

**FUTURE INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

FEEDBACK, COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS OVERVIEW

THE TRAINEE REPRESENTATIVE GROUP

It is important to us that the views of our trainees are heard regularly and that the SCITT team are able to act upon suggestions in a timely manner. For this reason we encourage the trainee group to be representative of our different routes and that they meet with the SCITT team at least once per term. In September the group will present their initial findings to the SCITT team at their weekly management meeting, and any actions or changes that take place as a result will be reported in the subsequent weekly bulletin to all stakeholders. The group will also be asked to present at open mornings to prospective candidates, and be involved in collating evaluation forms after weekly training sessions and following quality assurance visits.

COMPLAINTS AND APPEAL OVERVIEW

We will regularly seek feedback on different aspects of the programme. Most concerns can be resolved quickly and easily by being open and honest with your colleagues at The Pimlico London SCITT. Please do not hesitate to approach someone in the SCITT team.

However should you feel a formal complaint is necessary, please follow the following procedures:

- Step 1: To raise the complaint verbally or in writing with your subject mentor and/or the SCITT Coordinator info@futuretraining.org – We will endeavour to respond to your concern within 24 hours or within the reasonable constraints of the school calendar. If either party believes that the complaint cannot be resolved at this stage we will move it on to Step 2.
- Step 2: The complaint to be heard by senior members of the Pimlico London SCITT team that will include Primary, Secondary Leads, school Principals and the Head of Initial Teacher Training – n.parker@pimlicoacademy.org. Sufficient time will be given to investigate the complaint fully with the opportunity to meet and mediate with a neutral third party. If either party believes that the complaint cannot be resolved at this stage we will move to step 3
- Step 3: The complaint will be reported to the CEO of Future Academies, Paul Smith CEO@futureacademies.org. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of this stage of the investigation then he/she will be informed of his/her right to refer the matter to the Governors Hearing Committee. Appeals can be made on this decision by conducting the Office of Independent Adjudicators whose decision will be final.

COMPLAINTS POLICY

We shall regularly seek feedback on different aspects of the programme. The Pimlico-London SCITT aims to work in partnership with its student teachers, Headteachers, prospective candidates and the wider community, and maintain open and positive relationships. From time to time a student teacher, Headteacher, prospective candidate, partner school or member of the community may express concern or make a complaint about some aspect of the conduct or operation of The Pimlico London SCITT. Most of these concerns will be dealt with informally and should be made initially to the Head of Initial Teacher Training.

It is in everyone's interest that complaints of any nature are resolved at the earliest possible stage. How effectively a complaint is dealt with in the early stages is crucial in determining whether the complaint will escalate. It is therefore essential that all staff know and understand the procedures to be followed when receiving a complaint, no matter how trivial it may appear.

If the complaint is made verbally then the person receiving the complaint (the receiver) will re-assure the complainant that the Pimlico London SCITT will do what it can to try and resolve the matter. The receiver will try to ascertain some brief information about the complaint to help them decide the best way to proceed depending on both the nature and severity of the complaint. Where the receiver feels they can resolve the matter then this should be done.

It is recognised that sometimes the best person for a complaint to be referred to is not always the member of staff who is available at that time. Therefore, where possible, it is arranged with the complainant that someone (if possible the name of the member of staff will be given) will contact them within 24 hours regarding the complaint. The complaint is then passed to the relevant member of staff who will contact the complainant to find out more information either by telephone, or via an arranged meeting. Where it is possible, the member of staff may wish to find out more information prior to contacting the complainant to help them in dealing with the complaint.

Where the complainant wishes to see someone immediately then the relevant member of staff should be contacted and an available member of staff asked to respond to the matter.

If the complaint is unable to be resolved then the member of staff may offer some additional support as part of the informal stage.

In all cases, even if the complaint has been resolved, the complaint must be recorded, along with any investigation notes, and records kept.

COMPLAINT HEARD BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, FUTURE ACADEMIES

Where the complainant is dissatisfied with the way the complaint has been handled or resolved, the Chief Executive will become involved and will further investigate the complaint using both existing evidence collected and any other evidence that may be required. The Chief Executive will then make a decision regarding the action to be taken, and try to resolve the complaint with the complainant.

The Chief Executive will be required to keep records of the investigation and the action identified in order to resolve the matter.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation and the action taken then he/she will be informed of his/her right to refer the matter to the Governors Hearing Committee.

The complainant will be informed of the need to write to the Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint who will then (or a nominated Governor) convene a meeting of the Hearing Committee to which the complainant will be invited to attend.

COMPLAINT HEARD BY THE GOVERNING BODY HEARINGS COMMITTEE

On receiving a formal complaint the Chair will ask the Clerk to convene a meeting of the Hearing Committee within ten days of receiving the complaint. The Hearing Committee will be formed of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. In addition to this, one member of the Hearing Committee is required to be a person independent of the management and running of The Pimlico London SCITT. It is important that the hearing is independent and impartial and therefore no Governor should be involved in the Hearing if they have prior knowledge of the complaint.

The complainant will be informed of the date and time of the Hearing, and they will be informed that they may be accompanied to the Hearing. They will be asked to inform the Clerk of any witnesses they may be calling so that a programme can be put together for the hearing.

The hearing will always aim to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between The Pimlico London SCITT and the complainant.

It is recognised, however, that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome, if the hearing does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations, which will satisfy the complainant that his/her complaint has been taken seriously.

An effective panel will acknowledge that many complainants feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. The Chair should ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible. The layout of the room will set the tone, and care is needed to ensure the setting is informal and not adversarial.

The Governors sitting on the panel need to be aware of the complaints procedure.

