



KING EDWARD VI
SHELDON HEATH ACADEMY

Complaints Policy

The Academy believes that it provides a well-rounded education, which extends beyond academic study and that it creates a secure and caring environment in which children can experience success. The Academy Governors, the Principal and other staff work very hard to build positive relationships with students and their families. However, the Academy is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by students and/or their parents/carers. The following policy sets out the procedure that the Academy follows in such cases.

The Academy defines a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction either verbally or in writing, in respect of the education a student is receiving or other matter that is the direct responsibility of the Academy. This policy and procedure is for the benefit of students and their parents/carers at the Academy and will be relied upon in respect of all complaints students and their parents/carers made against the Academy except in respect of:

- Child protection allegations where a separate policy and procedure apply;
- Exclusions where a separate policy and procedure apply;
- Appeals relating to assessment decisions for external qualifications where a separate appeals procedure apply;
- Complaints made by members of the public about the Academy.

This policy and procedure is available on request to students and their parents/carers and to prospective students of the Academy and their parents/carers.

The Academy expects that most concerns can be resolved informally and will use its best endeavours to resolve any complaints that are made informally, or any concerns that are raised, on that basis. If informal procedures fail to resolve the issue, a formal complaint about any matter not involving child protection allegations, internal assessment decisions or a decision to expel or remove a pupil, must be stated courteously in writing to the appropriate member of staff.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that a complaint (should cause arise):

- Is handled sympathetically, efficiently and at the appropriate level.
- Receives fair and proper consideration and a timely response.
- Is resolved as soon as possible.
- Is treated seriously and confidentially (whether raised informally or formally).

Policy Statement

The Academy needs to know as soon as possible if there is any cause for dissatisfaction. Parents and students should never feel - or be made to feel - that a complaint made in a reasonable and appropriate way, will be taken amiss or will

reflect adversely on the student or his/her opportunities at this Academy. The Academy will investigate and try to resolve every complaint in a positive manner and will treat every complaint as an opportunity to improve practice. Through this policy, the Academy aims to:

- Be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint.
- Give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible.
- Resolve any complaints through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, puts the interests of the child above all other issues.
- Put right any matter which may have gone wrong.
- Review systems and procedures in the light of the relevant circumstances.

The Academy recognises that a complaint which is not resolved quickly and fairly can soon become a cause of resentment, damaging to relationships and also to the Academy's internal culture.

Procedures

Complaints Form: Every concern or complaint notified to a member of staff must be noted, together with the action taken, on a standard form known as a "Complaints Form". A sample of the form is attached to this policy.

1. **Minor Concerns:** In many cases, a concern can be resolved quickly and will not reach the stage of becoming a formal complaint. Even so, the member of staff will complete a Complaint Form noting the action taken and will send it to the Designated Officer.
2. **Acknowledgement:** A formal complaint in writing will be acknowledged by telephone on the date of receipt if practicable or in writing within three working days. A letter of acknowledgement will state the action being taken and the likely time scale.
3. **Designated Officer:** The Governing Body has appointed a governor ("**Designated Officer**"):
 - To be responsible for investigating and resolving complaints.
 - To be the first point of contact while the matter remains unresolved.
 - To co-ordinate the complaint procedures in the Academy.
 - To maintain an on-going training programme for all Academy employees in relation to complaints.
 - To monitor the keeping, confidentiality and storage of records in relation to complaints.
 - To report regularly to the Principal with respect to complaints.

While pupils may, themselves, raise concerns and complaints under this policy and procedure, the Academy will involve parents should this occur.

How to complain

This policy and procedure in no way overrides the right of the Academy to act in accordance with the Academy's Terms and Conditions agreed by parents upon enrolment of their child as a pupil in the Academy.

Minor Concerns: Minor concerns should be addressed to the appropriate form teacher, Head of Department, Head of House or Student Support Manager, who will investigate and offer feedback on any subsequent actions within 3 working days. All staff will make every effort to resolve a problem at this informal stage. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way.

If after receiving a response from staff at the Academy the dissatisfaction remains, the concern can be put in writing, making clear whether the matter is to be dealt with as a complaint.

If there is a need to make a formal complaint:

Education Matters: If the concern relates to the classroom, the curriculum or special educational needs please speak or write to the Vice Principal (Curriculum).

Pastoral Care: If the concern relates to matters outside the classroom, please speak or write to the Principal.

Financial Matters: A concern or complaint about a matter relating to financial matters should be stated in writing to the Finance Director.

Permanent Exclusion: Parents who are aggrieved by a decision of the Principal to permanently exclude a student have the rights of representation and appeal as outlined in the Exclusion Policy (this will be sent to parents of any child permanently excluded).

