

St. Hilda's C.E. High School

General Complaints Procedure

Introduction

The Governors are committed to ensuring that the highest standards are maintained at the school both in the provision of education to pupils and in every other aspect of the running of the school. A complaints procedure is an important part of the management of a well-run school allowing parents the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have through appropriate channels. This procedure has been adopted by the Governing Body to ensure a systematic and fair approach to the resolution of such concerns. This general policy is not meant to cover complaints relating to the curriculum and specifically R.E.

Any complaints by staff should be addressed under the school's Grievance Procedure.

This procedure is designed to allow parents and carers of registered pupils at the school a means of making complaints which they can be confident will be addressed properly.

A complaint may result in disciplinary action by the school against a member of staff which would be confidential between that member of staff and the school but otherwise parents should be kept fully informed of the handling of any complaint. Any complaint will be kept confidential unless it is necessary to involve other parties and will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

In general, any written complaint should be addressed to the Head although it is expected that attempts will be made to resolve difficulties informally with the class teacher/form teacher/Head of Year/tutor before being referred to the Head. The informal stage of the procedure should be exhausted before the matter is referred to the formal stage. If any substantial complaint is received by a member of staff it should be referred to the line manager or Head as appropriate if it cannot immediately be resolved by the member of staff to the satisfaction of the parent.

Complaints Procedure – Stages in the Procedure

Introduction

There are two stages in the School's Complaints Procedure: an informal stage when staff will try to resolve the problem and a formal stage when the matter is referred to Governors if the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the first stage.

Informal Stage

Most parents' concerns can be adequately resolved by discussion with the class teacher/form teacher/Head of Year/tutor or with other members of staff. There may be no need for the complaint to be put in writing at this stage.

1. If the concern is not met to the parents' satisfaction by discussion then the initial recipient of the complaint should refer the matter further. At this stage it is appropriate the specific complaint be put in writing.

Complaint about	Designated investigator
Subject teacher	Head of Department/Teacher in Charge
Form teacher	Head of Year
Non-teaching staff	Bursar
Head of Department/Teacher in Charge	Assistant Head/Deputy Head (Curriculum)
Head of Year	Assistant Head/Deputy Head (Pastoral)
Bursar/Assistant Head/Deputy Head	Head
Head	Chair of Governors

2. The designated investigator will investigate the circumstances of the complaint and may find it appropriate to ask for written statements from staff or pupils and to call for any relevant documentation.
3. If the complaint is against a member of staff, that member of staff has a right to be given details of the complaint and the opportunity to make representation about it. These will be taken into account by the investigator.
4. The designated investigator will respond to the parent with the outcome of the investigation, normally within 20 school working days of receipt of the substance of the complaint. The response may be in writing or at a meeting with written confirmation of the outcome.
5. A parent must be informed of his or her right to have the matter referred to a panel of Governors if the outcome of the informal stage is not satisfactory. Any such request by a parent should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governors.

Formal Stage

6. Having exhausted the informal stages, when a formal request for the Governors to consider a complaint is received by the Clerk, the Clerk will refer the matter to a panel of Governors (minimum 3 in number).

The Clerk will write to the complainant, the Head and the Chair of Governors giving details of the meeting, requesting copies of any documents to be put before the meeting to hear the complaint and names of any witnesses who either party may wish to attend. To protect any children involved it is not expected that children will be present and that any written statements will,

6. Cont/..

wherever possible, protect their anonymity. Attendance by a child will be exceptional and depend upon the agreement of both parties, the child and the child's parent(s). In such cases it is expected the child will be accompanied by their parents. The complainant will be informed of the right to be accompanied by a friend. The hearing should be within 20 school working days of the formal request to the Clerk and documents be with the Clerk 10 school working days before the hearing. The Clerk will copy and distribute those documents within 5 working days of receipt.

7. The procedure at the hearing needs to be appropriate for the circumstances and is at the discretion of the Chair of the panel but is likely to involve:

- presentation of the complaint
- questioning by the person who is the subject of the complaint
- a reply by the person who is the subject of the complaint
- questioning by the complainant
- summing up by the complainant
- summing up by the person who is the subject of the complaint
- representation about ways to resolve the complaint satisfactorily

The panel may ask questions at any point.

8. Both parties will withdraw for the panel to consider the complaint and reach a conclusion. The Clerk will inform both parties in writing within 5 school working days of the decision. The panel's decision is final. Where the governing body's response has failed to satisfy the complainant some further recourse lies in a complaint to the Secretary of State. **However, it should be pointed out that the Secretary of State's powers do not extend to reviewing decisions of complaints committees. The Secretary of State only has the power to decide whether the governing body concerned has acted unreasonably or is in default of its statutory duties.**