

Complaints Policy

Hill View Primary



Policy Approved by Governors

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Written by:	Headteacher



Reach for the stars.

Hill View Primary School Complaints Policy

The governing bodies key roles are;

- To provide a strategic view
- To support and challenge
- To ensure accountability

Rationale

Hill View Primary school recognises that at times things can and do go wrong. The Head Teacher, staff and members of the Local Governing Bodies (LGB) at Hill View Primary, believe that it is in everyone's best interest to resolve concerns and complaints at the earliest possible stage. We believe that a complaints procedure enables concerns and complaints to be dealt with in an open and professional manner, ultimately benefitting relationships with parents, carers, community facility users, neighbours, students and visitors.

This policy therefore seeks to outline how concerns and complaints can be resolved. The policy meets the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards (England) Regulations 2010 Schedule 1, Part 7.

Aims

The Hill View Primary school Complaints Procedure will:

- Encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
- Be easily accessible and publicised
- Be simple to understand and use
- Be impartial
- Allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress
- Ensure a full and fair investigation by independent people, where necessary;
- Respect people's desire for confidentiality
- Provide information to the leadership teams of the schools so that services can be improved.

Summary of Procedures

The following diagram outlines the key stages of our complaints procedure:

- **Stage One** - An Informal discussion
- **Stage Two** - Complaint heard by Head Teacher
- **Stage Three** – Complaint heard by an Independent Complaint Panel

Investigating Complaints

At each stage, the person dealing with the complaint should ensure that they:

- Establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved
- Meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information is necessary)
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right
- Interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- Conduct the interview with an open mind.

Resolving Complaints

At each stage in the procedure the school will consider ways to resolve a complaint. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An apology
- An explanation
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- An assurance that the event complained of will not recur
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again
- An undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

Managing and Recording Complaints

If your concerns are not resolved at Stage One, Stage Two will need to be initiated. To do this please complete our complaints form at Appendix B. The school can provide support for this if needed. This policy is intended to cover all complaints against the academy regardless of whether it is related to parents or pupils attending the school

Local Governing Body

The Governing Body will monitor the level and nature of complaints across the schools and review the outcomes on a regular basis to ensure the effectiveness of the procedure and make changes where necessary. The reports will not name individuals.

Stage One - An Informal Discussion

Our experience is that the vast majority of concerns and complaints can be resolved informally to the full satisfaction of those who raise them. There are many occasions where concerns can be resolved straight away, providing the complainant with the benefit of an immediate response, and avoiding the need to submit a formal complaint. Concerns may be raised with any member of the school staff, depending on the type of issue to be discussed.

By their nature, we do not impose specific timescales for dealing with concerns at this stage, or monitor them formally, although all issues will be considered as quickly and effectively as possible.

If the person is dissatisfied with the discussion, they should refer to Stage 2 below.

Where the first approach is made to a Governor, the next step must be to refer the complainant to the appropriate person and advise them about the procedure.

Governors must not act unilaterally on an individual complaint outside the formal procedure or be involved at the early stages in case they are needed to sit on a panel at a later stage of the procedure.

Stage Two - Complaint heard by the Head teacher

If the complainant would like us to investigate their concerns further, our complaint form which can be found at Appendix B, should be completed and handed to the school's office.

Following receipt of a complaints form, the Head Teacher will nominate a member of staff to be an investigating officer. The investigating officer will acknowledge the complaint in writing within 5 working days.

The investigating officer will speak to the necessary individuals; interview witnesses and/or take statements from those involved. This could take up to 10 working days. If the complaint centres on a pupil, the pupil will also be interviewed. If the concern is about a pupil's behaviour, parents will not be invited to attend however parents will be asked to attend to discuss any other concerns.

Written records of meetings, telephone conversations and other documentation will be kept. Once the facts have been established Head Teacher will arrange to meet the complainant to discuss the investigation. The complainant will leave the meeting with a letter which also explains the outcome of the investigation. This meeting and letter will be held within 20 working days from the date the complaint form was handed into reception.

Following this meeting the complainant will be advised that, if they wish to take the complaint further, they should refer to Stage Three below.

If the complaint is against the Head Teacher, Stage two will be carried out by the Chair of Governors.

If the complaint is against a Governor, Stage two will be carried out the Chair of Governors from another school within our Trust.

Stage Three – Independent Complaints Panel

Complaints only rarely reach this formal level, where the complainant is not satisfied by the response. It is important that any complaint hearing is independent and impartial and, that it is seen to be so. We will ensure that all members of the panel will have had no prior involvement in the complaint. We will also ensure that at least one member of the panel will be independent of the management and running of the school involved.

The aim of a panel hearing is to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant.

If you would like to request a panel hearing, please write to the Chair of LGB at the school, explaining why you are not happy. This will need to be within 25 working days (One month) of receiving the outcome letter. Anything received after the 25th day will be referred back to Stage One of this process.

The Chair will set up a hearing within 10 working days of receiving the letter and inform the complainant of this, in writing. All parties will be given five working days' notice of a hearing.

As mentioned earlier, the people hearing the complaint will have had no prior involvement with the complaint and one person will be independent of the management and running, of the academy involved.

The complainant may be accompanied to the hearing by a friend, relative or representative.

The Head will be invited to the hearing. Involvement of other staff is subject to the discretion of the complaint panel.

The hearing will allow for:

- The complainant to explain their complaint and for the Head Teacher to explain the school's response
- The complainant and the Head Teacher to question each other and for members of the hearing panel to also ask questions
- Any party to have the right to call witnesses (subject to the approval of the Chair) and all parties having the right to question all the witnesses.
- Final statements by both the complainant and the Head Teacher

Following the hearing the complaint panel will consider the complaint and will send their written decision to both parties within 15 working days.

What happens if you are still unhappy with the outcome?

The Education Funding Agency (EFA) is responsible for open academies on behalf of the Secretary of State.

We hope that we will be able to resolve your concerns through the processes outlined in this policy however the EFA can investigate if your reasons fall into any of the following conditions:-

- undue delay or non-compliance with an academy's own complaints procedure
- an academy's failure to comply with a duty imposed on it under its funding agreement with the Secretary of State
- an academy's failure to comply with any other legal obligation, unless there is another organisation better placed to consider the matter as set out in the next section

The EFA are not able to overturn an academy's decision about a complaint.

If the EFA uphold a complaint they may do one or both of the following:

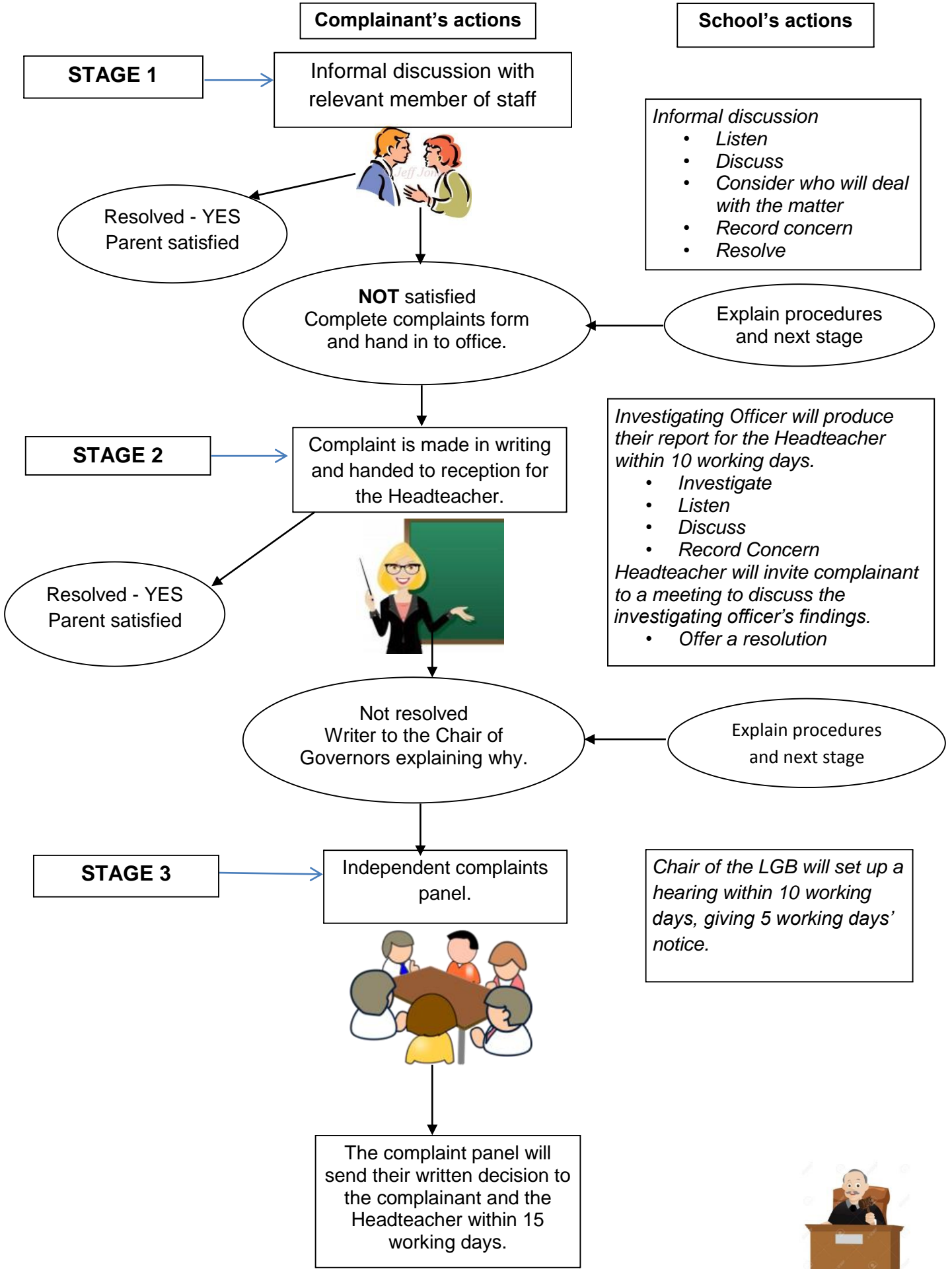
- ask the academy to reconsider the complaint from an appropriate stage
- ask the academy to change its complaints procedure so that it complies with legal requirements

For more information and the School Complaint form, please see click this link:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/complaintsprocedure/b00212240/making-complaint-school>

See attachment: pictorial illustration of procedure

APPENDIX A: STAGED APPROACH TO HANDLING CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS



APPENDIX B: COMPLAINT FORM – STAGE 2

Please complete the form below and return it to the school office, who will acknowledge receipt and confirm what action will be taken.



Your name:

Pupils name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Email address:

Contact telephone number:

Please circle to tell us:-

When you would like us to contact you:

During the school day

Between 5 pm and 8pm

Anytime

And how:

In person

By telephone

By email

Please turn over.

For official use only:-

Date handed to the receptionist:

Investigating Officer

Date of acknowledgement:

Oral or in writing?

Investigation report handed to Headteacher on:

Meeting with complainant arranged for:

Outcomes of investigation (summary)



Complaint form Stage 2

Please give details of your complaint:

What action, if any have you taken to try and resolve your complaint? (Who did you speak to and what was their response?)

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details: