



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Written by	Reviewed by	Ratified by	Ratified on	Status
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Introduction

At Hebden Green School we strive to provide an outstanding education for all pupils. The headteacher and staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents and carers. However, it is important that the school has procedures in place through which parents and carers can exercise their right to complain about aspects of the school's policy or practice, if they have concerns which have not been resolved through the normal channels of communication. This policy sets out the procedures which the school follows in such cases.

If any parents or carers are unhappy with the education and care that their child is receiving, or have any concerns relating to the school, we encourage them to talk to the child's pastoral or subject teacher immediately.

If any parents or carers are unhappy with aspects of the residential provision, we encourage them to talk to the residential team immediately. Both school and residential staff can always be contacted by telephone, writing a note in the home school communication book, by email or by writing a letter.

We always seek to resolve any concerns as quickly as possible, in the best interests of the child. In the vast majority of such cases, issues can be swiftly resolved to the satisfaction of parents and carers.

We deal with all formal complaints in accordance with procedures laid down by the Local Authority (LA). If the school itself, including the governing body, cannot resolve a complaint, those concerned can refer the matter to the LA.

All parents and carers have the right, as a last resort, to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education, if they still feel that their complaint has not been properly addressed. Parents may also contact Ofsted.

Aims and objectives

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints, and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding. In all cases, we put the interests of the child above all else. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

The aims of this policy are to:

- assure all parents that we will consider all complaints seriously;
- set out how we will manage the complaints process;
- make clear the roles and responsibilities of staff in responding to any complaints;
- provide information to parents and carers if they wish to make a complaint.

The complaints process

If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education and care that we are providing, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's pastoral or subject teacher. In our experience, most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making excellent progress; they naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before it seriously affects the child's progress.

Where parents or carers feel that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the pastoral or subject teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should discuss it with their child's department lead. They can be contacted by telephone, by the home school communication book, by letter or by email. A parent may then choose to make a complaint to the headteacher, Helen Ashley, if the parent or carer feels that the complaint has not been sufficiently resolved. Helen Ashley considers any such complaint very seriously, and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved by this stage. (This is stage 1 and is the informal stage in the procedure.)

If a parent is concerned about anything to do with our residential department, we would again ask that they telephone or write a note to the residential team, either to a team member or to Lesley Ellison the Head of Care. As above, if the parent does not feel that their complaint has been resolved by talking directly to the residential team, they may discuss their concern with the deputy head teacher and then the head teacher.

If a parent is concerned about any of the therapies that we provide, including nursing, physiotherapy and speech and language, please contact the relevant therapy team member. Parents or carers may also wish to talk to a member of the senior leadership team about their complaint.

Although the headteacher is not the line manager of our therapy colleagues, very effective relationships ensure that we can usually work together to resolve any complaints or concerns. The headteacher promotes cohesive and mutually respectful relationships.

If complaints or concerns regarding therapy provision cannot be managed within school, then a more formal complaint needs to be made to the local health authority, in the first instance to Central and Eastern Cheshire PCT, Universal House, Erf Way, Pochin Way, Middlewich, Cheshire, CW10 0QJ or 01606 275303 and follow their procedures.

Members of the governing body who are approached informally by a parent or carer with a complaint about the school will always refer the parent back to the headteacher or an appropriate member of the school staff. Only when such steps at stage 1 have been followed and the parent remains dissatisfied should the complaint be taken forward to the governing body.

Only if an informal complaint at stage 1 fails to resolve the matter should a formal complaint be made to the governing body (stage 2). This must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint, and how the school has handled it so far. The parent should again send this written complaint to the chair of governors, Mrs Ashley Roberts.

The chair of Governors will investigate the issue to ensure that stage 1 of the process has been followed and that the school has responded properly to the complaint at the informal stage.

The governing body will consider all written complaints within three weeks of receipt. It will arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint, and will invite the person making it to attend the meeting, so that s/he can explain the complaint in more detail. The school gives the complainant at least five days' notice of the meeting, and the opportunity to submit further information in writing if they so wish.

The parent or carer may take a friend, representative or interpreter with them to the meeting if they so wish.

After hearing the complaint and all the evidence, the governors' panel may ask questions to clarify any issues. They will also hear from the headteacher who will present the school's position and will question her about this. The panel will then consider their decision and inform the parent about it in writing. The governors do all they can at this stage (stage 2) to resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction.

If the complaint is not resolved, a parent may make representation to the LA (stage 3). Further information about how to do this is available from the school or from the LA. A further meeting is chaired by an independent person, who considers all the evidence and makes a further judgement in an attempt to resolve the complaint.

If any parent is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then s/he is entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education (stage 4).

Monitoring and review

The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The headteacher logs all complaints received by the school, and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis.

Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents and carers, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.