



ACADEMY COMPLAINTS POLICY

This policy applies to any matter (other than matters relating to admissions and exclusions which have their own processes) which has been raised with the Academy as a matter of concern but which has not been capable of resolution informally and which the complainant or the Academy consider should be dealt with on a formal basis. The Academy will publish guidance on how matters of concern should be raised on an informal basis. Generally, it is expected that where the matter relates to a student it will have been raised with the student's Form Tutor and Head of Year before a request is made to deal with it under this policy.

It is a precondition to the operation of this policy that the complainant shall have made reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution and shall have acted in relation to the matter in a reasonable and measured way consistent with the Academy's Behaviour Code adopted from time to time. The Chair of Governors shall have a discretion, which will be exercised reasonably, not to allow a complaint to be pursued where this precondition has not been met.

If at any stage of the complaints process the Governors in their absolute discretion which is not to be exercised unreasonably consider that a complaint is or has become vexatious the complainant will be advised that the Academy will not correspond on the matter further.

The first stage of the formal procedure will be as follows:-

1. The complainant must put the complaint in writing, addressed to the Headteacher, setting out briefly the facts and stating what it is that the complainant considers should have been done or where the Academy has not met reasonable expectations.
2. An investigation will be carried out by a member of the Senior Leadership Team - made up of the Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher and the Assistant Headteachers - who will offer the complainant a meeting and who will speak to others involved. Whenever reasonably possible, the meeting with the complainant will take place within 15 school days of the written complaint being received
3. The investigator will put her/his findings in writing and will indicate what, if any, steps should be taken to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done within 15 school days of the meeting with the complainant.

Any complaint relating to the Headteacher must be raised in the first instance with the Chair of Governors (or Vice-chair in the absence of the Chair) who will, if an informal resolution cannot be reached, designate a Governor to investigate in the same way as in the first stage of the formal process outlined above.

The second stage of the formal procedure (if required) will be as follows:-

1. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the investigator, she/he may request that the complaint be considered by the Complaints Panel of the Governing Body which will comprise at least 3 people and which will include one person who is independent of the management and running of the Academy. That request must be in writing, addressed to the Clerk to the Governors at the Academy, within 10 school days of the response being sent to the complainant and must set out briefly the reasons why the complainant is dissatisfied with the response.

Responsible Committee: Resources Committee
Date Last Reviewed: November 2016
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2. The Clerk will invite the Academy to put in writing its response to the complainant's reasons. The Academy will do this within 15 school days and at the end of that period (whether or not the Academy has responded) the Clerk will convene a meeting of the Complaints Panel of the Governing Body. That meeting will be held as quickly as practicable given the need to find a date that is reasonably convenient for the complainant, the Academy and the members of the Panel. Whenever possible, the meeting will be held within 15 school days of the end of the Academy's response time. At any meeting, the complainant will be entitled to be accompanied by a friend but legal representation will not be allowed.
3. The meeting is not a court case and will be as informal as circumstances allow. The complainant will have the opportunity to put her/his reasons for dissatisfaction and to enlarge on them but may not introduce reasons that were not previously put in writing. The Academy will have the opportunity to put its side of things and each side, as well as the Panel members, will be able to ask questions. The complainant will have the opportunity to make final comments to the Panel.
4. The Panel may make findings and recommendations and a copy of those findings and recommendations will be:
 - (i) sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
 - (ii) available for inspection on the Academy premises by the Academy Trust and the Principal.
5. The Panel will formulate its response as quickly as reasonably possible, aiming to do so within 10 school days, and the Clerk to the Governors will notify all concerned.
6. A written record of all formal complaints and their outcomes (including at what stage they were resolved) will be kept and reviewed at least annually by the Headteacher.
7. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.