



Parent and Public Complaints Policy and Procedure

This policy provides guidelines for the Academy's parent and public complaints procedure.

- To be minuted and adopted by Specialist, Early Years and Safeguarding Committee on 17th June 2019

Re- Written: May 2019

Review date: May 2022

CONTENTS

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Aims of this Policy
- 3 The Complaints Process
- 4 Referral to the EFA
- 5 Complaints that are Handled Externally
- 6 Monitoring and Review

Version Number	Date written/ ammended	Comments	Date approved	Author	Approved by
1	May 2019	Complete rewrite of complaints policy		BW	

1 Introduction

1.1 Within Brookside Academy we aim to make all decisions which affect parents and the local community in a fair and transparent way. Where any stakeholder feels that this is not the case, we have a robust procedure through which any complaint can be considered and resolved. Complaints are a key part of a constructive process that allows schools to improve and, as such, it is crucial that there is a process to handle them fairly and respectfully.

1.2 This policy details the complaints procedure for all parents/carers of Academy pupils, members of each school's local community, ex-pupils and any third party who has concerns about the school. Members of Academy staff should consult the Whistle Blowing Policy and will not be considered in this document.

1.3 Throughout this policy the term 'working days' shall refer to weekdays all year round (including INSET days).

2 Aims of this Policy

The aims of this policy are:

- i. to provide clear guidelines for individuals wishing to make a complaint, as to how a complaint may be lodged and to whom;
- ii. to clarify to the individual making a complaint how and when the Academy will respond;
- iii. to advise individuals who have complaints about issues that are out of the Academy's control how and to whom they can register their complaint;
- iv. by doing the above, encourage a process of constructive criticism with the ultimate aim of improving practice within the Academy; and
- v. to provide clarity and support to members of staff about how to deal with complaints.

3 The Complaints Process

3.1 Stage 1: Registering an informal complaint

The Academy encourages informal resolution of complaints wherever possible. Any individual wishing to make a complaint should therefore do so in person, by phone or in writing to an appropriate member of Academy staff for the nature of the complaint. For a parent this is often the child's teacher. Any individual who is unsure with whom it is appropriate to discuss a complaint should speak to a member of front office staff.

3.2 Stage 1: How the school will respond

Once a complaint has been received by an appropriate member of staff, he/she shall discuss the issue informally with the individual making the complaint and try to resolve the issue directly.

If the complaint cannot be resolved, either because the member of staff does not feel able to do so or because complainant is not satisfied, the complaints process will move to stage 2 (see 3.3).

3.3 Stage 2: Registering a formal complaint

Except when a complaint is judged by the head teacher to be particularly serious, a formal complaint will not be accepted unless an informal complaint has already been registered. A formal complaint should be made to the school's Head Teacher in writing, in person (by appointment) or by telephone. The complainant should make it clear that they are making a formal complaint. On receipt of a complaint, a log will be opened and all subsequent meetings and communications with the complainant will be logged.

3.4 Stage 2: How the school will respond

The Head Teacher will respond to the complaint within 48 hours. During school holidays this timescale may not be possible, but the response will not be unreasonably delayed. Depending on the nature of the complaint this response may address the issue directly or may acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint and request more time to consider/investigate the matter. The amount of time requested for any further consideration by the Head Teacher shall not be more than five days unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If the Head Teacher feels that it is appropriate, or because the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of stage 2, the complaints process will move to stage 3.

3.5 Stage 3: Mediation

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of stage 2, the process will move to the mediation stage. The complainant will be invited to meet with a member of the Academy governing body who will contact the complainant within two working days and arrange to meet within five days. The purpose of this meeting is to allow the complainant to outline the complaint to a person who is not involved in the issue. The mediator will talk to all parties involved and then meet the complainant to try to find a reasonable solution to the complaint.

3.6 Stage 3: How the mediator will respond

Following the meeting, the mediator will write to the complainant with a summary of any agreed actions or decisions. The mediator will ensure that all agreements are communicated to the relevant members of staff. The mediator will follow up the situation at a later date agreed by both parties, either by 'phone, email or in a meeting.

3.7 Stage 4: Appeal to the Governing Body

A complaint can usually only progress to stage 4, after passing through stages 1, 2 and 3 as detailed above. However, in exceptional circumstances, e.g. if a serious complaint is made against a Head Teacher, it may be appropriate for a complaint to be elevated to the Governing Body Panel without having progressed through the earlier stages of the complaints process. If a complainant wishes to elevate his/her complaint to the Chair of the Board, a request in writing to do so should be given to the Clerk to the Academy (contactable via the front office) within 5 working days of receipt of the mediator's response to the complaint.

3.8 Stage 4: How the Chair of Governors will respond

The clerk shall acknowledge receipt of the request within 5 working days. The Chair of Governors shall, at that point, convene a panel to hear the complaint. In doing so, The Chair of Governors shall ensure that:

- i. the individual making the complaint is invited to attend the hearing at least 5 days before the date of the hearing;
- ii. it is made clear to the individual making the complaint that s/he may be accompanied at the hearing by one other individual if they wish;
- iii. that one member of the panel is independent from the management and running of the Academy; and
- iv. anyone involved in the complaint up to this point will not be on the panel.

The panel's judgement is the ultimate decision that can be obtained within the Academy structure.

4 Referral to the EFA

4.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with the Academy's final response, he/she may make a complaint to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) Please visit:

www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/complaintsprocedure/b00212240/making-complaint-school

4.2 Please note that the EFA will not usually consider complaints unless the complainant has attempted to resolve the issue with the school directly.

5 Complaints that are Handled Externally

5.1 Some complaints either cannot be dealt with by the Academy (because the Academy is not the ultimate decision-making authority) and/or should be directed to the EFA. The following are examples of complaints that are handled externally:

Complaints about the content of the school curriculum. Complainants should address their complaints to the Department of Education (DfE)

Complaints about admissions into an academy's Reception year group. Complainants should address their complaints to Somerset Local Authority.

Complaints from parents about the school's support of pupils with SEN are within the scope of this complaint's procedure. However, where parents have specific complaints about the Education Health and Care (EHC) plan procedures, or about the content of their child's EHC plan, these should be referred to the Local Authority. This is in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice.

When the Academy is not complying with its own Complaints Policy. Complainants should address their complaints to the EFA.

When the Academy is in breach of its funding agreement with the Secretary of State. Complainants should address their complaints to the EFA.

5.2 More information about serious complaints relating to the overall running of the school can be found in the Academy's Whistleblowing Policy which can be found on our Website.

6 Monitoring and Review

6.1 The Complaints Policy shall be reviewed by the Board of Governors every three years, following any major procedural change or following any serious incident that requires action.