Other Complaints: A parent who is dissatisfied with an aspect of the Academy's policies, procedures, management or administration should write to the Principal with details of the complaint. The Principal will investigate and will do his best to resolve the dispute. If the parent is dissatisfied with the outcome, he should renew his complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors. The Chair may:

- delegate the investigation to the Delegated Officer;
- convene a panel of Governors to hear the complaint.

In the case of a hearing, the panel will be made of a minimum of three people, none of whom would have been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and at least one person will be independent of the management and running of the Academy. The process used for selecting an independent person will conform to relevant guidance issued by the Department for Education and Skills (DfE). More details on panel hearings can be found in Appendix 1.

The outcome of any complaint will be notified to the parent in writing giving reasons for any decisions. This will normally be within 10 school days of the meeting. For most complaints the decision of the governors is the last step in the procedure. However, all parents have the right, as a last resort, to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education, if they still feel that their complaint has not been properly addressed.

Monitoring and review

The Governors monitor the Academy's complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled promptly and properly. The Principal logs all complaints received by the Academy and records how they were resolved. Governors may examine this log at any time.

Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any necessary modifications to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Student Welfare Committee.

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This form should be made available on request to any person who wishes to make a complaint. Completed forms should be passed to the Principal.

1. What is the nature of the complaint? (Please tick)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Conduct | <input type="checkbox"/> Parental Conduct |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching Standards | <input type="checkbox"/> Pastoral Care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Condition of Premises | <input type="checkbox"/> Time tabling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Matters of Regime and Routine | <input type="checkbox"/> Access to or Regulation of Extra Curricular Activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please give details) | |

2. Please give details of your complaint:

Date(s) of Incident:

Time(s):

3. If you are complaining about a particular incident please give the names of any witnesses to the incident(s):

4. Action Taken:

Name:

Contact Details:

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 1: Panel Hearing Procedures

Parents must lodge their appeal in writing and within ten (10) working days of the date of the Academy's decision. The parents should provide a list of their complaint(s) made against the Academy and which they believe to have been resolved unsatisfactorily, along with the remedies sought in respect of each. The Complaints Panel is only obliged to consider the complaint(s) lodged in this 'initial submission' although they may use their discretion to consider other relevant and related matters that may subsequently arise.

Where an appeal is received by the Academy, the Academy will, within five (5) working days, refer the matter to the Clerk to the Board of Governors, who will act as Clerk to the Complaints Panel. Where the appeal is received by the Academy during school holidays, or within two (2) working days of their commencement, the Academy has five (5) working days upon commencement of the school term to refer the matter to the Clerk to the Board of Governors.

The Clerk provides an independent source of advice on procedure for all parties.

Once an appeal has been received by the Clerk, he/she will acknowledge the appeal in writing within five (5) working days, and inform the parents of the steps involved in this Complaints Procedure.

The Clerk will then endeavour to convene an independent Complaints Panel hearing as soon as possible to consider the matter, normally no later than twenty (20) school days after receipt by the Academy of parents' written notice dependent upon the availability of the Panel members.

The following are entitled to attend a hearing, submit written representations and address the Panel:

- (a) The parent/s (or, if aged over 18, the pupil) and/or one representative;
- (b) The Principal of the Academy and/or one representative; and
- (c) Any other interested person whom the Complaints Panel considers to have a reasonable and just interest in the appeal and whose contribution would assist the Panel in their decision-making.

Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

Where the Complaints Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. In such cases all parties will be given the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Panel in support of their position, including:

- (a) documents in support of complaint(s),
- (b) chronology and key dates relating to complaint(s), and
- (c) written submission setting out the complaint(s) in more detail.

This evidence will be considered by the Panel, along with the initial submission that was lodged by the parents.

Evidence will be initially sent to the Clerk, who will then circulate the documentation to all parties, including the Panel members, along with an order of proceedings. All written evidence must be received by the Clerk no later than ten (10) working days in advance of the hearing. The Clerk will distribute the written evidence to the relevant parties no later than five

(5) working days in advance of the Panel hearing.

It is for the Panel to decide how to conduct the proceedings of the appeal, which should be reasonably informal so that all parties can present their case effectively. If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.

After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision, and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within ten (10) working days of the hearing. The decision reached by the Complaints Panel is final.

Any decision reached that may have financial implications for the Academy will need the appropriate approval from the relevant authorities e.g. the Board of Governors, although any such approval must be compatible with the decision of the Complaints Panel.

The Panel's findings will be sent by the Clerk in writing to the parents, the Principal, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of. The letter will state any reasons for the decision reached and recommendations made by the Complaints Panel.

The Academy will keep a record of all appeals, decisions and recommendations of the Complaints Panel, which record will be kept for one (1) year after the pupil leaves the Academy.

Any correspondence, statements and records will remain confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended) requests access to them or where any other legal obligation prevails.