**Concerns and Complaints Policy**

We aim to give everyone an excellent experience during their time training with the Inspiring Leaders SCITT, so we welcome your comments, suggestions and feedback about your experience. We understand that occasionally you may need to raise an issue with us.

The majority of issues raised by trainees are concerns rather than complaints. The Inspiring Leaders SCITT 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 recourse to formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the concern, individuals may wish or be asked to follow the SCITT’s formal complaints procedure.

Whilst there is no timeframe for when a complaint can be raised, we advise that you speak to a relevant person as close to the time of incident as possible in order for us to address and resolve it as quickly as possible. Investigating incidents that occurred historically can be a challenge so we would encourage trainees to raise concerns as early possible to help us address problems.

**Scope**

The scope of this policy covers most complaints that we are likely to receive. This includes:

• Complaints about ITT personnel

• Complaints about placement schools

• Issues with the ITT programme

• Health and safety issues

• The working environment

• Harassment and discrimination

**Procedure**

The Inspiring Leaders SCITT Complaints Procedure has four main stages, as follows:

**If the concern is about the school, its staff or students**

**If the concern is about the SCITT programme or its staff**

The concern is raised informally with an in-school mentor (Keep SHL informed as appropriate)

The concern is raised informally with the hub leader

Stage 1

The concern is brought to the attention of the Headteacher

Stage 2 (school only)

Stage 3

The concern is escalated to the SCITT Programme Director

The concern is escalated to the MAT’s Director of Education (or equivalent)

A formal complaint is heard and responded to by the SCITT Accounting Officer and Partnership Director

Stage 4

Stage 5 / Stage 6 if appropriate

If the concern is deemed to be whistleblowing, and involves the person named as the lead at that stage, then the complainant may skip to the next stage.

At each stage, the person investigating the complaint will ensure that they:

• Clarify the nature of the complaint and unresolved issues

• Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right

• Interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish

• Keep notes of the interview(s)

At each stage, the person investigating the complaint will seek ways to resolve the complaint satisfactorily. It may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

• An acknowledgement that the complaint is valid in whole or in part and/or acknowledgement that the situation could have been handled differently or better (this is not the same as an admission of negligence)

• An apology

• An explanation

• An assurance and an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again

• An undertaking to review SCITT procedures in light of the complaint.

Where it is not felt that a complaint is valid in whole or in part, this will be communicated with an explanation of why the complaint is not upheld.

**Stages**

**Stage 1 –** Raising a concern

Concerns can be raised at any time and will often generate an immediate response which will resolve the concern. Unless the concern involves them, trainees should make their first contact with their in school mentor. It is anticipated that the vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way.

**Stage 2 –** Concern reviewed (school only)

If the in-school mentor deems that they cannot resolve the concern themselves, or the trainee is not happy with the initial response given, then it may be passed to the Headteacher of the school.

**Stage 3** – Concern escalated

If the concern is deemed to need escalating to the point where it may become a formal complaint, then it will be passed to the SCITT Programme Director (if it relates to the SCITT) or the MAT Director of Education or equivalent for that phase (if it relates to the school).

**Stage 4** - Making a complaint

Formal complaints should be put in writing and addressed to both the SCITT Accounting Officer and the Partnership Director. The complaint will be logged, including the date it was received. The Accounting Officer will acknowledge receipt of the complaint. The complaint will be delegated to the Senior Leadership Team member with direct responsibility for the particular area. An investigation will be carried out, and conclusion reached. The Senior Leadership Team member will write to complainant within 10 school days of the complaint being received.

**Stage 5 -** Complaint has still not been resolved

Trainees have the right to appeal the conclusions of their complaint by writing to the SCITT Accounting Officer within 10 school days of receiving the outcome. They will then acknowledge the response within 5 school days and will seek to form an appeals panel made up of the Accounting Officer, one other member of the assessment panel and 3 people not involved in the matter of the complaint. The appeals panel will take place within 25 school days of the Accounting Officer’s acknowledgement to the appeals letter.

The panel will review the investigation for procedure and fairness and come to a conclusion. The panel will write to the complainant confirming the decision or request a re-run of relevant stages of the investigation within 21 school days of the appeals panel meeting.

The SCITT will then issue a Completion of Procedures Letter outlining its conclusion.

**Stage 6 -** Dissatisfied by the outcome of the appeals panel

A trainee can raise a complaint with the Office of Independent Adjudicators (OIA). A letter to the OIA should set out clearly the issues that have been considered, the provider’s final decision and the deadline for bringing a complaint to the OIA. Below are the details required:

http://www.oiahe.org.uk / OIA, Second Floor, Abbey Gate, 57-75 Kings Road, Reading, RG1 3AB / Telephone: 0118 959 9813