



Leventhorpe
a business and enterprise academy

Governing Body Policy

Policy Title: Complaints

Policy no: R3

Committee: Resources

Staff Main Link: JCM

Last Review: November 2018 (amendments made in response to ESFA advice)

LEVENTHORPE

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Each day Leventhorpe makes many decisions and tries to do the best for all the children and to the community it serves. Your comments – either positive or negative – are helpful for future planning. Please let us know your views.

We know that it can feel uncomfortable to question or challenge, but if you do not express your concerns we cannot explain or take any remedial action.

If you are dissatisfied about the way a child is being treated, or any actions or lack of action by us, please feel able to tell us informally. We hope that most concerns can be resolved quickly and informally. In more serious instances or where we cannot reach resolution informally then you may wish to make a complaint. . If you have a concern and you are not a parent/carer you should in the first instance contact the office.

Arrangements for handling complaints from parents of children with SEND about the school's support are within the scope of this policy. Such complaints should first be brought to the attention of the SENCO; they will then be referred to this complaints policy.

Complaint by a Parent whose child no longer attends the school

Where Parents have removed their child from the school roll it is clearly impossible for the Governing Body to put things right for that child. However, the Governing Body has a duty of care to the remaining students and, where appropriate, the Headteacher and/or Governors will investigate the circumstances to satisfy themselves that no-one had acted inappropriately and that procedures and policies had been followed correctly. Complaints regarding incidents older than 3 months will not normally be investigated.

We undertake that:-

- Your complaint will be dealt with honestly, politely and in confidence.
- Your complaint will be looked into thoroughly and fairly.
- Your complaint will be acknowledged and dealt with as soon as possible and we will keep you informed.
- We will apologise if we have made a mistake.

How to make a complaint

First – Informal Stage If you have a concern about anything we do or if you wish to make a complaint you can do this by telephone, in person or in writing during term time. We hope that most complaints can be settled quickly and informally, either by putting matters right or by giving you an explanation. If you have a particular concern, or there is something you are unhappy about, or you do not understand why we are doing something in a particular way, please contact your child's Head of Year in the first instance. If you feel that your complaint has not been resolved

satisfactorily then you should contact the Headteacher either in writing or by speaking to the Headteacher's Personal Assistant. Following discussion with the Headteacher (or a nominated governor if more appropriate) if you feel that your complaint has still not been dealt with satisfactorily then there is a next step.

Second – Formal Stage

If you are not satisfied you can complain formally by completing a form, which is available from the Clerk to the Governors. Send the completed form to the Chair of Governors c/o The Clerk to the Governors at the school. The Chair will then arrange for your complaint to be investigated and considered and will reply within 20* academy days to give you a progress report and tell you what will happen next. When your complaint has been fully investigated you will be told of the outcome in writing.

Third Stage – Complaint heard by a Complaints Panel

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 2, you may request (in writing) that your complaint be dealt with at a further stage. In this case the Chair or a nominated Governor will convene a complaints panel. Governors will ensure that at least one member of the panel is independent of the management and running of the academy. The hearing will normally take place within 20* Academy working days of the receipt of the written request for Stage 3 investigation.

You will be invited to attend the panel hearing and you will have the right to be accompanied if you wish.

The aim of the Panel Hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the Panel's decision in writing within 7 academy working days after the date of the hearing.

The formal panel hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process.

The findings and recommendations of the panel will be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Headteacher. A written record will be kept of all complaints made along with details of whether they were resolved following a formal procedure, or progression to a panel hearing. The academy will record the action it takes as a result of complaints received (regardless of whether they are upheld).

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 act requests access to them

In the unlikely event that your complaint cannot be resolved by the complaints panel, there is a further step for certain categories of complaint. If you are not satisfied with the school's handling and investigation of your complaint then you may contact the

EFA (Education Funding Agency) who are responsible for ensuring that academies comply with their Funding Agreements.

The EFA will check whether the complaint has been dealt with properly by the academy and will consider complaints about academies that fall into any of the following three areas:

1. where there is undue delay or the academy did not comply with its own complaints procedure when considering a complaint
2. where the academy is in breach of its funding agreement with the Secretary of State
3. where an academy has failed to comply with any other legal obligation

The EFA cannot review or overturn an academy's decision about a complaint but they may ask the school to review its decision and/or ask the academy to change its complaints procedure so that it complies with legal requirements. Their contact details are

academyquestions@efa.education.gov.uk

Academies Central Unit
Education Funding Agency
Earlsdon Park
53 – 55 Butts Road
Coventry
CV1 3BH

Vexatious Complaints

The school will not respond to complaints that are vexatious, repeated or manifestly trivial. It may decline to deal with some complaints where the number and/or type of complaints made by a particular individual or family is unreasonable. If, at any stage of the complaints procedure, governors decide that a complaint is or has become vexatious they will advise the complainant that the school will not correspond on the matter further. Should correspondence continue, it will be read and filed but may receive no acknowledgement.

In instances where there is a breakdown of relations between the complainant and the school, a decision may be made to restrict contact. Any restrictions imposed should be appropriate and proportionate. The options that the school is most likely to consider are:

- requesting contact in a particular form (e.g. – letters only);
- requiring contact to take place with a named member of Staff (e.g. – Headteacher);
- restricting telephone calls to specified days and times;
- asking the complainant to enter into an agreement about his/her future contact with the school; and
- informing the complainant that if he/she still does not follow this advice (as stated above) any further correspondence that does not present significant

new matters or new information will not necessarily be acknowledged, but should be kept on file.

- if the complainant tries to reopen an issue that has already been examined through the complaints procedure, the Chair of the Governing Body may inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

*Please see **Policy R3 Appendix A** for complaints form – available on request from the school*

*every effort will be made to meet the timescales stated in this policy. If the nature of the complaint or the investigation is complicated then resolution may take longer. If this is the case then the school will keep the complainant up to date with likely revised timescales