

Complaints Policy and Procedure (April 2013)

Introduction

This document sets out the School of Natural Therapies Ltd (hereafter known as **the school**) complaints policy and procedure and is aimed primarily at our learners, although it may also be relevant to other interested parties who receive direct or indirect services from us.

The overarching aim of the school is to provide high quality and high integrity training in vocational qualifications, related to the massage and holistic therapies training industry and we value the opportunity to teach all students of the school to the highest standards.

If anything fell short of the level of teaching expected by our learners, we would be extremely disappointed and further, if expectations fell short owing to any degree of complaint, we feel it is important to investigate this in a timely fashion and address concerns thoroughly, so that we may learn lessons and make any relevant changes necessary to maintain the reputation and service level of the school and uphold the credibility of the relevant awarding body.

Scope

This policy encompasses complaints that learners, members of the public, or external agencies, eg Skills Funding Agency, OFSTED, qualifications regulator (Ofqual) as well as ITEC as an awarding body may wish to make, in relation to the services offered by the school.

If the complaint relates to the way in which an examination, assessment or records are kept, then the investigation may be conducted under our **malpractice and maladministration policy**, which is published on the school's website along with this policy/procedure, under the heading of **Policies and Procedures**

Schools Responsibilities

All staff involved in teaching or administration duties will be made aware of this policy and procedure and the appeals process in place, to deal with complaints in relation to the services of the school.

Review process

The school will also review this policy annually, from the date of publication of this document below, to take account of any complaints processes established by the regulators and any trends that may be emerge in relation to the subject matter of the complaints received.

How should I complain?

All complaints should ultimately be made directly to the school's administration office either by phone call, email, or in writing to:

Marc Innes – School Principal

The best form of contact will be by email:- admin@schoolofnaturaltherapies.co.uk

Alternative forms of contact may be made in writing, to the school's administration address, which will be provided on initial contact by email, or by telephone to the administration office: - **0203 544 6544**.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, we recognise however, that minor complaints or issues may be made at the time by learners, perhaps during or after teaching sessions, directly to the tutor(s) for example.

In such circumstances, tutors will make a note of the nature of the complaint and will make the administration office aware of the complaint at the first reasonable opportunity, if he/she is unable to deal with it at the time, or where it is more appropriate in their judgment to pass this complaint on to the Principal to deal with, or where class/teaching time does not permit.

If the complainer is unhappy with the response at the time of complaining, eg in class, or would prefer to make a complaint directly to the administration office, or where the tutor deems the matter more appropriate for the administration office to deal with, they will pass on the relevant contact details.

If learners, members of the public or other external agencies wish to complain directly to the schools administration office, all complaints should be made using the aforementioned contact details, between the hours of 09.30am until 5.30pm, Monday to Fridays.

What details will I need to give?

We would require the following information:-

- ✓ If relevant, copies of correspondence between the learner, external agency or member of the public and the school office or tutor(s)
- ✓ A statement of circumstances surrounding the complaint
- ✓ Written statements from any other learners or members of the public concerned.
- ✓ Any learning materials or correspondence relevant to the complaint/investigation
- ✓ Any other supporting documents deemed appropriate and relevant.

Confidentiality and whistle blowing

Occasionally, a complainant may wish to remain anonymous – this may be because they have concerns about possible adverse consequences. However, it is always preferable to disclose your identity and contact details to us where possible. For reassurance, we can confirm that the regulators do not oblige us to reveal the identity of a complainant and any request for us not to reveal a student's identity to a tutor for example, will be respected and upheld fully by the principle.

If a complainant against the school principal wishes to remain anonymous, or in instances where it is felt that a complaint has not been dealt with satisfactorily by the principal in the first instance, or the issue has not been fully resolved, complaints may be made directly to ITEC in exceptional circumstances. The contact details for complaints to ITEC under these circumstances are:

The Operations Manager
ITEC
2nd floor, Chiswick Gate
598-608 Chiswick High Road
London
W4 5RT

It should be reiterated that any attempt to resolve a written complaint should be dealt with in the first instance by the school principal.

Where all attempts to resolve the complaint using the schools process have been exhausted, complaints to ITEC are the next stage in the process and only under these exceptional circumstances should this course of action be taken.

Details of ITEC's own complaints procedure should be downloaded and read from the following link first, before submitting a complaint directly to them:-

<http://www.itecworld.co.uk/students/appealsandcomplaints.htm>

Investigation, timelines and summary processes

- ✓ We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint in writing, or by email within 48 hours – if a complaint is received over a weekend or bank-holiday period, the complaint will be acknowledged on the next working day.
- ✓ We aim to investigate the complaint and resolve it within 10 working days
- ✓ If the complaint is deemed 'complex' in nature, or where relevant individuals are unavailable, we may have to extend this period – in such instances we will inform you of the likely time-scale for this.
- ✓ If deemed appropriate, we may also recommend a meeting, in order to seek clarification, or more information.
- ✓ When we have investigated the complaint, we will write to you, or email you, advising you of our decision.

What happens if my complaint is upheld?

A number of things could happen as a result of our investigation, to ensure that such circumstances do not re-occur; this could include:-

- Reviewing our procedures
- Arranging further staff training
- In extreme circumstances, for example where staff conduct is deemed inappropriate, we may discipline the staff member concerned

NB: This is not an exhaustive list of possible actions.

What happens if I am not happy with the outcome of my complaint?

If you disagree with the outcome or decision made by the principal, you should contact the Operations Manager at ITEC, on the address details supplied above, who will contact the school to take the matter further.

If you are still unhappy with the decision or outcome taken by ITEC, then you can take the matter through the Appeal arrangements, outlined in the ITEC Appeals Policy on their website:-

<http://www.itecworld.co.uk/students/appealsandcomplaints.htm>

For any queries about the contents of this policy, please contact Marc Innes on 0203 544 6544