

## Student Complaints Policy & Procedures

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| Aspect of QA     | Learner Protection and Support  |
| Policy Owner     | Student Welfare Officer   |
| Purpose          | To outline the procedures for handling learner complaints in a fair, transparent and timely manner. |
| Scope            | This policy applies to all staff and learners at Swan ELT.  |
| Related Policies | Student Welfare Policy, Academic Quality Assurance Policy   |
| Review Cycle     | Annual  |

While Swan ELT is committed to providing a learning experience and environment which meets each of its learners’ needs, it is also aware that there may be times when learners may feel their needs have not been met. Swan ELT recognises the rights of learners to make a complaint in such situations.

Complaints from learners may be in response to a variety of issues where they feel that the service or treatment they have received may have fallen short of what they had expected from the school. These complaints may include dissatisfaction with the staff or with the resources of the school or the behaviour of their peers. The learner has the right to raise the complaint and to have it considered with courtesy, in a timely fashion (within 15 days), and without fear of prejudicial treatment

Complainants are encouraged to attempt to resolve the problem by discussion and/or correspondence with the staff directly involved in, or close to, the situation that is the source of the complaint, for example, learners wishing to raise issues concerning classroom matters should approach their teacher in the first place.

Should the complainant prefer not to approach their teacher or in the case of a specific non classroom related complaint, the learner should initially communicate with the Student Welfare Officer who may attempt to resolve the issue directly. If the complainant is not satisfied with the suggested resolution, the Welfare Officer will explain the process as laid out in the below process flow charts.

Complaints made anonymously will not normally be investigated.

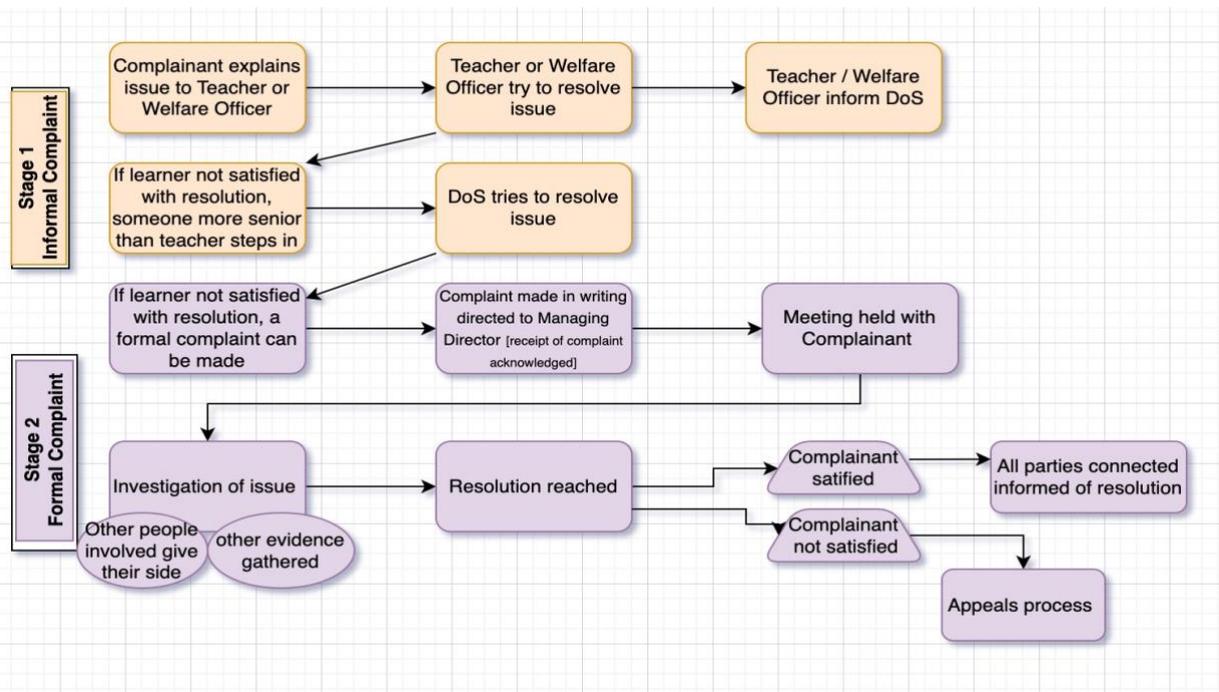
Learners making an informal or formal complaint are expected to comply with the policies and procedures. They have the right to be accompanied by a friend, family member or colleague acting in a supportive capacity during any interactions with Swan ELT regarding their complaint.

All complaints are treated confidentially. The complainant, together with any friend or representative, is also required to observe confidentiality in respect of the complaint.

