



**London District East
Teaching School Hub**

For all schools in Barking & Dagenham, Havering and Newham

LDE Teaching School Hub (including LDESCITT) Complaints

Policy

September 2023



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1. Aims

The London District East Teaching School Hub ('LDE TSH') complaints procedure seeks to:

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
- be impartial
- be non-adversarial
- allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress
- ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary
- respect people's desire for confidentiality
- address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary.

The complaints procedure will also:

- be easily accessible and publicised
- be simple to understand and use
- provide information to the LDE TSH or SCITT management team so that services can be improved.

2. General Principles

2.1. The difference between a Complaint and a Concern

A 'concern' may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.

A complaint may be generally defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

LDE TSH describes a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction with any service or lack of service provided by LDE TSH. This complaints procedure is not restricted to trainees of LDE SCITT or ECTs at LDE TSH: it may also be initiated by potential trainees, partner schools or members of the public.

For a trainee who is currently enrolled in LDE SCITT must see the Boleyn Trust Grievance Policy. A complaint may also be submitted collectively. A spokesperson should be nominated who will be the channel of communication for the group, however, a complaint may not be lodged by a third party on behalf of the complainant.

The majority of issues raised are concerns rather than complaints. LDE TSH is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing to implement formal procedures.

All SCITT trainees, ECTs and NPQs participants have access to direct mobile phone lines that they can use to immediately express concerns at any time to LDE TSH or SCITT leaders.

- SCITT Mobile: 07458303569
- ECT Mobile: 07827374799
- NPQs Mobile: 07469054530

We reserve the right to reject a formal complaint that we consider to be unsubstantiated or frivolous.

It is usual to disregard anonymous complaints unless somebody is prepared to substantiate them. However anonymous complaints may be investigated, at the discretion of the LDE TSH Leaders, if it is felt the complaint is of sufficient seriousness to warrant this.

For LDE TSH to be able to investigate a complaint, it needs to be made within three months of the incident occurring. If a complaint is older than three months it will not be investigated.

The prime aim of the policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner.

2.2. How to make a complaint

A concern must be made in writing.

Concerns should be raised with:

- Director or Deputy Director of LDE TSH
- Director of Teacher Training of LDE SCITT
- NPQs Lead
- AB Lead

If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint to Tom Canning CBE, CEO of the Boleyn Trust.

If making a formal complaint, this must be made in writing to ensure clarity of the complaint to all parties.

Complaints against LDE TSH staff or Partners (except the Director) should be made in the first instance, to the Director: craig.lilleyman@londondistricteast.org. Please mark it as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the Director should be addressed to Tom Canning CBE, the CEO of the Boleyn Trust: tom.canning@theboleyntrust.org. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

If a complaint remains unresolved it will be passed to the Standards Committee of the Boleyn Trust Trustees to adjudicate.



In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

2.3. Dealing with Complaints - Initial concerns

LDE TSH distinguishes between a concern and a complaint. By taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage we endeavour to keep the numbers that develop into formal complaints to a minimum.

This document deals with complaints but the underlying principle is that concerns ought to be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures.

The requirement to have a complaints procedure should not in any way undermine efforts to resolve the concern informally. In most cases the individual concerned will receive the first approach. It would be helpful if LDE TSH was able to resolve issues on the spot, including apologising where necessary.

2.4. Time-Limits

A complainant should be able to expect to have a response, even if not the final response, to their complaint within five school days of the complaint being received in writing by email.

The response may initially be a phone call. Many concerns are resolved at this stage.

Where further investigations are necessary, new time limits can be set at the discretion of LDE TSH. The complainant will be informed of the new deadline and then an explanation for the delay by email. Further contact may be in writing or at a meeting with written confirmation of the outcome.

2.5. Procedure

2.5.1. The Stages of Complaints

The Formal Complaints Procedure has three stages:

Stage One: complaint heard by the Director

Stage Two: complaint heard by the CEO of the Boleyn Trust

Stage Three: complaint heard by the Complaints Committee of The Boleyn Trust Board of Trustees

3. Stage One:

Formal complaints must be made to the Director (unless they are about the Director) as above by email.

The Director will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (by email) within five school days.

Within this response, the Director will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The Director can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

Note: The Director may delegate the investigation to another member of the LDE TSH management team but not the decision to be taken.

During the investigation, investigator will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the investigator will provide a formal written response within five school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the investigator is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date by email.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions that LDE TSH will take to resolve the complaint.

The investigator will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage One.

If the complaint is about the Director – the CEO of the Boleyn Trust (or their appointee) will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage One.

If the complaint is also about the CEO, Stage One will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the Boleyn Trust Trustees. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

4. Stage Two: Complaint heard by the CEO of The Boleyn Trust (the ‘CEO’)

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage One and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage Two – a meeting with the CEO.

A request to escalate to Stage Two must be made to the COO of The Boleyn Trust by email: steven.lock@theboleyntrust.org (‘COO’) within five school days of receipt of the Stage 1 response.

The COO will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (by email) within three school days.

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The COO will email the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within no more than 15 school days of receipt of the Stage Two request. If this is not possible, the COO will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the COO will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

The CEO will provide the complainant and LDE TSH with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 5 school days of the conclusion of the meeting.

The letter (by email) to the complainant will include details of how to escalate the complaint further if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled. They can take the complaint to Stage Three.

If the complaint is about the CEO - Stage Two will be heard by the Committee (see below).

5. Stage Three: Complaint heard by the Standards Committee of the Boleyn Trust (the 'Committee')

A Complaints Committee will be formed of at least three impartial Trustees from The Boleyn Trust Board with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, the Trustees will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Committee.

The Committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate.

For instance, if an employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.



A request to escalate to Stage Three must be made to the COO of The Boleyn Trust by email: steven.lock@theboleyntrust.org ('COO') within five school days of receipt of the Stage Two response.

The COO will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (by email) within three school days.

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The COO will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within no more than 15 school days of receipt of the Stage Three request. If this is not possible, the COO will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the COO will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

At least 3 school days before the meeting, the COO will confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible.

The Committee will not normally accept, as evidence, any new information not already presented in Stages One and Two of the investigation relating to the original complaint.

The Committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage One of the procedure.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not permitted.

The Committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The Committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the Committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the LDE TSH systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Complaints Committee will provide the complainant and the school with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 5 school days of the conclusion of the meeting.



The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions that will be taken to resolve the complaint.

The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.

6. General Principles underlying the Complaints Procedure

LDE TSH Complaints Procedure recognises the importance of the protection of the rights of those wrongly accused. Malicious or frivolous accusations will be viewed as a serious matter by LDE TSH.

7. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator

Should the appellant wish to take the matter further we suggest they contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education ('OIA') is an independent body set up to review student complaints. It is free to students and deals with individual complaints against Higher Education Institutions in England and Wales.

When all internal procedures are complete, students may request an independent review of their case by the OIA, if they remain dissatisfied with the final outcome from LDE TSH. Provided the complaint is eligible under the rules of the OIA's complaints scheme, the OIA will look at whether LDE TSH applied its regulations properly and followed its procedures correctly.

WEB SITE: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>

OIA, Second Floor, Abbey Gate, 57-75 Kings Road, Reading, RG1 3AB Telephone: 0118 959 9813



Appendix 1: Complaint Form

Complaint Form

To be completed by the person who wishes to make a complaint and emailed to LDE TSH as above.

To:

FROM:.....

TITLE:

Give below details of the complaint including dates of the incident/issue:

The expected outcome:

Signed: Date: