Complaints Policy

GENERAL SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

1. This document sets out a way that general school complaints can be managed informally and, if necessary, via a formal procedure. The education of the students who attend the school is very important. The school is a part of the community, and the action of the individuals who work in it, is open to comment. These concerns are either sorted out informally, often as a result of discussion, or become formal complaints.

2. This document also provides information on how other specific types of complaints may be progressed.

Which complaints are covered by the General School Complaints Procedure?

1. Most matters to do with the management of the school are the responsibility of the School Management Body (e.g. how children are taught and the behaviour of staff). It is appropriate for these issues to be resolved in school and/or by the School Management Body.

2. A general school complaints procedure **only** applies to complaints that are the responsibility of the School Management Body and are **not** covered by other separate procedures.

Quick, Efficient, Full and Fair Consideration

1. All complaints will be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible. The period of consideration will vary with the gravity and complexity of the complaint and the urgency with which it needs to be settled.

How does listening to a concern affect the role of a Management Body?

1. Although Management body will wish to be helpful, reassuring any concerned parent that an issue will be handled timely, taking part in such discussions can delay the process. Management body are, therefore, advised to either:

   (a) make this difficulty known and refer the parent to the Headteacher; or

   (b) listen in order to help resolve the concern.

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Who will deal with your complaint?

- **Stage 1 - First Contact - Informal Stage**

1. Parents should be provided with an opportunity to discuss any concern with the appropriate member of staff. The member of staff should try and clarify with the parent the nature of their concern and assure them that the school wants to listen and resolve their concerns. In response the member of staff may explain to the parent how the situation happened. It can be helpful to identify at this point what sort of outcome the parent is looking for.

2. If the member of staff first contacted cannot immediately deal with the matter they should note the details of the concern and refer it to the appropriate person e.g. SLT or Headteacher

3. The member of staff dealing with the concern should ensure that the parent clearly understands:

    - what action has been agreed;

    - when they may be provided with a response if one cannot be provided immediately. (Other than in exceptional circumstances a response should be provided within 10 school days);

4. The member of staff should also arrange for the matter to be put in writing if this seems the best way of making things clear.

5. If the parent is not satisfied with the response they should request that their concerns be referred to the Headteacher (if they have not already dealt with the issue). The Headteacher will seek any necessary clarification of the concerns including interviewing the parents where this would be helpful. The Headteacher will advise the parents of the outcome of their consideration. Other than in exceptional circumstances the Headteacher should provide a response to the parent within 10 school days of them requesting the involvement of the Headteacher.

6. The parents should be made aware of the procedure for considering their concerns further if they are not satisfied after this informal stage has been completed.

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- **Stage 2 - Formal Consideration**

1. Where a parent has made an approach to the school through the informal stage and is not satisfied with the outcome, they should write to the Headteacher giving details of their concerns and asking for the matter to be given further consideration.

2. Such letters can be a simple statement.

3. All complaints reaching this stage will be logged and acknowledged immediately by the school and copied to the Clerk to the Management Body for information.

4. The Headteacher will seek any clarification necessary about the complaint, including interviewing the parent where necessary.

5. The Headteacher may also seek any necessary advice on the matter.

6. Other than in exceptional circumstances the parent will receive a written response from the Headteacher, within 10 school days of receipt of their letter, clarifying their concern.

7. Where a parent is not satisfied with the outcome of this formal stage, they have 5 school days, from the date of the Headteacher's letter, to register the complaint with the Management Body of the School.

- **Stage 3 - Appeal - Referral to the Management Body**

1. Where a parent has made an approach to the school through the formal stage and is not satisfied with the outcome, they should write to the Clerk of the Management body giving details of their concerns and asking for an appeal against the decision or action taken by the Headteacher.

2. The Management Body of the school will only hear appeals that have already progressed through stages 1 and 2 of this procedure.

3. On receipt of a written request for an appeal from a parent, the Clerk to the Management Body will;

   - immediately log and acknowledge receipt of the appeal;
   - check that the complaint has already completed Stages 1 and 2;

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- check that the 5 school day period since Stage 2 was complied with;
- seek any clarification necessary about the nature of the complaint and/or the appeal;
- arrange for the Management Body to consider the appeal as soon as it is practical to do so and, other than in exceptional circumstances, within 10 school days of receipt of the letter requesting an appeal; and
- invite the parent and any representative to the meeting.
- Full written records of the complaints will be kept. Copy of any findings/recommendations will be available to the relevant persons.

4. A Committee of the 3 independent people, none of whom will have any involvement within the complaint and one who is independent of the Management Body will consider the appeal, with the parent and their representative, who will be given an opportunity to address them. The Headteacher will also be given an opportunity to address the Management Body. A detailed procedure covering the conduct of this meeting is attached.

5. The Clerk to the Management Body will notify in writing the outcome of the appeal to the parent and Headteacher within 5 school days.

6. The independent panel will provide the School Proprietor with a copy of investigation or recommendations.

7. All complaints, decisions and their outcomes will be kept confidential other than from Inspectors from the Department of Education.

This concludes the process for considering a general complaint.

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Flow Chart: Stages for Handling Complaints

STAGE ONE: INFORMAL

Expression of concern to member of staff

⇩

Satisfactory outcome reached?

⇩ ⇩

No Yes ⇨ **No further action**

⇩

Refer to Principal

⇩

Satisfactory outcome reached?

⇩ ⇩

No Yes ⇨ **No further action**

⇩

Response provided to parents normally within 10 school days.

STAGE TWO: FORMAL CONSIDERATION

Complainant makes written complaint to Principal

⇩

Investigation conducted and reported to complainant

⇩

Satisfactory outcome reached?

⇩ ⇩

No Yes ⇨ **No further action**

⇩

Response provided to parents normally within 10 school days

STAGE THREE: APPEAL TO THE MANAGEMENT BODY

Complainant asks for an appeal, against the decision of the Principal, to Management Body within 5 school days via Clerk to Management Body

⇩

Appeal - Management Body Meeting
Complainant and Principal attend

⇩

Parents and Principal notified of outcome within 5 school days.

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STAGE 3 - APPEAL TO THE MANAGEMENT BODY

SUGGESTED PROCEDURE FOR A MANAGEMENT BODY

MEETING DEALING WITH A FORMAL

PARENTAL COMPLAINT

1 The Chair opens the meeting explaining that the purpose of the meeting is to hear the appeal of the parent against the decision taken by the Headteacher to resolve the parental complaint. Both the Headteacher and parent are present until item 8 of this procedure.

2 The parent presents his/her case stating the issues clearly.

3 Management Body, Headteacher, and any representative have an opportunity to ask questions of the parent seeking clarification.

4 The Headteacher provides details of how the concerns have been handled and details of any action taken.

5 The parents, Management Body and any representative have an opportunity to ask questions of the Headteacher.

6 The Headteacher summarises his statement.

7 The parent summarises his/her statement.

8 The Headteacher and parent leave to allow the Committee to consider the concerns, if appropriate.

9 The Clerk to the Management Body will confirm to the Headteacher and parent, in writing, the Committee's decision (usually within 5 calendar days of the meeting).

Note: If the parents or the Headteacher feel that discussing the appeal collectively (face to face) may not be the best approach in such matter, then the Management Body can be requested to meet the Headteacher and parents separately. In such instance, items 3 & 5 above will not take place. A decision will be made by the Management Body after individual discussions and any written statements.

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Complaints against the Headteacher or the Child Protection Officer

If any allegations are towards the Headteacher or Child Protection Officer, then the enquiries must be carried out by the Chair of Governors, Trustees and the Proprietor accordingly and contact relevant departments.

Number of complaints registered during **academic year 2025-2026**:

0

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