

Rochford Primary & Nursery School (Academy)



Complaints Policy and Procedures

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SOUTH EAST ESSEX
ACADEMY TRUST



Vision Statement:

“inspiring lifelong learning”

We are committed to providing:

- inspirational teaching;
- a stimulating environment;
- a challenging and interesting curriculum, so that children learn a variety of skills and are inspired to develop a love of learning; and
- a happy, safe and caring school where:
 - every child can reach their full potential;
 - staff are valued; and
 - visitors feel welcome.

We are committed to developing an inclusive school at the heart of the Rochford Community where:

- every child’s happiness and needs are of great importance;
- there are high expectations of good behaviour; and
- all members of the school community value good manners and co-operation.

We are committed to:

- communicating and working effectively with parents so that there is a genuine partnership supporting children’s learning.

1. This policy statement sets out the school's approach to dealing with parental concerns and complaints. Further details of how we handle them are contained in our procedures below.
2. We value good home/school relations and will, therefore, do everything we can to establish and maintain them. This includes seeking to resolve any concerns or complaints promptly, and to the satisfaction of all concerned.
3. We welcome feedback on what parents feel we do well, or not so well, as a school. We will consider carefully all feedback, whether positive or negative, and will review our policies and practices accordingly.
4. We will treat all concerns and complaints seriously and courteously and will advise parents and others of the school's procedures for dealing with their concerns. In return, we expect parents and other complainants to behave respectfully towards all members of the school community. In particular, any disagreement with the school should not be expressed inappropriately or in front of pupils.
5. All school staff, teaching and non-teaching, members of the SEEAT Board and Local Governing Body, will receive a copy of this policy statement and will be familiar with the school's procedures for dealing with parental concerns and complaints, to which they will have access as required.
6. The school's procedures will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary.
7. Whilst we will seek to resolve concerns and complaints to the satisfaction of all parties, it may not be possible to achieve this in every case. We will, therefore, use our option to close a complaint before all the stages of the school's procedures have been exhausted, if this appears to be appropriate.
8. The Government advocates the resolution of parental concerns and complaints at school level wherever possible, in the interests of maintaining good home/school relations.

Procedures for dealing with complaints

Level 1 – Informal – Class teacher

Many concerns will be dealt with informally when you make them known to us.

The first point of contact should be your child's class teacher. A judgement will be made by the class teacher about the nature of the concern/complaint and the appropriate level for it to be dealt with.

Serious issues may be raised to a higher level at this point.

It is expected that many issues can be resolved with the class teacher at this level.

However, if you are dissatisfied following this informal approach, your concerns/complaint will be passed on to a Phase Leader or Deputy Head.

Level 2 –Informal – Phase Leader

Parents/carers may need to discuss the issue with the appropriate Phase Leader.

If you remain dissatisfied with the results of the discussion you should ask for an appointment to meet with the Deputy Head.

Level 3 Informal – Deputy Head

Parents/carers may need to discuss the issue with the Deputy Head. If you remain dissatisfied with the results of the discussions, you should ask for an appointment to meet the Head of School.

Level 4a Informal – Head of School

Parents/Carers may need to discuss the issue with the Head of School.

Level 4b – Formal Complaint to Head of School

An issue that has not been resolved through the informal levels 1, 2, 3 and 4a can become an official complaint.

Parents/carers wishing to move to level 4b must write a formal letter (this is not by electronic communication and needs to be personally signed) of complaint to the Head of School within two weeks of the Level 4a meeting. The letter will need to set out clearly the issues which have previously been discussed at the informal levels and why the parent/carer considers the issue to be unresolved.

The Head of School should consider the complaint and offer a resolution to the complainant in writing within 10 school days of receipt of the letter. If the complaint is resolved at this level, the complaint will be closed by the school and cannot be re-opened.

The decision that the Head of School has made as a result of the complaint does not become a complaint about the Head of School. If the complainant feels the complaint has not been resolved, or if the complaint is about the Head of School, s/he should proceed to Level 5, a Governors' Complaints Panel.

Level 5 – formal complaint requesting a Local Governing Body Governors' Complaints Panel.

Complainants wishing to move to Level 5 of the formal complaints procedure will need to write a letter to the school's Chair of Governors to request that a Governors' Complaints

Panel meets to hear the complaint. This formal complaint letter must be received within two weeks of the last meeting with the Head of School concerning the issue. The complainant should write to the Chair of Governors at the school address marking the envelope 'urgent, private and confidential'.

The letter will need to set out the complaint that has previously been formally discussed with the Head of School and explain clearly why the matter is not resolved.

Before the meeting:

The Chair of Governors should appoint a clerk to the Governors' Complaints Panel which will include an independent member, acknowledge the complainant's letter in writing within 5 school days of receipt and arrange for a panel of governors to meet within 15 school days of receipt. It must be recognised that if the letter is received within 14 school days to the end of term it may not be possible to organise the governors' panel meeting. In this case the matter should be dealt with within 10 school days of the school reopening.

The Head of School should be given a copy of the complainant's letter and written documentation should be requested from the school. The clerk should send both the complainant's letter and the school documentation to the Governors' Complaints Panel members, complainant and Head of School (and anyone else involved in the meeting) at least 5 school days before the date of the meeting.

The complainant and Head of School will be invited to attend the Governor's Complaints Panel meeting to give a verbal statement in support of their documentation. Each of them can bring someone to support them if they wish.

At the meeting:

The complainant and Head of School (or his/her representative) should provide all the relevant information they wish and the Governors' Complaints Panel members should clarify any points. After the complainant and Head of School (or his/her representative) have provided all the information they wish, the Chair will ask all parties to leave except the panel members and the clerk.

After the meeting:

The Governors' Complaints Panel will write to all concerned within 10 school days to explain their decision and suggest a resolution to the problem, if appropriate.

The decision of the Governor's Complaints Panel is final.

The decision of the Governors' Complaints Panel will not be investigated. Time Scales:

Receipt of complainant's letter	Acknowledgement within 5 school days
Receipt of complainant's letter	Governors' Panel meeting within 15 school days
Written documentation sent to Governors' Panel Members and complainant and Head of School	5 school days before meeting.
Governors' Panel members decision communicated to all concerned	As soon as possible but within 10 school days of meeting.

Chapter 6, paragraph 15 of the Governance Handbook states:

"...An individual can complain to the Secretary of State for Education if they believe that a local authority maintained school board is acting 'unreasonably' or is failing to carry out its statutory duties properly. EFA (Education Funding Agency) handles complaints about academies on behalf of the Secretary of State."

Once a Governor's Complaints Panel has heard a complaint, and it is clear that correct procedures have been followed, that specific complaint is closed and cannot be re-opened. If a request is received in this respect, the Chair of Governors should inform the complainant that the matter is closed.

Any complaints concerning the conduct of school staff will be handled in accordance with the school's internal disciplinary procedures. The details of such an investigation will remain confidential.

Some complaints regarding admissions, the curriculum or special educational needs are covered by statutory regulations. The Head of School can give information about these issues.

Review

The Complaints Policy will be reviewed annually in consultation with staff and Governors.

Reviewed during	Autumn 2018
Approved by Governing Body	
Next review	Autumn 2019

Chair of Governors: _____

Date: _____