

Complaints Policy



Approved by :	A H Malek
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Updated :	March 2024
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Next review due by:	September 2024
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AIM

To establish fair and consistent procedures to deal with complaints relating to the school, and any community facilities or services it provides, as required by Section 29 of the Education Act 2002.

The following complaint procedure must be followed by the parents in case of any complaint arises.

1. Speak to the Head teacher on an informal basis and he should aim to resolve the complaint within five working days, however depending on the nature of the complaint this may vary..
2. Not satisfied – Put the complaint in writing to the Head Teacher, who will commence the investigation and respond to acknowledge the complaint; inform the complainant when the investigation will end and when a written response will be provided. Dependent on the nature of the complaint the timing will vary. A response will always be provided within fifteen working days of the complaint being made.
3. Still unsatisfied- Write to Trustees and they will arrange a panel hearing. The matter should be resolved within ten working days from the receipt of the letter/email.

Note: The panel will include three people who have not been involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of them will be independent of the management and running of the school.

Parents can bring a relative or a friend for panel hearing.

4. The panel can make recommendations and copies of the finding should be provided to the Complainant, Trustees, Head Teacher and where appropriate to the person complained about.

Note: All the correspondence, statements and records of the complaints will be kept confidential.

Written records of all complaints will be kept stating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or preceded to a panel hearing.

GUIDELINES

1. As a school, we encourage dialogue between parents, staff and trustees. Whilst this formal procedure is required, it is not intended to cover the normal process of dialogue with parents and pupils, including the expression of negative comments about aspects of the school, and we hope that people will normally use these informal approaches to the school.
2. The formal procedure is not meant to cover cases where parents are concerned about developments, and just want teachers or others to keep an eye out for problems: for example, if a parent is concerned that their child is having difficulties in a subject, or there seems to be some aggravation between their child and another student. Such issues should be dealt with more informally. We would

expect that the vast majority of complaints are resolved at this stage. Parents are encouraged to take issues to their child's class teacher in the first instance.

3. This complaints procedure is for use when someone has either come to an impasse in the process of dialogue, or they feel that a more formal complaint is appropriate.

STAGE 1 - INFORMAL COMPLAINTS

4. Any complaints received by Reception staff will be forwarded to the appropriate member of staff and the person expressing the complaint will be advised who is dealing with the matter.
5. The relevant member of staff will, wherever possible, telephone or write to the person making the complaint within 5 working days, either to discuss the matter or to assure them that the matter is in hand.
6. The school will respect the views of a complainant who indicates that s/he would have difficulty discussing a complaint with a particular member of staff. In such cases, the complaint will be referred to another staff member.
7. Should a member of staff be unable to deal with a complaint, it will be referred to the relevant line manager.
8. If the complaint progresses to the appropriate member of the Leadership Team and still cannot be resolved informally, the complainant will be invited to make a formal complaint, as in Stage 2 below.
9. Where the first approach is made to a Trustee, the trustee will refer the complainant to the appropriate person and advise them about the procedure. Trustees will not act unilaterally on an individual complaint outside the formal procedure or be involved at the early stages in case they are needed to sit on a panel at a later stage of the procedure.

STAGE 2 – FORMAL COMPLAINT

10. Formal complaints should be made on the Complaints Form, available from the school office or by sending an email and/or writing a letter to the school address.
11. Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the Head Teacher (or a member of the SLT, in the Head Teacher's absence) will normally ask another senior member of staff to investigate the matter and provide them with all relevant information.
12. The Head Teacher will inform the complainant that the complaint has been received and indicate the nature and timescale of any investigation and conclusion, which will normally be within 10 working days.
13. After considering all the available information, the Head Teacher will inform the complainant of the outcome of the complaint.
14. If the complainant is still dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further, s/he will be advised of the right to refer the complaint to the Trustees.

STAGE 3 – COMPLAINT HEARD BY TRUSTEES' COMPLAINTS PANEL

15. The complainant should make a formal complaint in writing to the Chair of Trustees. The Chair, or a nominated trustee, will convene a

complaints panel, consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The panel hearing will be convened within 10 working days of receiving the complaint. The school ensures that, where there is a panel hearing of the complaint, one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school. This process allows for a parent to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish.

16. The Trustees' appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process, and is not confined to merely rubber-stamping previous decisions.

17. The policy provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is—

- sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
- available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher;

18. Individual complaints should not be heard by the whole Governing Body at any stage, as this could compromise the impartiality of any panel set up for a disciplinary hearing against a member of staff following a serious complaint.

MONITORING

All complaints will be reported to the Governing Body and written records kept. They will be reviewed annually, so that potential problems and issues can be identified. Other appropriate policies may need to be reviewed, in light of the outcome.

