

Complaints Procedure

June 2014

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CONTENTS:

ACE @ The Hub Complaints Procedure:

1. Framework of Principles:
2. Definition of complaint
3. Definition of complainant
4. Types of complaints
 - a - Statutory/established procedures
 - b- Complaints not covered by established or statutory procedures- 3 stages.
5. Timescales - 3 stages
6. Further Stages
7. Complaint Form



The Management Committee and the Head are committed to providing the best educational experience they can for all pupils attending this school. They recognise the value to all concerned of dealing fairly, speedily and effectively with any complaint against their decisions, actions or omissions, which a pupil or parent or other aggrieved person may have. To this end, they have adopted the underlying principles and procedures set out in this document.

1. Framework of Principles:

Our complaints procedure:

- encourages resolution of problems by **informal** means wherever possible;
- is easily **accessible** and **publicised**;
- is **simple** to understand and use;
- is **impartial**;
- is **non-adversarial**;
- allows **swift** handling with established **time-limits** for action and keeping people informed of the progress;
- ensures a full and **fair** investigation by an independent person where necessary;
- respects people's desire for **confidentiality**;
- addresses all the issues and provide an **effective** response and **appropriate** redress, where necessary;
- provides **information** to the Management Committee so that services can be improved.

2. Definition of complaint:

A school complaint is any communication received by a person or persons with a legitimate interest in the school, but not employed at the school, which expresses dissatisfaction about the standard of teaching of members of the teaching staff, or about the conduct, actions or omissions of members of the teaching or non-teaching staff employed at the school.

3. Definition of a complainant:

A complainant is someone:

- who allegedly has been wronged
- whose child(ren) has been wronged (i.e. parent or carers or other person with parental responsibility or
- someone representing a person in one of the above groups, for example a Councillor.

Where a complainant is a pupil under the age of 18 years, the complaint may be pursued only by, or on behalf of, the child's parent or carer. Where someone other than a pupil or a parent/carers is pursuing a complaint on his or her behalf, this can be done only with the express consent of the pupil or parent concerned.

4. Types of complaints:

a- Statutory/established procedures;

Where there are established or statutory or other procedures for dealing with complaints, those will be followed. Areas to which this applies include:

- admissions to schools
- exclusions
- special education provision
- school re-organisation
- matters concerning the curriculum under Section 19 and 23 of the Education Reform Act 1988
- complaints by school staff or prospective staff
- child protection
- public examinations
- school records on individual pupils

b- Complaints not covered by established or statutory procedures

Stage 1 - Informal Stage:

All complaints, however received, should be reported to an appropriate member of staff to resolve the matter. That member of staff will have a duty to inform the head if any issue is not resolved after discussion with the complainant. Parents / carers should be encouraged to settle the matter with the head, teacher or designated staff member. The majority of straightforward complaints and problems are likely to be resolved at this point.

Stage 2 – Head:

The second stage is where the parent/carer is not satisfied with the informal response. They should be advised to take up the matter in writing with the Head. If the Head undertakes the investigation at stage 2, they will be exempt from sitting on any complaints committee convened to hear a complaint escalated to stage 3. The outcome at this stage may be:

- no further action, with reasons given
- action within the head of school's own powers
- referral to the Management Committee for consideration.

Stage 3 - The Management Committee:

The third stage will be where the parent/carer is not satisfied with the outcome of the stage 2 investigations and response. They should be advised to put their concerns in writing to the clerk to the Management Committee for consideration. The Management Committee would meet within 10 working days of the complaint being received by the clerk.

A panel of three members with *delegated powers* would convene to hear the complaint at a meeting attended by the complainant, the Headteacher and witnesses. Written evidence is submitted in advance to all parties and verbal evidence given at the hearing. The board's decision is final will be notified to all parties as soon as possible after the meeting. The outcome will be one of the following:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

5. Timescales:

The following limits should apply to all complaints handled under the schools complaints procedure:

Stage 1: It is reasonable that parents/carers seeking to resolve matters of concern to them should receive a response within **15 working days** of making initial contact, unless there is a good reason not to do so. The response should offer the complainant a full explanation or set out the steps that are proposed to resolve the complaint.

Stage 2: **Should be responded to within 15 working days from receipt of complaint escalation.**

Stage 3: **Should be responded to within 20 working days from receipt of complaint escalation.**

The longer time limit for Stage 3 reflects the fact that these complaints may be complex and therefore likely to take longer to resolve. Where it is not possible to respond to complaints within these timescales, the complainant should be informed in writing of the reason for the delay and given an anticipated response date.

6. Further Stages:

Following the Management Committee's review of the complaint at stage three, it is open to the complainant to pursue their complaint with the Secretary of State for Education via the EFA (Education Funding Agency). The Management Committee will give full consideration to any recommendations or directions the EFA may make. The complainant will be advised of this course of action should they remain dissatisfied with a decision made by the Management Committee.

ACE @ The Hub Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Head who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give details of your complaint.

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.
(Who did you speak to and what was the response)?

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 who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: