



Castle Hill School

COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS POLICY

Policy Created	2006
Committee	Resources
Last review	2017
Frequency	3 years
Date to be reviewed	2020

General Policy Statement

At our Academy we intend to provide a safe, secure, caring environment where every one is valued and respected equally. We aim to provide an inclusive education where children develop independent learning skills and are taught according to need whatever their age, gender, background, beliefs or abilities.

National legislation re disabilities, race relations and special education needs underpin this policy, which has also taken into consideration national, local and school policies on Special Educational Needs, Equal Opportunities and Health and Safety.

Compliments and Complaints Philosophy

Our Academy is delighted to receive compliments about its pupils and staff. It values compliments as indications of its success and realises that the pride which compliments engender is a powerful motivating force. To this end it strives to ensure that the achievements of pupils and staff are recognized and applauded.

Equally the Academy realises that it can learn from complaints. They can help us to put things right and provide a better service.

Complaints may come from an individual or group including staff.

They may be about

- a criticism of Academy policies and procedures
- the curriculum
- allegations about behaviour of pupils and staff

Practice

It is our policy to:

- take complaints seriously – we understand that people complain when they believe something is wrong
- give people time to explain their complaint
- respond calmly and clarify what the issues are
- explain how we will investigate complaints
- report back to the person who made the complaint

Outcomes of Complaints

There are a number of different outcomes possible as a result of a complaint and an investigation:

- no basis for complaint
- apology to complainant for misunderstanding – the Academy may consider changing systems
- apology to complainant for incident and appropriate corrective action
- In serious cases there may be implications for staff such as disciplinary or competence procedures.

Due to the above possibilities it is important that there are clear procedures for handling complaints.

- many complaints can be dealt with informally, by the staff member concerned, administration staff, or the Principal, depending on the nature of the complaint
- if this is not sufficient and you need to raise a formal complaint it should first be taken to the Principal. The Principal will deal with the complaint under the procedure set out below (Formal complaint to Principal)
- if the complaint is about the Principal, or you are not satisfied with the process, you should refer the complaint to the Local Governing Body by writing to the Chair of Governors. Also, the Principal may decide to do this in some circumstances, for example if (s)he feels that (s)he has been too much involved in the matter already to investigate it independently
- in either of these circumstances the complaint will then be dealt with as set out in the “Formal Complaint to Chair of Governors” procedure set out below
- if you choose to complain to one of the governors initially, they will pass the complaint directly to the Chair of Governors or the Principal as appropriate
- the governor should not get involved at this stage, as the complaint may be referred to them as part of a complaints panel later
- individual governors do not have the power to investigate complaints

Procedure for a formal complaint to the Principal

- when a formal complaint is made, it will be acknowledged in writing within 3 working days
- the Principal will acknowledge the complaint in writing within 3 working days of receiving the written complaint. The acknowledgement will give a brief explanation of the Academy's complaints procedure and a target day for providing a response to the complaint. This should

normally be within 10 working days: if this proves impossible, a letter will be sent explaining the reason for the delay and giving a revised target date

- the Principal may provide an opportunity to meet with him or her to supplement any information provided previously. If you wish you may be accompanied to any such meeting by a friend, relative, representative, or advocate who can speak on your behalf. Please let us know if you have any special requirements the Academy needs to be aware of e.g. wheelchair access, signing etc.
- if necessary, the Principal will interview witnesses and take statements from those involved. If the complaint centres on a pupil, the pupil should also be interviewed. Pupils may be interviewed with parents/guardian present. In some situations, circumstances may prevent this e.g. where this would seriously delay the investigation of a serious/urgent complaint or where particular circumstances mean that a pupil has specifically said they would prefer that parents or guardians were not involved. In such circumstances another member of staff with whom the pupil feels comfortable should be asked to attend
- if a member of staff is complained against, the needs of that person should be addressed through the school's counselling service, referral to employee health care, support from trade unions etc.
- the Principal will keep written records of meetings, telephone conversations and any other relevant documentation
- once all relevant facts have been established, the Principal should then produce a written response to the complainant, or may wish to meet the complainant to discuss/resolve the matter directly
- a written response will include a full explanation of the decisions and the reasons for it. Where appropriate, this includes what action the Academy will take to resolve the complaint
- if you wish to take the complaint further you should notify the Chair of Governors within 5 days of receiving the outcome letter

Procedure for formal Complaint to the Chair of Governors

- upon receipt of a written request for the complaint to proceed to Chair of Governors, the following procedure will be followed
- the Clerk to the Governing Body will write to you to acknowledge receipt of the written request. The acknowledgement should inform you that the complaint is to be heard by the Chair of Governors, usually within 20 working days of receiving the complaint. The letter should also explain that you have the right to submit any further documents relevant to the complaint. These must be received in time for the documents to be received and considered by the Chair
- the Chair of Governors will appoint a panel to hear the complaint comprising of least two Governors with no prior involvement and an additional external person independent of the running and management of the Academy

- the parent of a pupil will be allowed to be present at the meeting and they will be given sufficient notice of the meeting to enable them to attend if they so wish. The parent may be accompanied to the meeting
- the Chair's panel will then consider the complaint and all the evidence presented and (a) reach a decision on the complaint and (b) decide upon the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint and (c) where appropriate, suggest recommended changes to the Academy's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not happen again

Notification of the Chair's Decision

- a written statement outlining the decision of the Chair will be sent to the complainant, the Principal and where relevant, the person complained about, usually within 15 working days
- a confidential copy will be kept in the Academy for inspection

Taking the complaint further

- if you are not satisfied with the process carried out by the Governors, you may complain to ICAT, the Multi Academy trust company that runs the Academy. Please note that ICAT has a separate complaints procedure but will normally only deal with the complaint if it is felt that the Academy has failed to follow this procedure correctly, has failed to comply with its funding agreement or has failed to comply with the law
- there is also a procedure for complaining to the Educational Funding Agency. Details of this will be provided if needed
- at the time of writing the procedure can be found at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/557407/Complain_about_an_academy.pdf