



Avenue Primary School

# COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY AND FORM

USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH:  
POLICY & PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH VEXATIOUS CORRESPONDENCE AND COMPLAINTS

Adopted by Governing Body – 24<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2015

For review – 3 years

## **RATIONALE**

In any organisation, complaints will be made which need to be addressed. At The Avenue School we take any complaint seriously.

## **PURPOSE**

To ensure any complaint is dealt with in a consistent manner, fairly, openly and honestly.

It is a precondition to the operation of this policy that the complainant shall have made reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution and shall have acted in relation to the matter in a reasonable and measured way. The Chair of the Academy Council shall have a discretion, which will be exercised reasonably, not to allow a complaint to be pursued where this precondition has not been met.

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **First stage (informal):**

1. Any complaint should initially be directed towards the member of staff concerned, such as the class teacher.
2. If the above is not appropriate, the complaint should be referred to the Head of Year or the Deputy Head as appropriate. Only if the complaint is about the Headteacher should it be referred to the Chair of the Academy Council.
3. Complaints made to the Head or Deputy Head teacher will be acknowledged but may well be passed on to the appropriate member of staff to investigate and respond.

**Second stage:** This applies where an informal resolution has not succeeded.

1. The complainant must put the complaint in writing, addressed to the Headteacher, setting out briefly the facts and stating what it is that the complainant considers should have been done or where the Academy has not met reasonable expectations.
2. The complaint will be acknowledged in writing within two school days indicating how the complaint will be dealt with, in particular the investigation process.
3. An investigation will be carried out by a member of the Senior Leadership Team – made up of the Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher and an Assistant Headteacher – who will offer the complainant a meeting and who will speak to others involved. Whenever reasonably possible, the meeting with the complainant will take place within 15 school days of the written complaint being received.
4. The investigator will put her/his findings in writing and will indicate what, if any, steps should be taken to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done within 15 school days of the meeting with the complainant.
5. If the person investigating the complaint finds that there is a case to answer the following methods of redress may be offered:
  - ◆ an apology
  - ◆ an explanation

- ◆ action to put things right.
6. Any complaint relating to the Headteacher must be raised in the first instance with the Chair of the Academy Council (or Vice-chair in the absence of the Chair) who will, if an informal resolution cannot be reached, designate a Governor to investigate in the same way as in the first stage of the formal process outlined above.

**Third Stage:** The third stage of the formal procedure (if required) will be as follows:

1. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the investigator, she/he may request that the complaint be considered by the Complaints Panel of the Academy Council which will comprise at least three people not directly involved in the complaint, one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the Academy. The request must be in writing, addressed to the Governance Adviser to the Academy Council at the Academy, within 10 school days of the response being sent to the complainant and must set out briefly why the complainant is dissatisfied with the response.
2. The Governance Adviser will invite the Academy to put in writing its response to the complainant's reasons. The Academy will do this within 15 school days and at the end of that period (whether or not the Academy has responded) the Governance Adviser will convene a meeting of the Complaints Panel of the Academy Council. That meeting will be held as quickly as practicable given the need to find a date that is reasonably convenient for the complainant, the Academy and the members of the Panel. Whenever possible, the meeting will be held within 15 school days of the end of the Academy's response time. At any meeting, the complainant will be entitled to be accompanied by a friend but legal representation will not be allowed.
3. The meeting is not a court case and will be as informal as circumstances allow. The complainant will have the opportunity to put her/his reasons for dissatisfaction and to enlarge on them but may not introduce reasons that were not previously put in writing. The Academy will have the opportunity to put its side of things and each side, as well as the Panel members, will be able to ask questions. The complainant will have the opportunity to make final comments to the Panel.
4. The Panel may make findings and recommendations and a copy of those findings and recommendations will be
  - i. sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about
  - ii. available for inspection on the Academy premises by the Academy Trust and the Headteacher
5. The panel will formulate its response as quickly as reasonably possible, aiming to do so within 10 school days, and the Governance Adviser to the Academy Council will notify all concerned.
6. If a complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the Chair of the Academy Council may write to the complainant to inform him/her that the procedure has been completed and the matter closed.
7. A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.
8. 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 162A of the Education Act 2002 requests access to them.

