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 INNOV4TE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS POLICY

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| Person Responsible | Stacy Millington-MossDirector |

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# 1.0 Introduction:

It is in everyone’s interests that concerns are resolved/clarified at the earliest possible stage. Where concerns are raised Innov4te Independent School will work with the individual who raised the concern to identify what would resolve the situation and then endeavour to find a resolution at the earliest opportunity.

An appropriate member of staff should deal with initial concerns. These should be taken seriously, and every effort made to resolve matters as quickly as possible. In certain cases, it may be appropriate to forward these to the Director(s).

Where it is not possible to resolve concerns informally, the formal complaints procedure can be accessed.

This document outlines how complaints will be dealt with under the Formal Complaints Policy.

Complainants will always be given the opportunity to complete the complaints process in full, regardless of whether it is felt that that the complaint is justified or not.

If the complaints process is ongoing and further enquiries are received regarding the same subject, we will not respond to the new enquires/complaints. This is because it is unhelpful to have more than one investigation ongoing that duplicates the issues being investigated.

# 2.0 Complaints about services provided by external bodies using our premises

Where Innov4te Independent School has third party providers offering community facilities or services through Innov4te Independent School premises, the providers must have their own complaints procedure in place. Any complaints made concerning third party providers will be dealt with under their own procedures. Innov4te Independent School will ensure that providers have the correct processes in place to deal with any concerns or complaints and any issues should be raised with the provider directly.

# 3.0 Who can make a complaint?

Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that provides.

# Exclusions to the complaint’s procedure:

The following issues will not be subject to Innov4te Independent School’s complaints procedure as they are outside of Innov4te Independent School’s jurisdiction:

* + - admission to schools;
		- exclusions from school;
		- special educational needs (SEN Tribunal)
		- statutory proposals for school re-organisation;
		- claims for damages
		- staff grievance or disciplinary matters
		- child protection issues;
		- claims for damages.

Complaints made against school staff will be considered, however where it is determined that matters should be dealt with under Innov4te Independent School’s grievance and disciplinary procedures complainants will not be informed of the outcome.

Where a complaint relates to the behaviour of a learner this may be subject to Innov4te Independent School’s conduct, disciplinary procedures and the detail will remain confidential to Innov4te Independent School, and the parents of the child involved.

Complainants can be assured that the complaints will be investigated fully but due to data protection, information will not be shared with them in these circumstances.

Where complaints concern child protection matters these should be raised with Innov4te Independent School but will not usually be considered as a formal complaint where there is likely to be a Child Protection Investigation.

Where a complaint is received which should not be dealt with as a formal complaint, Innov4te Independent School will write to the complainant to advise them of this and the reason for the decision. Innov4te Independent School will confirm the correct process to be followed.

# Accessibility

Innov4te Independent School will ensure that the formal complaints procedure:

* + - is easily accessible and publicised both within Innov4te Independent School and available on Innov4te Independent School website.
		- is simple to understand and use.
		- is impartial and in the spirit of working together co-operatively to reach the best resolution for everyone.
		- respectful of confidentiality for all.

# 6.0 Time limit for making a complaint:

In general, any matter which is raised more than 3 months after the event being complained of, will not be considered.

# Recording Complaints:

Complaints should be made on the form provided by Innov4te Independent School, this is to ensure that there is an accurate record of the complaint, and it is clearly understood. However, if complainants are unable to complete this form complaints:

* + - in person;
		- by telephone;
		- or in writing,

Will be accepted as an alternative method of complaint and will be recorded accordingly.

When a formal complaint is received, Innov4te Independent School will write to the complainant within five working days to confirm what will happen next and the anticipated timescales.

# 8.0 Keeping people informed

Each stage of the complaints process has agreed timescales that should be adhered to. If for any reason this is not possible, Innov4te Independent School will write to the complainant to explain the reasons and confirm when the action will be completed.

# 9.0 Stages of the complaints process:

The following outlines the stages of the formal complaints’ procedure, at the end of each stage of the procedure complainants will be advised of how to progress to the next stage if they remain dissatisfied with the way in which the investigation has been conducted.

**Formal stage one: T**he Director will investigate a formal complaint. The investigation will be completed within 10 working days and at the end of the investigation, a full written response will be sent to the complainant.

**Formal stage two:** if stage one has been completed and the complainant remains dissatisfied with how the investigation was conducted the complaint can be referred to the Local Authority or Ofsted.

**Formal stage 3**

1.If the parents or carers are still not satisfied with the response at Stage 2 they should inform the School’s Directors who will arrange a panel to hear the complaint.

