



Compliments, Complaints and Resolutions Policy & Procedure

Date for renewal/updates/review	March 2020
Named person responsible for monitoring	Headteacher
Agreed by Personnel Committee	N/A
Agreed by Governing Body	October 2017

Introduction

Our Governing Body has adopted this procedure to manage compliments, concerns or complaints from members of the school community or general public.

Aims and Objectives

- We wish to share positive feedback within our school community.
- We aim to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any matter and to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding.
- The school considers any concerns very seriously and we hope to resolve problems at a very early stage.
- Careful consideration will be given to all concerns and complaints and we will deal with them as swiftly as possible. We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed.
- In all cases we will put the interests of the child above all other issues.

Our procedure is underpinned by the following framework of principles: -

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
- be easily accessible and publicised
- be simple to use and understand
- be impartial
- be non-adversarial
- allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress
- ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary
- respect people's desire for confidentiality, wherever possible (some information sharing may be necessary to carry out a thorough investigation)
- address all points of issue, providing an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- provide information to the school's senior leadership team so that services can be improved.

Compliments

Parents/carers, students and members of the public are free to give feedback and nominate staff for:

- outstanding service
- compliment the school on an event or activity they are particularly pleased with.

Please email the School Office who will pass onto the relevant member of staff and the Headteacher.

Areas not covered by this procedure

This procedure does not apply to issues concerning the curriculum, collective worship, admissions, exclusion appeals, whistleblowing, decisions about your child's special educational needs, matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation, complaints about services provided by other providers who use the school premises/facilities or grievances by school staff. These are the subject of separate complaints procedures. Copies of these procedures can be obtained from the school.

In addition, Ofsted has the power to investigate certain (qualifying) complaints about schools, including those from parents/carers. A qualifying complaint is one that affects the whole school, not an individual. More information can be obtained from Ofsted.

All other complaints are handled by the school according to the arrangements set out below.

Stage 1 What to do if you have a concern.

If you have any concerns about the school, or the education we are providing at any time, please discuss the matter with your child's form/subject teacher, Academic Leader or Head of Department at the earliest opportunity. Do not publicise any concerns you have on social networking sites, but speak to someone at the school as soon as possible.

The school considers any concerns very seriously and most problems can be resolved following discussion and a shared understanding of the issues. All members of staff work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school and is making good progress and they always want to know if there is a problem so they can help to resolve it.

Most concerns can be resolved at this level, however, if after speaking to your child's form/subject teacher, Academic Leader or Head of Department, you are still concerned, please discuss the matter with the Headteacher.

Stage 2 What to do if your concern is not resolved at Stage 1 and is now a complaint

Most concerns are resolved at Stage 1, however if you remain dissatisfied and wish to take the matter further you will be asked to complete a complaint form (Annex 1).

Complaint Form

The aim of the form is to ensure each party has a clear and common understanding of the complaint and includes a section on what actions might resolve the problem at this stage. It can be used by anyone making a complaint about the operation of the school which is not covered by an alternative procedure.

We are happy to provide the assistance of someone unconnected with the complaint, if you would like support in completing the form.

The form (see Annex 1) should be returned to the Clerk to the Governing Body who will forward it to the Headteacher for action and to the Chair of Governors for information, unless the complaint concerns the Headteacher or a Governor, in which case the Clerk will forward the form only to the Chair of Governors.

You will receive an acknowledgement of the receipt of your complaint form within 5 working days. Working days are school working days. If school holidays intervene during the process then timescales may be longer.

Investigation

An investigation will be carried out into the complaint and the way it has been handled by the school. This will include a review of any relevant documentation and information and seeking

the views of relevant people, where necessary. The person undertaking the investigation will normally write to you with the outcome of this process within 15 working days of receiving the complaint.

If, at any time, it becomes apparent that the complaint is a staff disciplinary or capability issue, the matter will be dealt with by following the appropriate procedure rather than the complaints and resolution procedure. You will be notified if this is the case with your complaint, however, you are not entitled to know which procedure, or the final outcome, because of the right to confidentiality of the member of staff involved.

