

## Stage 1: Make concerns known to a Staff Member:

It is in everyone's best interest to resolve any complaints at the earliest possible stage. Any concerns must first be made to an appropriate member of staff within 1 school day of the cause for the concern being raised. This could be a Class Teacher, Teaching Assistant or School Secretary. This member of staff will do their best to resolve this concern by the end of the day. However, if it is not, or cannot be satisfactorily resolved by this member of Staff, please move on to the next step.



## Stage 2: Make concerns known to the Head teacher

If the member of Staff involved in stage one could not resolve your concern, or handled the matter in a way that dissatisfied you, you can make your complaint known to the Head teacher. This could be in writing or in a meeting with the Head teacher, but you should be prepared to give the following information:

- ❖ The details concerning the complaint
- ❖ What outcome you would reasonably like to see from making the complaint

If you intend to take the complaint to this stage, you must do so within 3 days of the cause of the complaint, unless there are reasonable extenuating circumstances as to why there was a delay in reporting the complaint. The Head teacher may delegate the task of collating information to another member of staff but will make the final decision on the outcome of the complaint at this stage. The Head teacher will make their decision as expediently as possible; however, if collating information takes longer than 10 school days, the Head teacher will inform you of the delay and discuss a reasonable time frame within which to decide.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of making a complaint to the Head teacher, please move on to the next step



## Stage 3: Write to the Chair of Governors

If the Head teacher could not, or did not, resolve your complaint to your satisfaction or if your complaint is about the Head teacher, you can write a letter to the Chair of Governors, detailing the complaint made and requesting that your complaint is considered further. If your complaint is about the Chair of Governors, or any other Governor, the complaint must be addressed to the Clerk of Governors, who will advise you how to proceed. Unless there is a reasonable reason as to why you delayed in implementing this stage, you must write to the Chair of Governors within 3 days of receiving the Head teacher's decision at Stage 2.

The Chair of Governors will review and determine an outcome as quickly as they are able to; however, if the reviewing of the information and collating of their own information takes in excess of 10 school days, the Chair of Governors will write to you informing of the delay and the causes of it.

If the Chair of Governors does not resolve your complaint to your satisfaction, you have the right to request that a Complaints Appeals Panel reviews your complaint



## Stage 4: Complaint is heard by the Governing Body Complaint's Appeal Panel

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the previous stages, you have the right to request that the Complaints Appeals Panel considers your complaint. To request this, you must write to the Clerk of Governors requesting that your complaint is put before the Panel: You must give details of the complaint and a reasonable resolution you find acceptable. The Vice Chair of Governors, or another nominated Governor if the Vice Chair has been involved in any of the previous stages, will then convene the panel in line with the Governing Body's Terms of Reference.

The Complaints Appeal Panel has the authority to:

- ❖ 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 systems or procedures to ensure a similar situation does not arise

If possible, the Complaints Appeals Panel must be called to meet within 10 school days of receiving your request. However, if this is not possible, a later date can be determined to take place within the next 5 school days. Once your complaint is heard, the Complaints Panel must inform you of their decision, or the reasons as to why a decision has not yet been made within 5 school days.

Your complaint will never be heard by the whole Governing Body because this may compromise the impartiality of any disciplinary panel that may need to be convened following a serious complaint.

## **Time Limits and Cut Off Points**

It is important that any issue causing complaints or concerns is resolved quickly to prevent the issue arising again. To ensure that all complaints can be dealt with in a timely and accurate manner, please adhere to the time limits set in the complaints procedure above. As a general rule, if a complaint is registered with us outside of the time limits specified, the school will not investigate your individual complaint. We do, however, accept that there are reasons as to why a complaint could not be progressed through the stages within the prescribed time limits, e.g. so that complainants can gather evidence to support their complaint. In which case, the school will consider such situations on an ad hoc basis.

## **How can Complaints be Made?**

A complaint may be made in person, by telephone, or in writing directly to the school. An example of a complaint form can be found at the end of this policy. It is never acceptable for comments about the school to be posted on social media site and complaints cannot be made to the school via the use of social media, even if the school is made aware of any comments posted online.

Stage 4 is the final stage through which to progress complaints within the school. **Once the complaint has been considered at each stage, the school will not reconsider the same complaint at any stage and you will be informed of this once in writing by the Chair of Governors.** If you do not feel that your complaint has been dealt with to your satisfaction, you have the option to progress the complaint to outside agencies. If you have a different complaint or concern, you can begin the procedure again.

Since the implementation of the Education Act 2011, you no longer have to make a complaint to the Local Authority before making a complaint to the Department for Education. Complainants should be advised to write to The School Complaints Unit (SCU) at:

Department for Education  
2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

Anyone can complain to the Secretary of State for Education if they believe that a governing body is acting unreasonably or is failing to carry out its duties properly. If the Secretary of State agrees the governing body can be directed to act appropriately, this may be legally enforced. Parents may use the complaints procedure if they believe that either the LA or the governing body is failing:

- ❖ To provide the National Curriculum in the school or for a particular child.
- ❖ To follow the law on charging for school activities.
- ❖ To offer only approved qualifications or syllabuses.
- ❖ To provide religious education and daily collective worship.
- ❖ To provide the information that they have to provide.
- ❖ To carry out any other statutory duty relating to the curriculum; or
- ❖ Are acting unreasonably in any of the above cases.

## **What will the Department for Education do?**

If a complaint has exhausted the local procedures, SCU will examine if the complaints policy and any other relevant policies were followed in accordance with the provisions set out. SCU also examines policies to determine if they adhere to education legislation. However, the department will not re-investigate the substance of the complaint. This remains the responsibility of schools.

If legislative or policy breaches are found, SCU will report them to the school and the complainant and, where necessary, require remedial action to be taken. Failure to carry out remedial actions could ultimately result in a formal Direction being issued by the Secretary of State.

### Example of a Complaint Form

Please complete and return to Carly Marsden (complaints co-ordinator) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

<b>Your name:</b>	
<b>Pupil's name (if relevant):</b>	
<b>Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Postcode:</b>	
<b>Day time telephone number:</b>	
<b>Evening telephone number:</b>	
<b>Please give details of your complaint.</b>	
<b>What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak to and what was the response)?</b>	