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A unique International British School exclusively dedicated to highly gifted children

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Leonardo Gifted School

Concerns and Complaints Policy

School Internal Policy

Introduction

In accordance with current guidelines on best practice set out *by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) Leonardo Gifted School (LGS)* is required to have a Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedure in the event of dissatisfaction with a service. This document sets out the remit of the policy and the procedure for its delivery.

Aims

We seek to provide an educational service that meets the standards for international British Schools. However, from time to time a parent/guardian may be dissatisfied with the service provided by the school and will want the matter to be considered. This process refers to concerns and complaints about:

- General issues of student behaviour
- Incidents of bullying or harassment in the classroom or the school yard
- Learning programs, assessment and reporting of student learning
- Communication with parents
- School fees and payments
- General administrative issues
- Any other school-related matters
- Health and safety



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Leonardo Gifted School seeks to enable parents/guardians to have the confidence to raise matters of concern with the school as soon as possible. By doing so, the Department uses the information provided through its concerns and complaints procedures as an opportunity for continuous improvement of its services and performance.

Conceptualization

For the purposes of the policy:

- a **'concern'** is an issue of interest (because of its importance and effect) which is raised informally in order to improve or change a situation. For example:

I believe that the school's physical education policy and program is inadequate.

I don't think that it caters for students who have well-developed skills and who need to be involved in competitive sport. I think the school should review its policy in this area.

- a **'complaint'** is an expression of grievance or resentment where the complainant is seeking redress or justice. For example:

My daughter has been left out of the school's netball team for the third time in a row.

She is an accomplished netballer and deserves to be part of the team. It is not fair that she is left out and I want you to do something about it!

Expectations

We expect that all parties will, when addressing concerns and complaints:

- Maintain the confidentiality of all parties
- Acknowledge that their common goal is to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- Act in good faith and in a calm and courteous manner
- Show respect and understanding of each other's point of view and value difference, rather than judge and blame

School developed by Centrul Gifted Education, www.giftededu.ro. Member ECHA- European Council for High Ability, WCGTC- World Council for Gifted and Talented Children. Partner University of Bucharest, Faculty of Education Sciences and Psychology. International Audit: CEU and Johns Hopkins Carey School of Business



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- Recognise that all parties have rights and responsibilities which must be balanced

In addition to the expectations of all parties above, we will address complaints:

- Courteously
- Efficiently
- Fairly
- Promptly, within timelines agreed with the person with the concern or complaint
- In accordance with due process and where appropriate, the principles of natural justice and the Department's regulatory framework.

Parent concern or complaint

STAGE 1 - INFORMAL RESOLUTION

- ✓ A parent/guardian can raise a concern or complaint about any aspect of a school's operations. In the first instance, they should take a concern or make a complaint to the school. Most concerns and complaints should, in the first instance, be raised with the students's Class Teacher -either by letter or by telephone, email or in person- and it is hoped that most concerns and complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.
- ✓ Staff will always liaise closely with the Headmistress when dealing with parental concerns and complaints. We will endeavour to acknowledge such letters or telephone calls within 2 working days of their receipt and to inform parents of how we intend to investigate the matter.



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STAGE 2 - FORMAL RESOLUTION

- ✓ Parents whose complaint has not been resolved by the Stage 1 process, should put their complaint formally in writing to the Headmistress.
- ✓ The Headmistress will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- ✓ The Headmistress will meet with the parents concerned to discuss the complaint within 7 days of receiving it.
- ✓ The Headmistress will then carry out any necessary further investigations.
- ✓ Once the Headmistress is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing, within 21 working days of receipt of the formal complaint. The Headmistress will also give reasons for the decision.
- ✓ If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed within 14 days of
 - receipt of the written outcome to Stage 3 of this procedure.

STAGE 3 – PANEL HEARING

- ✓ If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the **Convenor, the Clerk to the Governors, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.**
- ✓ The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom is independent of the management and running of the school.
- ✓ Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chair of Governors. The Convenor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint within 3 working days of receipt and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and within 21 working days.



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- ✓ If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 7 working days prior to the hearing.
- ✓ The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- ✓ If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- ✓ Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 10 days of the hearing.
- ✓ The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headmistress, the Board of Governors and, where relevant, the person about whom the complaint was made.