If, following the outcome of the investigation, you feel your complaint has not been resolved, you may choose to refer your complaint to Stage 3 of the procedure. This must be done in writing to the Clerk to the Governors within 15 working days of the completion of Stage 2.

Stage 3

At this stage the complaint will be considered by a panel of two governors and a person who is independent of the management and running of the school, who will meet to consider the complaint and make a final decision about it on behalf of the Governing Body.

The two Governors will have no detailed prior knowledge of the complaint, or connection with the complainant. The meeting will normally take place within 15 working days of your request.

You will have the opportunity to submit written evidence on the complaint prior to the meeting of the panel and also to attend, accompanied by a friend/partner if you wish, to put your case. Legal representation would not normally be appropriate. The Headteacher will be given the same opportunities. Annex 2 outlines the process that will be followed at a panel hearing.

Outcome of the Panel Hearing

The panel will write to you with its conclusion within 5 working days of the meeting, and its decision is final.

If you are still not satisfied, you may wish to put your complaint to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) by using the schools' complaint form. Links to further information and the form are below.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/557407/Complain_about_an_academy.pdf

https://form.education.gov.uk/submitform.php?self=1&form_id=cCCNJ1xSfBE&type=form&ShowMsg=1&form_name=Contact+the+Department+for+Education&noRegister=false&ret=%2Fmodule%2Fservices&noLoginPrompt=1

Unreasonably persistent complainants and unreasonable complainant behaviour

Unfortunately, in a minority of cases, people pursue their complaints in a way which can either impede the investigation of their complaint or can have significant resource issues for the school.

These actions can occur either while the complaint is being investigated, or once the school has concluded the complaint investigation.

In such cases, the school will observe the Department for Education's guidance on Serial and Persistent Complainants which is below.

The decision to stop responding will never be taken lightly.

A school needs to be able to say yes to all of the following:

- The school has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's needs;
- The complainant has been given a clear statement of the school's position and their options (if any);
- The complainant is contacting the school repeatedly but making substantially the same points each time.

The case is stronger if the school agrees with one or more of these statements:

- The school has reason to believe the individual is contacting them with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience - have they actually said as much in a letter, email or telephone call?
- The individual's letters/emails/telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive.
- The complaints make or include insulting personal comments about or threats towards staff.

The school will not should not stop responding just because an individual is difficult to deal with or asks complex questions. In most circumstances the school will only stop responding because the subject matter is offensive and/or not relevant to the initial complaint. The school has a legal obligation to provide parents with the information they are entitled to under The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005. However, where an individual's behaviour is causing a significant level of disruption the school may wish to implement a tailored communications strategy such as restricting the individual to a single point of contact via an email address or by limiting the number and frequency of contacts: e.g. a fixed number of contacts per term.

Complainants have a right to have any new complaint heard and failure to respond at all to a complainant could mean that the school is failing to comply with its legal obligations. The school will need to ensure that it is acting reasonably and that any genuine complaint can still be heard.

Complainants who may have been restricted in their communications with the school can also be advised to ask a third party to act on their behalf, such as the local Citizen's Advice Bureau. Ultimately, if a complainant persists to the point that the school considers it to constitute harassment, the school will seek legal advice as to the next steps. Exceptionally, injunctions and other court orders have been issued to complainants because of their behaviours.

Once a school has decided that it is appropriate to stop responding, it will need to let the complainant know; ideally, through a hard copy letter but an email will be sufficient.

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

Annex 2 - At the panel hearing

- After introductions, the complainant will be invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses (if any).
- The Headteacher/Chairman of Governors may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The Headteacher/Chairman of Governors is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses (if any).
- The complainant may question both the Headteacher/Chairman of Governors and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The panel may ask questions at any point.
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
- The Headteacher/Chairman of Governors is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
- The Chairman of the panel explains that both parties will hear from the panel within five working days.
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
- The Clerk remains to support the panel.