## YOU HAVE A CONCERN OR COMPLAINT ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

Please read the following procedure

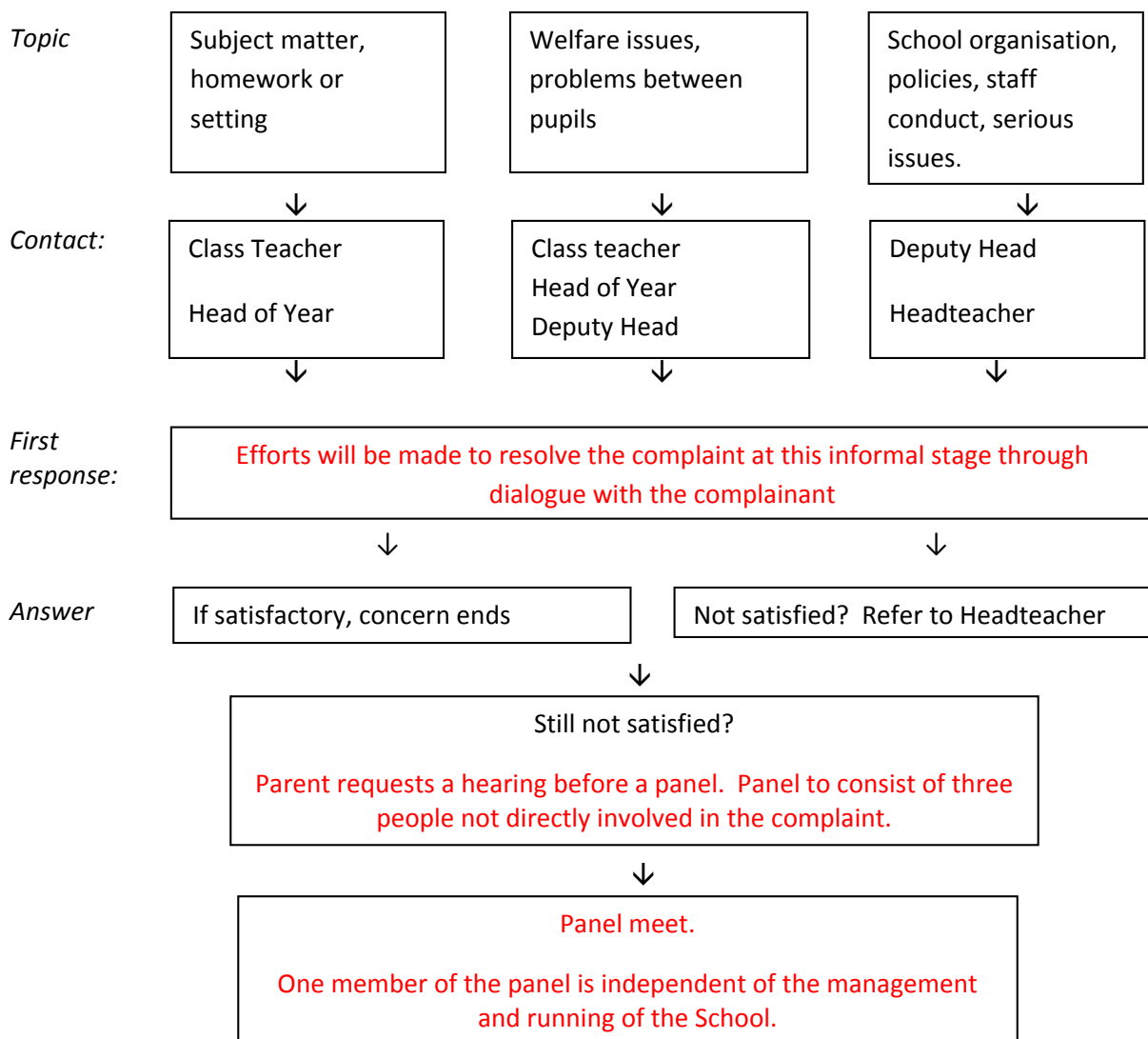
*When to contact us:* whenever you are concerned about something at our school or wish to complain

*Why?* we wish to have a supportive partnership in which problems are solved. This is far better for pupils than divisions between home and school.

*How?*

- Home/School Diary if you wish
- chat with class teacher
- telephone call if the issue is urgent : school office (01985 213383)
- letter before a formal complaint.

*Who?* Depends on the nature of the issue; the main options are:



**Please note:** If the complainant is still not satisfied that the complaint has been dealt with the EFA (Education Funding Agency) contact details will be given to the relevant individual.

*There is no formal procedure for praise. If you feel the school and/or The Academy Council have done something especially well, please let us know. It is helpful to know which aspects of our school are particularly valued by parents.*

**COMPLAINTS LOG**

This is to be initiated by the person receiving the complaint and passed to others for completion as appropriate.

Name of Complainant	Address / telephone number	Received by:	Date received	Dealt with by
Nature of Complaint (brief details)				
Action Taken				
Date matter closed				

Please ensure you bring all complaints to the attention of your Line Manager.

When the procedure is concluded, this form and all supporting evidence/documentation must be passed to the Headteacher's PA for filing.