A programme of events should be drawn up for each hearing, depending on who will be giving evidence. The hearing should reasonably follow the pattern outlined below and should be kept as informal as possible. The Chief Executive will present the case on behalf of The Pimlico London SCITT.

1. Introduction identifying the programme of events and what the Governors are aiming to achieve through the hearing.
2. The complainant is then invited to explain their complaint, referring to any previous information they have provided.

3. The chair will then invite the Chief Executive, followed by the panel, to ask questions of the complainant.
4. Any witnesses invited by the complainant will be asked to present their evidence (the witnesses will be invited into the meeting when required).
5. The chair will then invite the Chief Executive, followed by the panel, to ask questions of the witnesses.
6. When all evidence has been presented by the complainant the Chair will then invite the Chief Executive to explain The Pimlico London SCITT's actions.
7. The Chair will then invite the complainant, followed by the panel, to ask questions of the Chief Executive.
8. Any witnesses provided by The Pimlico London SCITT will be invited to present their evidence (the witnesses will be invited into the meeting when required).
9. The Chair will then invite the complainant, followed by the panel, to ask questions of the witnesses.
10. The Chair will then invite the panel to ask additional questions of the complainant or the Chief Executive.
11. The complainant will then be invited to sum up their complaint.
12. The Chief Executive will then be invited to sum up The Pimlico London SCITT's actions and response to the complaint.
13. The Chair will then ask both parties to leave while the panel decides on the issues.
14. The Chair will then inform both the Chief Executive and the complainant of the timescale by which they will hear an outcome from the Panel.

As a result of the hearing the panel can:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part.
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.
- Recommend changes to The Pimlico London SCITT's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

The Chair of the panel will ensure that the complainant is notified of the panel's decision, in writing, with the panel's response within three days of the meeting. This letter will explain the right of appeal, which must be sent to the Clerk to the Governors within ten days of the first hearing taking place.

COMPLAINT HEARD BY THE GOVERNING BODY APPEALS COMMITTEE

On receiving notification, within the set time, that the complainant wants to appeal against the decision of the Hearing Committee, the Clerk will convene a meeting of the Appeals Committee within 10 days of receiving the complaint. The Hearing Committee will be formed of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. In addition to this, one member of the Hearing Committee is required to be a person independent of the management and running of The Pimlico London SCITT. It is important that the Appeals Hearing is independent and impartial and therefore no Governor should be involved in the Hearing if they have prior knowledge of the complaint. No Governor can sit on this if they were on the Hearing Committee which heard the initial hearing.

The complainant will be informed of the date and time of the appeal hearing and they will be informed that they may be accompanied to the Hearing.

The Appeals Hearing will not be required to hear the evidence again but to consider the reasons the complainant has given for the appeal. The committee should refer to the minutes of the Hearing and any other documentary evidence which was provided at the Hearing in order to consider the reasons for the appeal.

A programme of events should be drawn up for each appeal hearing which should reasonably follow the pattern outlined below, and should be kept as informal as possible.

- Introduction identifying the programme of events and the remit of the appeals hearing - that it is to consider the reasons for the appeal.
- The complainant will then be invited to explain their reason for the appeal, referring to any previous information they have provided regarding their reason for the appeal.
- The Chair will then invite the panel to ask questions of the complainant.
- The Chair will then ask the complainant and the Chief Executive to leave while the panel decides on the issues.
- The Chair will then explain that both parties will hear from the panel within three days.
- The panel will consider the information provided regarding the reason for the appeal, the minutes of the Hearing and any other documentary evidence from the Hearing and decides on the issues.

As a result of the appeal hearing the panel can:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part.
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.
- Recommend changes to The Pimlico London SCITT's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

The Chair of the panel will ensure that the complainant is notified of the panel's decision, in writing, with the panel's response within three days of the meeting. This letter will inform the complainant that there is no right of appeal.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

THE ROLE OF THE CLERK

Any panel or group of Governors considering complaints will be clerked. The clerk is the contact point for the complainant and will be required to:

1. Set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible.
2. Collate any written material and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing.
3. Meet and welcome the parties as they arrive at the hearing.
4. Record the proceedings.
5. Notify all parties of the panel's decision.

THE ROLE OF THE CHAIR OF THE PANEL

The Chair of the Panel has a key role, to ensure that:

1. The remit of the panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption.
2. The issues are addressed.
3. Key findings or facts are conveyed.
4. All participants at the hearing are put at ease.
5. The hearing is conducted in as informal manner as possible, with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy.
6. The panel is open-minded and acting independently.
7. No member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings, or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure.
8. Each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions, and written material is seen by both parties. If a new issue arises it would be useful to give all parties the opportunity to consider and comment on it.

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

Monitoring and evaluation of this policy will link with the monitoring and evaluation procedures in relation to seeking views of other stakeholders.

The effectiveness of the policy will be evaluated through feedback from the committees, and through feedback from staff involved in the informal stage.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The Governing Body will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout The Pimlico London SCITT

Office of the independent adjudicator [OIE]'s student teacher complaints scheme

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education [OIA] has been established to provide an independent scheme for the resolution of student teacher complaints. All Higher Education Institutions [HEIs] are required to comply with the Scheme which came into effect from 1 January 2005. Areas of complaints covered by the OIA include:

- A programme of study or research for which the complainant was registered
- A service provided by the Pimlico-London SCITT
- A final decision by the Pimlico-London SCITT disciplinary or appeal body

The OIA will not, however, advise about a complaint if:

- It relates to a matter of academic judgement (which will normally be about a student teacher's academic performance)
- The matter is or becomes the subject of court or tribunal proceedings
- It concerns a student teacher employment matter.

Forms and further details on the operation of the OIA are available from the OIA website www.oiahe.org.uk.

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis.