



**Focus 1st Academy**

**Complaints Procedure**

**Focus 1st Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment!**

Working in Partnership with North London Schools & Local Authorities since 2000

Accredited Independent School Status 2014 (Registration N0. 308/6003)

Contents

[Contents 2](#_Toc178600334)

[Complaints Procedure 3](#_Toc178600335)

[COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FORM 3](#_Toc178600336)

[The Parental Complaints Procedure 4](#_Toc178600337)

[Informal Complaint 4](#_Toc178600338)

[Informal Complaints Procedure: 4](#_Toc178600339)

[Formal Complaint 5](#_Toc178600340)

[Staff Complaints Procedure 6](#_Toc178600341)

[Whistle-blowing Policy 7](#_Toc178600342)

[Raising a concern 7](#_Toc178600343)

[Allegation Against the Headteacher: 8](#_Toc178600344)

[Step one 8](#_Toc178600345)

[Step two 8](#_Toc178600346)

[Step three 8](#_Toc178600347)

[How we will handle the matter 8](#_Toc178600348)

[Safe Staff Recruitment 10](#_Toc178600349)

Complaints Procedure

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FORM

Name Student: ………………………………………………………………………………

Date of Birth: ……………………………………………

Name of School …………………………………………………………………………….

|  |
| --- |
| **Cause for Concern** |

|  |
| --- |
| **Action Taken** |

Signed (Tutor):

Signed (Director)

Date:

The Parental Complaints Procedure

Informal Complaint

Focus 1st Academy have adopted, with amendment, The Education [Independent School Standards] (England) Regulation 2010 as amended by The Education [Independent School Standards] (England) (Amendment) Regulation 2012 and updated 2019.

Our aim is to provide services of high quality and we are always looking to improve our services; your complaints can help us to do this. Once we have received a complaint we hope to be able to settle complaints quickly and informally at your first point of contact. Where this is not possible, the rest of this section explains what you should do. Making a complaint will not put you at a disadvantage now or in the future.

We want to deal with any complaint we receive in a systematic and transparent manner and aim to deal with a complaint before it reaches the formal stages of the procedure. We take this opportunity to affirm that all parties to the relationship between Focus 1st Academy, parent and students have equal rights. As such we will operate the complaints procedure against Focus 1st Academy and its staff alongside a procedure that allows staff to register complaints against parental behaviour. As with the parents’ complaints procedure it is assumed that procedures to protect staff against inappropriate parental behaviour should be systematic and transparent. We aim to deal with a complaint prior to it reaching the formal stages.

Informal Complaints Procedure:

* **We have an open-door policy for informal complaints; complaints can be registered with any member of staff either in writing, in person or via telephone or email at anytime**
* **Once a parental complaint has been made; this will be instantly registered / logged.**
* **The complaint is reported to the Executive Headteacher, Marina Savva who will endeavour to resolve this issue on an informal basis.**
* **We aim to respond to complaints within 10 working days of receipt.**
* **Complaints can be raised directly to any of the examining bodies, whom Focus 1st Academy is accredited with (BCS, AQA, EDXEL/Pearson, NCFE and OCR).**

Formal Complaint

If the complaint cannot be resolved in an informal manner, then this would then become a formal complaint with the following measures in place:

* The formal complaint must be put in writing by the complainant
* Focus 1st Academy will notify the panel, send supporting documentation and agree a date and time for the hearing and will ensure to provide adequate notice for all parties; within 21 days
* Notify the complainant/parent of set hearing date and time; the parent may attend accompanied, to the panel hearing if they wish
* The panel must research findings and make recommendations and a copy of the findings and recommendations must be submitted to the complainant, proprietor and, where relevant, the person complained about
* A written record will be kept of all complaints and their outcomes, whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, when a complaint is submitted in writing or whether they proceed to a panel hearing

All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection [Ofsted/ISI under section 162A of the 2002 Act] requests access to them.

Our panel will consist of 3 people who were not directly involved in previous consideration of the complaint. We have an appointed Lawyer - Henry Lamprecht, who is independent of the management and the running of the school and has committed to joining the panel for a hearing, the LADO and the referrer of the student.

