

Complaints Policy

History of document: To be reviewed annually and re-approved every two years, or sooner if deemed necessary.

Issue number	Author	Date written	Approved by Board	Comments
1	C Burt	September 2016	23/05/2017	

COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Trust aims to provide an outstanding service to the young people and families it serves. The Trust is committed to working in partnership with students and parents/carers to ensure it continues to improve and takes account of the views of all its stakeholders. However, parents/carers may have occasion to express concern or make a complaint. The purpose of this document is to outline how concerns and complaints should be resolved.

2. INFORMAL STAGE

- 2.1. Parents/Carers should feel free to raise their concerns with the Head of Year/Class Teacher or other appropriate member of staff either in person, by telephone or in writing.
- 2.2. The Trust and its Schools are committed to responding as quickly as possible to any issues raised i.e. staff will listen to parents' concerns and seek to reach a speedy and satisfactory resolution.
- 2.3. **Complainants will, where possible, receive a response to their concern within 3 school days.** If it is not possible to meet this deadline they will be informed of when a response will be made.
- 2.4. If, after attempting to resolve the issue informally, a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome they will be provided with information about the formal complaints procedure (go to stage 1).
- 2.5. **Exceptions** – Any complaint which involves a claim for compensation or an allegation of misconduct about a particular member of staff should be put in writing to the Headteacher. A complaint about the conduct of the Headteacher should be made in writing to the Chair of the Local Governing Body. The Local Governing Body should consider appointing a designated governor to investigate the complaint.
- 2.6. A written record will be made of informal complaints received and any action taken. A copy of the relevant form is attached to this policy. Completed forms will be stored in a file.

3. FORMAL STAGE 1: HEADTEACHER

- 3.1. The complaint should be put in writing to the Headteacher.
- 3.2. **Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged within 3 school days** and will specify how the complaint will be investigated, by whom and the timescale within which a full response will be made.

- 3.3. The Investigating officer will ensure that a full response is made within **10** school days. If the timescale needs to be extended, parents/carers will be informed.
- 3.4. The Headteacher should nominate a senior member of staff, who has had no prior involvement with the complaint, to investigate. This allows the Headteacher to retain a degree of detachment and independence from the complaint.
- 3.5. During the investigation the Headteacher, or nominated person, may contact the complainant to clarify the details of the complaint and speak to other persons as necessary.
- 3.6. A Complainant will be allowed the opportunity to meet with the investigating officer and to be accompanied by a friend or relative to speak on their behalf or help them make their case.
- 3.7. The Headteacher, or nominated person investigating the complaint, will interview relevant witnesses and take statements from those involved.
- 3.8. If the complaint involves a pupil, he/she should also be interviewed, normally with a parent/carer present. In some cases, this might not be possible and a member of staff with whom the pupil feels comfortable should attend the interview.
- 3.9. The investigating officer should keep written records of all meetings and telephone conversations undertaken as part of the investigation together with any other relevant documentation.
- 3.10. A full written response will be made to the complainant who may be offered a further meeting to explain how the investigation was carried out and how decisions were reached.
- 3.11. The complainant will be advised that if they are dissatisfied with the outcome they may refer the matter to the Local Governing Body (go to stage 2). This should be done by writing to the Chair of the Local Governing Body within **10** school days of receipt of the letter from the Headteacher.

4. FORMAL STAGE 2: APPEAL TO PANEL OF LOCAL GOVERNORS

- 4.1. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of stage 1 there will be a further and final right of appeal to a specially convened panel of governors.
- 4.2. Appeals should be lodged with the Chair of Local Governors within **10** school days of receipt of the Stage 1 decision.
- 4.3. The panel will meet within **20** school days of receiving the complaint and the complainant and the Headteacher will be informed of the date, time and venue of the hearing.
- 4.4. The complainant will receive, at least five days before the panel meets, a written reply from the investigating officer explaining how the decision at Stage 1 had been made.
- 4.5. The panel will comprise of at least **2** governors **who have had no previous knowledge of or involvement in the case and an additional independent person**. The panel should not include teaching or staff

- governors. The panel must make provision to include one person who is independent of the management and running of the school.
- 4.6. The panel will appoint its own chair, normally the Chair or Vice-chair of the Local Governing Body. The Chair of the panel will ensure that the appeal hearing is minuted.
 - 4.7. The panel will consider the way the complaint has been investigated and handled by the school. The panel will carry out a review of the investigation carried out at Formal Stage 1. It will hear the report of the investigating officer at formal Stage 1 and any submissions on that report by the complainant. The review should not entail a rehearing of the case.
 - 4.8. It will be open to the governors to uphold the complaint and/or direct a different remedy to that decided upon by the investigating officer at stage 1.
 - 4.9. The complainant may be accompanied by a friend or relative to speak on their behalf or help present their case.
 - 4.10. The decision of the panel is final and will be communicated in writing to the complainant and the Headteacher within **3** school days.
 - 4.13. A further stage of appeal can be taken to the Secretary of State at the DFE, but only on the grounds that the governing body is acting or proposing to act unreasonably or illegally.

Notes:

Anonymous complaints – Will be investigated but only insofar as it is possible and practicable.

Persistent complainants and vexatious actions – complaints will be thoroughly investigated but will not be re-opened unless relevant new issues are brought forward, in which case these will be investigated in accordance with the Complaints Procedure.