

Complaints Policy

Academic Year	2017-2018
Written by/on	KCG
Responsibility for updates	KCG
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Next review date	October 2018

This policy should be used in conjunction with the Department for Education's School Complaints Toolkit and alongside the Smith's Wood Academy Home/School Agreement.

Introduction:

Since 1 September 2003 governing bodies (GBs) of all maintained schools and maintained nursery schools in England have been required, under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, to have in place a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides. This does not limit complainants to parents or carers of pupils registered at a school. A complainant could be a member of the wider community or representing an ex-pupil. The law also requires the procedure to be publicised.

The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or pupils, are concerns rather than complaints. Smith's Wood 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, you may wish or be asked to follow the Academy's formal complaints procedure.

The prime aim of the 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 should be used to resolve complaints.

The Smith's Wood Academy 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 the Head of Academy;
- Stage 3 (formal): complaint heard by Chair of Governors;
- Stage 4 (formal): complaint heard by the Governing Body complaints appeal panel.

Stage 1 – concern heard by staff member

Concerns can be raised with the Academy at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will resolve the concern. The Academy requests that parents make their first contact with the class teacher or Head of Department for a subject based concern or the child's Head of House for a pastoral concern. On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case you 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

you are not satisfied with the result at stage 1, please write to the Academy within 10 school working days. The Academy will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

A referral to a senior member of staff may be made at this point.

Stage 2 – complaint heard by the Head of Academy;

The Head of Academy may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken. The Head of Academy 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 Head of Academy 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 Academy will provide you with details of the new deadline and an explanation on the delay. If you are not satisfied with the result at stage 2 please write to the Academy within 10 school working days of getting our response. The Academy will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

Stage 3 – complaint heard by Chair of Governors

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 3 or the complaint is about the Head of Academy, then you will need to write to the Chair of Governors c/o the Academy. 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 Academy will provide you with details of the new deadline and an explanation on the delay. If you are dissatisfied with the result at stage 3, you will need to let the Academy know within 10 school working days of getting the response. The Academy will then escalate your complaint to the next stage.

Stage 4 – complaint heard by Governing Bodies Complaints Appeal Panel.

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 4, then you will need to write to the Clerk of Governors giving details of the complaint and asking that it is put before the appeal 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.

The aim of the Appeal panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the Academy and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the Panel's decision in writing within five school working days after the

date of the hearing. The letter will also contain what you need to do if you wish to take the matter further.

The Governors appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process.

If a complaint has completed the local procedures and the complainant remains dissatisfied, they have the right to refer their complaint to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State has a duty to consider all complaints raised but will only intervene where the governing body has acted unlawfully or unreasonably and where it is expedient or practical to do so.

From 1 August 2012 complaints about maintained schools not resolved by the school should be addressed to the School Complaints unit (SCU), Department of Education, 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate, Manchester, M1 2WD

For further information and advice regarding this Model School's Complaints Policy please contact the School's Information Officer on 0121 704 8536.

Useful information

Parents, carers and members of our school community may find the following Department for Education document useful in relation to the management of complaints by schools:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/489056/Best_Practice_Advice_for_School_Complaints_2016.pdf