

HOCKLEY HEATH ACADEMY COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction:

All academies must have a Complaints Policy which meets the standards set out in the Education (Independent School Standards (England) Regulations 2014 Schedule 1, Part 7. The Regulations set out how complaints procedures should be drawn up and used effectively to handle complaints from parents of pupils.

The Education Funding Agency (EFA) has produced guidance to help academies meet these standards and to share good practice. This policy takes account of this guidance.

The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or pupils are concerns rather than complaints. Hockley Heath Academy is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, a complainant may be asked to follow the school's formal complaints procedure.

The prime aim of this policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner.

The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints.

Policy:

The Policy has four main stages. In summary they are as follows: -

- Stage 1 (informal): concern heard by an appropriate staff member
- Stage 2 (formal): complaint heard by Principal;
- Stage 3 (formal): complaint heard by Chair of Governors
- Stage 4 (formal): complaint heard by Complaints Panel.

Stage 1 – concern heard by staff member

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time, and will often generate an immediate response which will resolve the concern. The school requests that parents and pupils initially raise their concerns with the class teacher. On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case the complainant will receive an informal but informed response within a day or two. The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily

dealt with in this way. However, if the complainant is not satisfied with the result at stage 1, he/she should write to or call the school as soon as possible and ideally within 10 school working days. The school will then look at the complaint at the next stage.

Stage 2 – complaint heard by Principal;

The Principal may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken. The Principal will arrange for the complaint to be acknowledged within 5 school working days of receiving it and a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. Following the investigation, the Principal will aim to provide a written response within 10 school working days of sending the acknowledgement. However if a complaint is more complex to review, this can be extended to a maximum of 20 school working days. The school will provide the complainant of the details of the new deadline and an explanation on the delay. If he / she is not satisfied with the result at stage 2 he / she should write to, or call, the school within 10 school working days of getting the response. The school will then look at the complaint at the next stage.

Stage 3 – complaint heard by Chair of Governors

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 2 or the complaint is about the Principal, then the complainant will need to write to the Chair of Governors c/o the school. The Chair of Governors will arrange for the complaint to be acknowledged within 5 school working days of receiving it and a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. Following an investigation, the Chair of Governors will aim to provide a written response within 10 school working days of sending out the acknowledgement. However if a complaint is more complex to review, this can be extended to 20 school working days. The school will provide the complainant with details of the new deadline and an explanation on the delay. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the result at stage 3, then he/she should let the school know within 10 school working days of getting the response. The school will then look at the complaint at the next stage.

Stage 4 – complaint heard by a Complaints Panel.

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 3, then the complainant will need to write to the Clerk of Governors giving details of the complaint and asking that it is put before a Complaints Panel. Should the Chair have been involved at any previous stage in the process a nominated Governor, impartial to the complaint, will convene a complaints panel. The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 school working days of receiving it. The hearing will normally take place within 20 school working days of sending the acknowledgment.

If the complaint passes to this panel stage, the academy must:

- 1). allow the complainant to attend and be accompanied if they wish
- 2). ensure at least one member of the panel is independent of the management of the academy.

The panel cannot be solely made up of governing body members because they are not independent of the management and running of the academy. In the event of a complaint moving to this formal stage, the academy will be required to identify suitable independent individuals who can fulfil the role and responsibility of being the independent member.

The aim of the Appeal panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the Panel's decision in writing within 5 school working days after the date of the hearing. The letter will also contain what he / she should do if they wish to take the matter further.

The Complaints Panel is the last school-based stage of the complaints process.

Individuals that are not satisfied about the handling of their complaint may complain to the Education Funding Agency via the [schools complaints form](#).