***NB: Grievance and Cause for Concern forms can be obtained upon request from*** ***Kate Bowman 020 3793 0814 or via the website at*** [***www.focus1stacademy.org.uk***](http://www.focus1stacademy.org.uk)

Staff Complaints Procedure

If the complaint cannot be resolved in an informal manner this would then become a formal complaint with the following measures in place:

1. Focus 1st Academy will notify the panel, send supporting documentation and agree a date and time for the hearing.
2. Notify the complainant of set hearing date and time and allow parent to attend accompanied.
3. If parents wish, we will allow the panel to research findings and make recommendations and stipulate that a copy of those findings and recommendations is provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and made available for inspection on the school premises by The Head-Teacher. A written record to be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing which kept by the Headteacher, Marina Savva.

All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Act requests access to them.

(1)\* Our panel will consist of the Executive Headteacher, Marina Savva and/or Headteacher Andrea Kattirtzi, our Designated Safeguarding Lead, Kate Bowman however, if the complaint is against one of the Heads/DSLs then another will sit in with the panel; a school point of contact will be invited to sit in on the panel to join the meeting [the school that referred the student] LADO for L.B. Enfield of Hertfordshire County Council – Head of Alternative Provision is the point of contact and we will invite as an external professional sitting in on the panel hearing – Henry Lamprecht who was a music teacher and is now working in law.

***NB: Grievance and Cause for Concern forms can be obtained upon request*** ***from*** ***Kate Bowman 0203 793 0814 or via the website at*** [***www.focus1stacademy.org.uk***](http://www.focus1stacademy.org.uk)

For internal staff complaints please see staff handbook.

Whistle-blowing Policy

A whistle-blower is an employee, volunteer, or member of an organisation, who reports misconduct occurring in an organisation.

Focus 1st Academy takes whistle-blowing seriously to promote an organisational culture of openness and accountability. We encourage all staff / volunteers to raise concerns you may have about dangerous practice or serious risk as early as possible. We will respond appropriately to promote a safer organisation.

Raising a concern

You do not need to have firm evidence before raising a concern. But we do ask that you explain as fully as you can the information or circumstances that gave rise to your concern.

We hope you will raise your concern openly. However, we recognise that there may be circumstances when you would prefer to speak to someone in confidence first. If this is the case, please say so at the outset. You can access confidential advice from Enfield’s Local Authority Officer Cathy Phelan on 020 8379 4392/2850 or [cathy.phelan@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:cathy.phelan@enfield.gov.uk) or Hertfordshire’s Local Authority Designated Officer.

Simultaneously, in the case of a complaint against the Headteacher:

The complainer will in the first instance put this in writing to the Headteacher who will endeavour to resolve this internally; if this cannot be resolved then this issue will be referred to an external appointed person; Enfield’s Local Authority Officer Cathy Phelan on 020 8379 4392/2850 or [cathy.phelan@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:cathy.phelan@enfield.gov.uk) and/or Henry Lamprecht who is an established solicitor 07736 121 014.

If you ask us not to disclose your identity, we will not do so without your consent unless required by law. There may be times when we are unable to resolve a concern without revealing your identity, for example where your personal evidence is essential. In such cases, we will discuss with you whether and how the matter can best proceed.

Allegation Against the Headteacher:

If there is an allegation against the headteacher then this should be referred directly to Cathy Phelan on 020 8379 4392/2850 or cathy.phelan@enfield.gov.uk or Hertfordshire County Council LADO administrative office on 01992 555420 [LADO.Referral@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:LADO.Referral@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

Step one

If you have a concern about dangerous practice, serious risk or wrongdoing at work, raise it first with Focus 1st Academy’s Executive Headteacher Marina Savva, Headteacher, Andrea Kattirtzi or Designated Safeguarding Lead, Kate Bowman who can be contacted on

[marina@focus1stacademy.org.uk](mailto:marina@focus1stacademy.org.uk)

[andrea@focus1stacademy.org.uk](mailto:andrea@focus1stacademy.org.uk)

[kate@focus1stacademy.org.uk](mailto:kate@focus1stacademy.org.uk)

Step two

If you feel unable to raise the matter with one of the officers named above for whatever reason, or if there is a problem with the organisation, raise the matter with Enfield’s Local Authority or Hertfordshire County Council.

