

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar, Alford

A Selective Academy



Complaints Procedure

General Principles

All concerns expressed informally will be taken seriously and if possible dealt with immediately to avoid the need for the formal complaints procedure to be followed. This procedure also covers general complaints regarding the centre's delivery or administration of qualifications such as GCSEs and A Levels. Staff receiving concerns or complaints will inform the Headteacher in writing of the nature of the concern/complaint and discuss action to be taken.

Complainants should make the school aware of their complaint as soon as possible after the matter or incident has occurred that they wish to complain about. Usually, we would expect complainants to do this within three months of the incident occurring and if they do not contact the school within that time, we will not usually consider a formal complaint. If, however, the complaint relates to a continuing act, then occurrences outside of the three month time limit will usually be considered alongside the more recent occurrence. If complainants feel there are exceptional circumstances that have prevented them from meeting the time limit, they should provide an explanation of these circumstances along with their complaint so that Governors can take them into account. The final decision rests with Governors as to whether your complaint will be considered when it is raised outside of the three month time limit.

All complaints will be investigated fully, fairly (by an independent person where necessary) and carefully. People's desire for confidentiality will be respected wherever possible and complainants will be kept informed of progress during, as well as at the end of, each stage.

The main aim at all stages will be to ensure that either the complaint is settled or that a decision is taken about the complaint and it can then, if required, proceed to the next stage.

We would again emphasise that most matters can be resolved by discussing issues with our staff at the informal stage of our procedure (see below). Regrettably, there are times when complainants raise issues with or about staff in ways which are unacceptable. This can cloud the concern at the heart of the complaint, which may result in the delay or hindrance of a resolution. It can also have an adverse effect on pupils, staff and the effective running of the school. Examples of behaviours that we consider to be unacceptable are as follows:

- Using abusive or threatening language and/or behaviour.
- Making excessive demands on staff time and resources in pursuit of a complaint, whether in person, by phone, email or letter.
- Harassing individual staff members in a way which appears intended to cause personal distress rather than to find a resolution.
- Refusing to follow the complaints procedure as set out in this policy.
- Persisting in repetitious complaints when these have been previously dealt with under the school complaints procedure.
- Changing the basis of the complaint as the consideration proceeds and/or making unjustified complaints about those trying to deal with the complaint.
- Pursuing unreasonable outcomes which are disproportionate to the nature of the matters in hand.



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- Electronically recording meetings, telephone calls and conversations without the prior knowledge and consent of the other persons involved.

The school expects that any person wishing to raise a concern or complaint will:

- Follow the school complaints procedure.
- Treat all members of the school community with courtesy and respect.
- Recognise the time constraints that staff operate under.

It should be noted that complainants do not have an automatic right to enter school grounds and may be banned from entering the school site with immediate effect after an incident where their behaviour towards staff has been verbally and/or physically aggressive.

Complaints Procedure

The day-to-day running of the school is the responsibility of the Headteacher. Concerns should be raised initially with the appropriate member of staff, but if they are not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant they should be put in writing and raised with the Headteacher. If complainants are still unhappy with the response they receive they should raise their concerns with the chair of governors. Where a complainant is not a parent of an attending pupil, the complaint will **usually** be considered in the same way as a complaint by a parent.

There are three levels at which a complaint may be considered. These are the informal level, the formal complaint to the Headteacher and the formal complaint to the Governing Body.

Stage 1: Informal Stage

Most complaints or potential complaints can be best resolved in discussion with the Headteacher or other staff at the school. This is where the process should start and, unless there are exceptional circumstances, there should be full discussion at the informal stage as a first step.

Note In all cases once the Headteacher or senior member of staff is involved, the aim will be to resolve the matter within 10 school days.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint to the Headteacher

If a complaint is not dealt with to the satisfaction of the complainant at the informal stage, complainants should put the complaint in writing, addressed to the Headteacher.

Note The Headteacher will respond as quickly as possible bearing in mind the urgency of the situation; in any event the Headteacher (or a delegated representative) will acknowledge receipt in writing of the complaint. After due consideration, within 10 working school days, the Headteacher will inform in writing the complainant of:

- the decision reached and the reason for it;
- any proposed action.



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If it is not possible to deal with the complaint fully within this timescale the complainant will be notified.

Stage 3: Formal Complaint to the Governing Body

If attempts to settle the complaint at school level have failed, complainants should set out their complaint in writing and submit it to the Clerk to the Governors (c/o the school) or the Chair of Governors (c/o the school). This written notification should make clear exactly what the complaint is and also make it clear that it is to be formally considered under the procedure for complaints about the curriculum or about collective worship. The Clerk will acknowledge in writing receipt of the complaint.

The complainant may be dealt with by the Chair of Governors or it may require a panel to be formed, ensuring at least one member of the panel is independent of the management and running of the academy. Normally this will take place within twenty (20) school working days (when school is in session) of receipt of the complaint. A complainant may attend the hearing if they wish and may be accompanied. Reasonable notice will be given to a complainant of the panel hearing date (within 7 working school days). Any reasonable request made by the complainant for an alternate date should result in a mutually convenient date being set at the earliest possible time. The Committee's decision is final.

If the complainant is not satisfied about the handling of their complaint by the academy they may contact the **EFSA** via the Schools Complaints Form

(https://form.education.gov.uk/fform.php?self=1&form_id=cCCNJ1xSfBE&type=form&ShowMsg=1&form_name=Contact+the+Department+for+Education&noRegister=false&ret=%2Fmodule%2Fservices&noLoginPrompt=1).

Or complainants can contact the School Complaints Team at the Department for Education. The team will refer complaints about academies to the Education Funding Agency, which is the arm of the Department for Education which oversees academies. Complainants must make complaints in writing, either by post to: –

School Complaints Team Department for Education Castle View House East Lane Runcorn, WA7 2GJ

Or, by using the Department for Education's online School Complaints form. This can be accessed at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/b00212240/guidance-on-making-a-complaint-about-a-school/how-to-complain-to-the-department-about-a-school>

Please note that, unless your complaint is about the academy's response or lack of response, your complaint will generally have to be considered first by the governing body of the academy.

