



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

General Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This procedure has been adopted by the Governing Body to deal with complaints relating to the school except for those issues which are covered by other formal procedures.
- 1.2 Ideally, the Governing Body would wish the business of the school to proceed without any situations occurring which might form the subject of a complaint, but it recognises that such situations may well arise from time to time. When this occurs the following procedures will be followed.
- 1.3 At each stage of this procedure, the complaint will normally be dealt with
- 1.4 Within 20 school days. If there are likely to be any substantial delays in resolving the complaint, the complainant will be informed of the development.

2. Stage one. Informal Stage

- 2.1 If at all possible the Governing Body would wish issues to be resolved informally and at the earliest possible stage. It would therefore encourage complainants to raise issues informally with staff at the school by contacting an appropriate person. This might involve contacting, for example, a Class Teacher, Form Tutor or Student Progress Leader, or might be discussed at a parents evening.
- 2.2 If the complainant is unable to resolve the matter at the informal stage, or considers the matter to be too serious for the informal stage, then should refer their complaint to the Head Teacher under Stage Two.

3. Stage Two. Formal Complaint Heard by Head Teacher

- 3.1 A formal complaint referred to the Head teacher should normally be made in writing.
- 3.2 The Head teacher will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and arrange for an appropriate investigation to be undertaken. This may be carried out by the Head or may be delegated to another senior member of staff.
- 3.3 The investigation will be conducted as soon as reasonably practicable. If there are likely to be any substantial delays, the Head or the delegated staff member will inform the complainant of progress. The investigation will be conducted with a view to establishing all relevant information; will be non-adversarial; and will be impartial.

This process is likely to include giving the complainant an opportunity to discuss their complaint with the Head or the investigating member of staff.

- 3.4 At the conclusion of the investigation, if it has been conducted by an investigating member of staff, the investigator may make recommendations to the Head teacher.
- 3.5 The Head teacher will decide what action is appropriate and will notify the complainant of their decision. The decision will normally be notified to the complainant in writing. If the Head teacher is unable to inform the complainant of some aspects of the proposed action because, for example, there is a requirement of confidentiality, the Head will explain the situation to the complainant.
- 3.6 If the complainant remains dissatisfied after stages one and two, or if the complaint involves the Head teacher, they should refer their complaint to the Chair of the Governors. This may include any dissatisfaction about the manner in which the complaint has been addressed at stages one and/or two.

4. Stage Three. Complaint Heard by the Governing Body

- 4.1 A formal complaint referred to the Chair of the governors should normally be made in writing.
- 4.2 The Governing Body will establish a Complaints Panel, usually of three governors, who will investigate the complaint.
- 4.3 The Panel will determine their own Chair who will be responsible for the proceedings of the panel. The Chair of Governors will refer the complaint to the Chair of the Panel.
- 4.4 The Panel's investigation will be conducted as soon as reasonably practicable.
- 4.5 The investigation will be conducted with a view to establishing all relevant information; will be non-adversarial; and will be impartial. The Panel will decide how it wishes to proceed, but this is likely to include giving the complainant an opportunity to discuss their complaint with the Panel and giving the school an opportunity to give their views on the complaint. The Panel may arrange to meet with the complainant and a representative of the school together if it considers that this might help to resolve the issue.
- 4.6 At the conclusion of the investigation, the Panel will decide what action is appropriate. Possible conclusions of the Panel may include:
 - The complaint is dismissed in whole or part;
 - The complaint is upheld in whole or part;
 - Appropriate action is recommended to resolve the complaint (if not within the powers of the Governing Body);
 - Changes are recommended to the school's policies and/or procedures with a view to avoiding similar problems in future.

- 4.7 The Panel will notify the complainant and the Head teacher of their decision through the Panel's Chair. The decision will normally be notified to the complainant and the Head teacher by the Chair in writing. If the Panel is unable to inform the complainant of some aspects of the proposed action because, for example, there is a requirement of confidentiality, the Panel will explain the situation to the complainant.
- 4.8 The Panel will report to the Governing Body on any action taken, including the general nature of the complaint and, if appropriate, on their findings.

5. Completion of School-Based Stages

- 5.1 Stage Three is the last school-based stage of the procedure. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, then may refer their complaint to the LA for verification that the school has acted properly.
- 5.2 If a complainant attempts to reopen an issue that has already been addressed under the school's procedure, the Chair of the governors will inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the school regards the matter as closed.