Step three

If these channels have been followed and you still have concerns, or if you feel that the matter is so serious that you cannot discuss it with any of the above, please contact:

NSPCC, Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2 3NH

020 7825 2775

How we will handle the matter

Once you have told us of your concern, we will assess it and consider what action may be appropriate. This may involve an informal review, an internal inquiry or a more formal investigation. We will tell you who will be handling the matter, how you can contact them, and what further assistance we may need from you. If requested, we will write to you summarising your concern and setting out how we propose to handle it and provide a timeframe for feedback.

If we have misunderstood the concern or there is any information missing let us know.

* If you have any personal interest in the matter tell us at the outset.
* It is a disciplinary matter to victimise a bona-fide whistle-blower and for someone to maliciously make a false allegation
* Whenever possible, we will give you feedback on the outcome of any investigation.

***Grievance and Cause for Concern forms can be obtained upon request from Kate Bowman 020 3793 0814 or via the website at*** [***www.focus1stacademy.org.uk***](http://www.focus1stacademy.org.uk)

*E+W+S+N.I.*

Safe Staff Recruitment

We have created a culture of safe recruitment of staff and volunteers and adopted recruitment procedures that help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children. Focus 1st Academy follow the Safer Recruitment guidance set out at p52 in the [Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d7301b9084b18b95709f75/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf) (KCSIE, 2024)

We ask for written information about previous employment within our application form. We seek references form previous employment to underpin safer recruitment. This is then followed through with enhanced DBS & List 99 checks prior to commencing work in Focus 1st Academy. All information is placed on a single central register that is kept with the Executive Headteacher, Marina Savva.

Under no circumstances would a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity. For new volunteers/staff in regulated activity who will regularly teach or look after children on an unsupervised basis or provide personal assistance/care on a one-off basis must obtain an enhanced DBS certificate with barred list check.

Visitors should at no time be left unsupervised and must sign in upon arrival.

Our Executive Headteacher, Marina Savva should always check for,

* Enhanced DBS Check
* Barring List 99 Check
* Application Form
* Medical Form
* 2 References
* Social Media and Google Search
* That no member in household has been disqualified from working with children
* Read & Signed – Keeping Children Safe docs
* Document to spreadsheet [central register]
* Book on child protection course
* Appraisal
* Copies of the following
* Qualifications,
* Birth Certificate,
* Passport
* Utility Bill (s)

This part of policy is about managing cases of allegations that might indicate a person would pose a risk of harm, if they continue to work in regular or close contact with children in their present position. It should be used in respect of all cases, in which it is alleged that a teacher or member of staff (including volunteers) in Focus 1st Academy that provides education for children under our care,

* Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
* Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
* Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.

This part of the guidance relates to members of staff who are currently working in any school or college regardless of whether the school or college is where the alleged abuse took place. Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching should be referred to the police.

We have a duty of care towards our employees. We will ensure effective support is provided for anyone facing an allegation and provide the employee with a named contact if they are suspended. It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer in Focus 1st Academy is dealt with very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

Procedures for dealing with allegations need to be applied with common sense and judgement. Many cases may well either not meet the criteria set out above, or may do so without warranting consideration of either a police investigation or enquiries by local authority children’s social care services. In these cases, local arrangements should be followed to resolve cases without delay. Some rare allegations will be so serious they require immediate intervention by children’s social care services and/or police. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be informed of all allegations that come to Focus’s attention.

We will endeavour to make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. We will act in accordance to the Education Act 2011 introduced reporting restrictions preventing the publication of any material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who has been accused by, or on behalf of, a pupil from the same school or college (where that identification would identify the teacher as the subject of the allegation).

The reporting restrictions apply until the point that the accused person is charged with an offence, or until the Secretary of State or the General Teaching Council for England publishes information about an investigation or decision in a disciplinary case arising from the allegation. The reporting restrictions also cease to apply if the individual to whom the restrictions apply effectively waives their right to anonymity by going public themselves or by giving their written consent for another to do so or if a judge lifts restrictions in response to a request to do so. The provision commenced on 1 October 2012.

Last reviewed July 2018

Last reviewed October 2018

Last reviewed March 2019

Last reviewed April 2020

Last reviewed September 2020

Last reviewed September 2021

Last reviewed May 2022

Last Reviewed August 2023

Last Reviewed September 2024

Last Reviewed July 2025