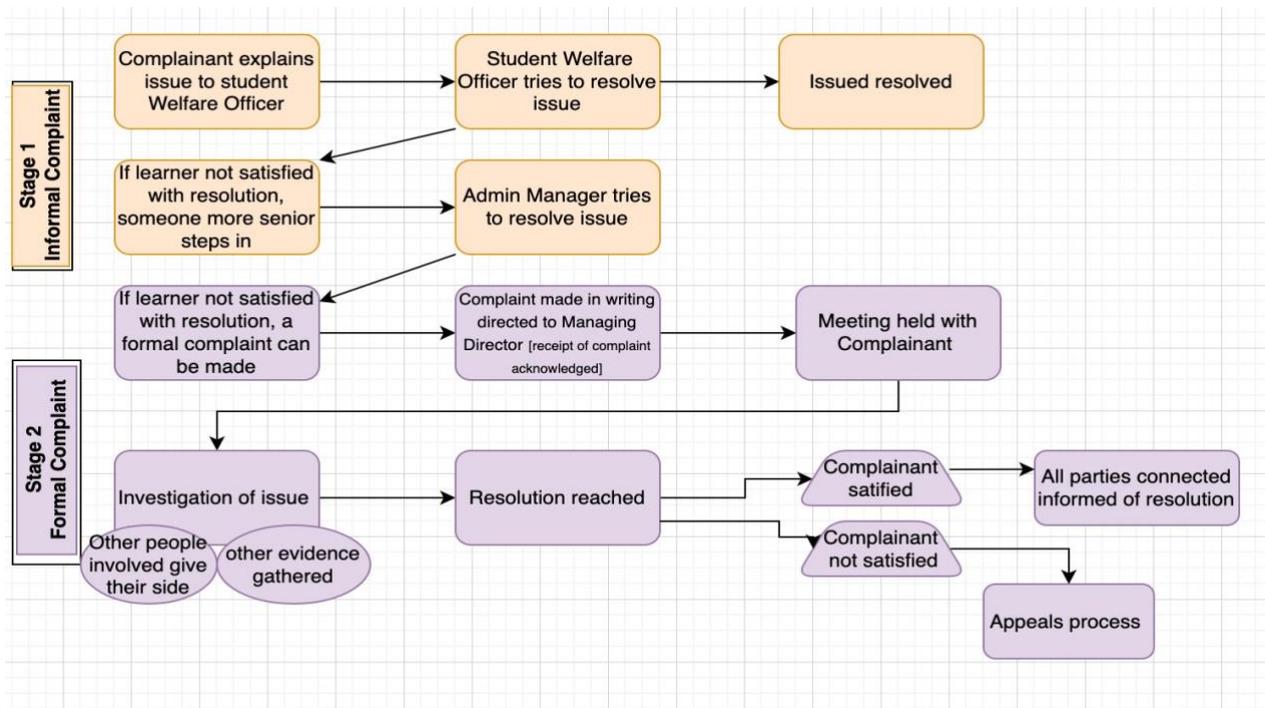
Swan ELT undertakes to:

- acknowledge any complaint promptly (within 3 working days)
- give due consideration to what the complainant has to say and fully investigate the circumstances of the complaint
- provide a written response, following the investigation, detailing action to be taken
- take the cause for complaint and the complainant's claim on board in order to continuously improve our service.
- notify the subject of a complaint (the person being complained about OR responsible for the matter) about the nature of the complaint, and to permit that person to respond

### Academic Complaint Process



## Administration Complaint Process



### Stage 1: Informal Complaint Procedure

This is the informal stage for complaint resolution when complainants are encouraged to make every effort to resolve the issue informally between the individuals concerned.

1. The complainant will, where possible, raise the issue within 3 days of the incident occurring.

The complainant describes the nature of the complaint to the relevant person involved (e.g. Teacher, Student Welfare Officer), who will attempt to resolve the issue directly.

Note: In this case the teacher, member of staff involved should inform the DoS/ Welfare Officer of the nature of the complaint and about any resolution suggested.

2. The complainant may if s/he prefers, raise the issue with another more senior member of staff or someone not directly involved [e.g. Admin Manager/Programme Manager] who will attempt to resolve the issue.

3. If, however, the learner is not satisfied with the suggested resolution in either situation [1 or 2 above], the formal complaints process (Stage 2) will be explained to the learner. S/he will then make a decision about whether to proceed to Stage 2 or not

### Stage 2: Formal Complaint Procedure

A learner may make a formal complaint if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the informal process or where the nature of the complaint is deemed serious enough to progress to Stage 2 immediately. Where an informal process has been attempted, the complainant must initiate Stage 2 within 15 days of the outcome of the informal process.

1. The learner must make the complaint in writing on the Complaint Form and address it for the attention of the School Director.
2. Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged, normally within three working days, and it will be determined if the complaint is within the remit of the complaints procedure.
3. At this stage a meeting will be held with the complainant to clarify the nature of the complaint and to gather further information prior to any investigation. The learner may be accompanied by a friend, family member or colleague at that meeting.
4. An investigation into the issue is initiated.
  - (i) The subject of the complaint (if applicable) is advised of the details and nature of the complaint and is invited to respond.
  - (ii) The complaint, with associated evidence and response from the subject of complaint is then reviewed.
    - Where the complaint is not considered valid, the process ends. The complainant will be informed in writing of this decision.
5. Where the complaint leads to recommendations or actions to be taken as a consequence of the complaint, all relevant persons/bodies within the school will be informed.
6. All parties will be informed in writing (complainant, subject of complaint and any other relevant persons) of the outcome of the investigation of the complaint, the findings, any decisions made or actions to be taken arising from those decisions.
7. If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the proposed resolution, then they are advised to progress to the Appeals process
8. A report of the process and its findings and actions will be presented to the Academic Committee / Directors for their review.
9. Where a complaint cannot be resolved internally to the satisfaction of the complainant or the school, an External Independent Complaints Review Procedure is implemented.

This is led by English Education Ireland (EEI). See below:

**External Independent Complaints Review Procedure**

**External Independent Complaints Review Procedure Form**