 2. The panel will comprise three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. At least one member of the panel will be independent of the running and management of the school (The member should not only be outside the school’s workforce, and not a member proprietorial body, but also should not be otherwise involved with the management of the school).

 3. The date of the panel meeting will consider the availability of the parents or carers as well as the school and will take place within 30 days.

4. Parents or carers will be invited to bring with them another person or persons to support them at the panel hearing if they wish. (The panel hearing does not confer a right on a parent to have a legal representative to make representations on their behalf at the hearing).

5. The panel will hear the complaint and will hear the outcome of the school’s investigations and its response to these. The panel will then make findings and recommendations which will be communicated in writing within 10 days of the conclusion of the hearing to the Directors, the parent or carer and, where appropriate, the person complained about.

6. If a parent does not exercise the right to attend a panel hearing, the panel will meet in line with this policy. The school’s arrangements for the panel hearing will be reasonable to facilitate the parent(s) exercising the right of attendance.

7. A written record of all complaints and their resolution, whether they proceeded to a panel hearing or not, will be kept on the school premises by the Headteacher (Equality Act 2010) and made available to Ofsted inspectors on request.

The school will record the progress of the complaint and the outcome. These records and any correspondence relating to a complaint will remain confidential, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 163 of the Education Act 2002 requests access to the records.

8. The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year will be published on the school website

**Learner Complaint**

The procedures below will be followed in the event of a learner making a complaint

against a member of staff, a fellow learner or any other person or situation either in

school or outside.

Learners may wish to talk to an adult they trust about a situation relating to school or

to a situation outside school.

Learners are reminded that, although they may speak to any member of staff, there

may be occasions where information will have to be referred to other agencies

such as Children’s Services.

Within school, learners may talk to any member of Education Staff.

A learner may merely need a trusted adult to talk a situation through with and may

not be making a formal complaint. However, all actual complaints made by

learners will be recorded by the member of staff in the Complaints Log. The school

response to the complaint will also be recorded. If the complaint is serious the

learner’s parents/carers will be informed of both the complaint and the outcome.

Some complaints will be referred to other agencies or to the Local Authority. If

necessary, a meeting will be called to discuss the issues further.

A learner may ask to speak to an adult from an outside agency. The school will,

wherever possible, put the learner in contact with a representative of the

appropriate agency. The referral will be noted in the learner’s file.

# 10.0 Social Media

Individuals who raise concerns are asked to comply with Innov4te Independent School’s guidance on social media, a complaint can be undermined by:

* + - Comments made on social media
		- Identifying individual staff on social media
		- Personal abuse targeted towards individual members of staff
		- Physical or verbal threats targeted to individuals or groups of staff these behaviours amount to harassment and will be dealt with by the Police.

# 11.0 Serial and Persistent Complainants

Innov4te Independent School is committed to working with anyone who raises an issue to take this seriously and work towards finding a solution to concerns. Generally, this should be a straightforward process and Innov4te Independent School values the feedback that we receive on services. We accept that complainants may ask difficult questions where they believe that things have gone wrong and have a right to go through the complaints process, however, in a minority of cases people pursue their feedback in a way which is inappropriate.

Where Innov4te Independent School is contacted repeatedly by individuals making the same point or asking for reconsideration on our position Innov4te Independent School will need to take appropriate action.

# Model Policy for Serial and Persistent Complainants

Innov4te Independent school is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with Innov4te Independent School. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will act to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive, or threatening.

Innov4te Independent School defines unreasonable complainants as ‘*those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with Innov4te Independent School, hinder our consideration of their or other people’s complaints*’.

The following are a list of issues and behaviours which could be considered unreasonable, this list is not exhaustive.

A complainant:

* refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance.
* refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved.
* refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaint’s procedure.
* insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice.
* introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be considered and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales.
* makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues and seeks to have them replaced.
* changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds.
* repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed).
* refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where Innov4te Independent School’s complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed.
* seeks an unrealistic outcome.
* makes excessive demands on time by frequent, lengthy, complicated, and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:

* maliciously.
* aggressively.
* using threats, intimidation, or violence.
* using abusive, offensive, or discriminatory language.
* knowing it to be false.
* using falsified information.
* publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Innov4te Independent School will deal with formal complaints in accordance with the timescales stated in the complaints policy and will agree the scope of the complaint at the start of the process. Once the complaint is agreed complainants should limit the numbers of communications while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email, or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Director will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an ‘unreasonable’ marking. The application of a ‘serial’ or ‘persistent’ marking will be against the subject or the complaint itself rather than the complainant.

If the behaviour continues the Director will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Innov4te Independent School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from Innov4te Independent School’s premises.