

3. If parents have a complaint about the Manager, they should first make an informal approach to the Trustees (as at stage 4 above) who is obliged to investigate it. The Chair will do all they can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the Centre, but if parents are unhappy with the outcome, they can make a formal complaint, as outlined above.

4. If, despite all stages of this policy being followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied they are not entitled to reopen the same issue. In such cases the Trustees can inform them in writing that the process has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

5. If an anonymous complaint is received it will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances serious concerns such as child protection issues or bullying allegations, where the Centre might consider it appropriate to contact outside agencies.

6. Investigating complaints

The person investigating the complaint will:

- Establish what has happened so far and who has been involved.
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved.
- Meet with the complainant or contact them if further information is required
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.
- Conduct any interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning. • Complete all necessary notes.

7. Resolving complaints

At each stage in the complaint, Diamond Families and the complainant will want to keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An in person apology;
- *An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- Assurance that the event that was the basis of the complaint will not recur;
- Explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure it does not happen again. Details of any disciplinary procedures that have taken place as a result of the complaint will not be shared.
- An undertaking to review Centre policy or procedure in light of the complaint;
- An explanation that there is insufficient evidence and thus the complaint cannot be upheld;
- An explanation that, following investigation, the evidence does not substantiate the concern.

*An admission that the Centre could have handled things better is not the same as an admission of negligence

8. Monitoring and review

The Trustees will monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The head teacher will log all stage 2 complaints received by the Centre, and record how they were resolved.

The findings and recommendations will be made available to the panel, these must stipulate that a copy of the findings and recommendations are provided to the complainant, and where applicable the person who is being complained about. This must also be available for the inspection of the Centre premises, by the proprietor.

These will be reported as part of the Managers report to Trustees and remain confidential, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 act requests to access them.

The Trustees of Diamond Families review this policy as necessary.

Useful Links

<http://parentalengagement.co.uk/getting-it-right-for-ofsted/4574813099>

<https://www.sendiass-stoke.co.uk/>

<https://stoke-on-trent.cylex-uk.co.uk/company/stoke-on-trent-parent-partnership-14633659.html>