

Academy Complaints Procedure

Certain types of complaint are subject to statutory procedures that are separate from this general complaints procedure. These include: Admissions; Exclusions; Freedom of Information & Data Protection; Child Protection/Safeguarding; Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN); Complaint by a member of school staff.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with any relevant Home/School Agreement and the DfE Guidance: Academy Complaint Procedure.

Introduction

The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or students, are concerns rather than complaints. At each Trust school we are committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish or be asked to follow the formal Complaints Procedure of the school concerned.

We try to make it easy as possible for parents to contact us to raise a concern via the school email address, the "Contact" tab on the web site, by telephone, or letter. It is therefore extremely rare for us not to be able to resolve issues.

The prime aim of our policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. If a formal complaint is made, it will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner.

The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints:

The Trust's Policy has four main stages.

- Stage 1 – A concern is raised with a staff member.
- Stage 2 – Complainant contacts the Headteacher.
- Stage 3 – Complainant contacts the Chair of Governors
- Stage 4 – Complainant refers matter to Governors Complaints Review Panel via the Clerk to the Governing Body.

Stage 1 – Raising a concern

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which resolves the concern. Parents should make their first contact with the pupil's year tutor. They will forward any concern they cannot help with to the relevant teacher or member of the senior leadership team.

On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an informal but informed response within five school days. The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at Stage 1, you may wish to take it to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Complainant contacts the Headteacher

A complaint at Stage 2 should be put in writing (letter or email) and addressed to the Headteacher. The school will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within three school working days of receiving it. The Headteacher, or a designated Senior Teacher, will investigate and arrange to discuss the complaint. This meeting will normally take place within 10 school working days. The aim will be to resolve the matter as speedily as possible.

Should your complaint not be resolved, you should inform the school that you wish to proceed to Stage 3.

Stage 3 – Complainant contacts the Chair of Governors in writing

The Chair of Governors will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within three school days. The Chair will then meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint, and then will investigate and respond within 10 school days.

Should your complaint still not be resolved, you should inform the school that you wish to proceed to Stage 4 and wish the complaint to be heard by a panel of Governors.

Stage 4 – Complaint heard by a panel of school governors

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 3, then you will need to write to the Chair of Governors outlining a desire to take the complaint to Stage 4.

As it is extremely rare that a complaint reaches Stage 4, detailed information will be given to parents if this should occur. This will include the details of the independent member who will sit on the panel.

The Governors' Appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process. If the matter is still not resolved at Stage 4 the final course of action available is to either:

- a) refer the matter to the DfE by writing to the Education Funding Agency, c/o Academies Central Unit, Education Funding Agency, Earlsdon Park, 53-55 Butts Road, Coventry, CV1 3BH (e-mail: academyquestions@efa.education.gov.uk)
- b) for complaints regarding admissions appeals, write to the same address/e-mail.