

Young Dancers Academy

Complaints policy procedure

YDA, in accordance with the Department of Education's 'Best Practise for Schools Complaints Procedure' follows the below statement with regards of what is the difference between a concern and a complaint both of which must be acted on with serious intent. YDA is aware of the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts and annually registers with the IMPS for such information to be shared by professional bodies who may become involved in an independent resolution.

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'. It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to invoke formal procedures. Schools should take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. There are occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. In those cases, the school's formal procedure should be invoked through the stages outlined within their procedure. Who can make a complaint? Any person, including members of the general public, may make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that a school provides, unless separate statutory procedures apply (such as exclusions or admissions). Schools must not limit complaints to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. As an independent school YDA also is required to comply with the Independent School Standards.

Raising a concern or complaint at YDA

There may be occasions on which parents wish to draw to the school's attention a matter of concern regarding their child's education or happiness at school. All such concerns or complaints will be treated seriously and, as far as possible, confidentially. Our aim is always to resolve such issues quickly, informally and personally. In line with the Equality Act 2010 a person may make a complaint in person, by speaking on the telephone or in writing.

Informal resolution (Stage 1)

It is hoped that all complaints and concerns will be resolved as early and as informally as possible. Where parents have a complaint, it should be discussed with the Directors. Whenever a complaint is received, a written record will be kept by the member of staff who receives the complaint, logging its nature and the date on which it was received. If the matter has not been satisfactorily resolved within fourteen days, then parents may choose to proceed to a formal resolution of their complaint. The procedure for this is outlined here.

Formal resolution (Stage 2)

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, then parents should put their concern in writing to the Directors who will decide the appropriate course of action. A full record will be kept of the complaint and of the action taken in respect of it. It is likely that the Directors and Director of Academics will wish to meet personally with the parents in order to discuss the matter, normally within seven days of receiving the complaint. It may be that the matter can be

resolved at this meeting, or the Directors may think it necessary to carry out further investigations. They will always keep the parents fully informed (by letter, email, telephone or in person) of the ways in which the issue is being handled. When the Directors has reached their decision, the parents will be informed in writing with a full account of their reasoning.

Independent resolution (Stage 3)

If parents are not satisfied with the Director's decision they may pass their complaint on to the Trustees of the school who will establish an appropriate Panel to consider the matter. The particular arrangements for this stage of the procedure will be communicated to parents at the time.

The Panel will normally comprise three persons, two of whom are members of the school's Advisory board and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Members of the Panel will be appointed by, or on behalf of the board of the Young Dancers Academy. Hearings will normally be held within 28 days of the approach to the Trustees. The parents will be invited to attend, and have a right to be accompanied by one other person (this may be a relative, teacher or friend; legal representation will not normally be appropriate). Other relevant evidence may be heard. The panel can make findings and recommendations.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the 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, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations. This process will normally be completed within seven days of the hearing. The Panel will write to the complainant informing them of its decision and of the reasons for it. Any further recommendations will also be sent in writing to the complainant and to the person being complained about, the school Heads, the School's Board and, where relevant, any other persons involved in the complaint. The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of these findings and recommendations are available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Head teacher. A written copy is kept of all complaints and whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and action taken by the school as a result from these complaints. All correspondence, statements and records relation to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection request access to them.

The Rights of Students

If a student wishes to raise a complaint personally, he/she should speak directly with the Directors or Head of Department. The matter will then proceed towards informal resolution. If it is not satisfactorily resolved in this way, the student's parents should follow the procedure for formal resolution outlined above.

Parents may look for further information on how to make a complaint against a school from either the Department of Education or Ofsted.

Reviewed: September 2019

By: K Williams