



Heston

COMMUNITY SCHOOL

School General Complaints Policy and Procedure

'I want to register a complaint. Do you know who sneaked into my room at three o'clock this morning?...

-Who?...

Nobody, and that's my complaint.'

Groucho Marx (1895 - 1977)

This Policy is founded within our School ethos which provides a caring, friendly and safe environment for all members of our community.

July 2009

1.0 Raising Concerns

- 1.1 Any problem or concern should be raised promptly with the student's Tutor or member of staff responsible for the area or action you are concerned about.
- 1.2 If your concern is more serious you may prefer to make an appointment to discuss it with the relevant Curriculum Leader, Learning Coordinator or a member of the Strategy and Leadership Team.
- 1.3 All staff will make every effort to resolve your problem promptly at this informal stage. Most concerns and potential complaints can best be resolved through informal discussion with the relevant Curriculum Leader, Learning Coordinator, a member of the Strategy and Leadership Team or relevant member of staff.

2.0 Stage 1

- 2.1 If you are dissatisfied with the response of the member of staff to your concerns (or the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher if they have been involved at the informal stage) then you may wish to put your concerns in writing to the Headteacher as a complaint.
- 2.2 You should make it clear if you wish the matter to be dealt with as a complaint. The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will investigate the complaint and provide a written response. This will normally be within 10 school days of your letter, but you will be kept informed if, for example, more time is needed to complete the investigation.
- 2.3 If your original concern was about an action by the Deputy Headteacher personally, and you have already discussed it at the informal stage, then you should put your complaint in writing to the Headteacher.
- 2.4 If your original concern was about an action by the Headteacher personally and you have already discussed it at the informal stage, then you should put your complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors (Stage 2).

3.0 Stage 2

- 3.1 If you are not satisfied with the Headteacher's response, you may contact the Chairman of Governors. The Chair's name and how to contact them, is available from the School Office.
- 3.2 The Chair of Governors will investigate your complaint and, in most cases, seek to resolve the matter through discussion with yourself and the Headteacher.
- 3.3 At the end of this stage the Chair of Governors will provide you with a written response. This will normally be within 10 school days but you will be kept informed if more time is needed.
- 3.4 If you are not satisfied with the Chair's response at the end of Stage 2, the complaint can be referred to the Governing Body by writing to the Chair of Governors or Clerk to the Governing Body.
- 3.5 The Governing Body will ask a small panel of Governors to investigate your complaint. This will normally be arranged within 15 school days of your complaint being received, depending on the availability of all concerned. You may be invited to speak to the panel at a meeting and be accompanied by a friend or representative.
- 3.6 After the meeting you will be advised of the outcome in writing. This will normally be within 10 school days of the meeting.
- 3.7 For most complaints the decision of the Governors is the last step in the procedure.

4.0 Complaints about the School Curriculum

4.1 There is a specific procedure for complaints about the school curriculum and matters relating to it, including the provision of information and charges. In general these are dealt with in a similar way to other complaints.

4.2 In this case, however, there are some specific differences:

- You may complain either to the LEA or the Governing Body in the first instance.
- The complaint will be investigated by whichever of these is responsible for the matter complained about.
- The Governing body will inform both the complainant and the LEA of the outcome of its investigation.
- There is a right of appeal to the LEA, and then to the Secretary of State.

5.0 Doubts and Uncertainties

5.1 If you are in doubt whether your complaint comes into this category or would like a copy of the full procedure for complaints relating to the school curriculum, please call the Children's Services and Lifelong Learning Section at the Civic Centre.

5.2 In general, internal school matters are the responsibility of the School's Governing Body. However, you may have a complaint which relates to something which is the Local Authority's responsibility. Arrangements for complaining to the Council can be obtained from the Children's Services and Lifelong Learning Section at the Civic Centre.

5.3 The LEA will provide advice to parents and the School on best practice procedures for dealing with complaints. The LEA will, where appropriate, check to make sure that the complaint has been reasonably dealt with. Where required, LEA officers may play a role in helping the School to investigate and resolve particular complaints.

6.0 Separate Complaint and Appeal Procedures

6.1 School Admissions and Exclusions

Separate complaint and appeal procedures exist for these matters and appropriate information is available on request from the school.

6.2 Special Needs

There is a separate appeal procedure for these matters, and appropriate information is available on request from the school.

6.3 Complaints against School Staff

If your complaint amounts to or includes an allegation against a member of staff, this may need to be considered under the School's Disciplinary Procedure for Employees, rather than the Complaint Procedure. You will be advised if these procedures are to be used in dealing with your complaint.

6.4 A complaint about the Local Education Authority

Procedures for complaining about the Local Education Authority are available from the Civic Centre. Complaints should be made in the first instance to the Head of the Service or section concerned.

6.4 If you are still not satisfied you may complain to the Director of Children's Services and Lifelong Learning.