



Complaints Policy

Procedures for dealing with complaints

At Skinners' Academy, we undertake to provide a friendly and safe environment in which students will be helped to achieve their potential, both academically and socially. We recognise that sometimes things can go wrong and parents, carers and members of the public may need to make a complaint or raise concerns they have with the Academy. This policy tells you what to do if this happens.

This policy refers to 'parents/carers' but this should be regarded as referring equally to a member of the public who makes a complaint.

This policy is available on request to parents of students and prospective students as well as members of public, and is published on the Academy's website at www.skinnersacademy.org.uk. In addition, translation of this policy and any subsequent papers related to its use, will be available on request.

Furthermore, any written correspondence relating to a complaint can be made available in the parents' mother tongue. In addition, during a complaints process, where any participant's spoken English is limited we will provide an interpreter who is neutral to both the Academy and the participant.

Please note, separate procedures are in place in respect of appeals relating to Admission and Exclusion decisions. Details of these procedures are available from the Academy.

INFORMAL STAGE

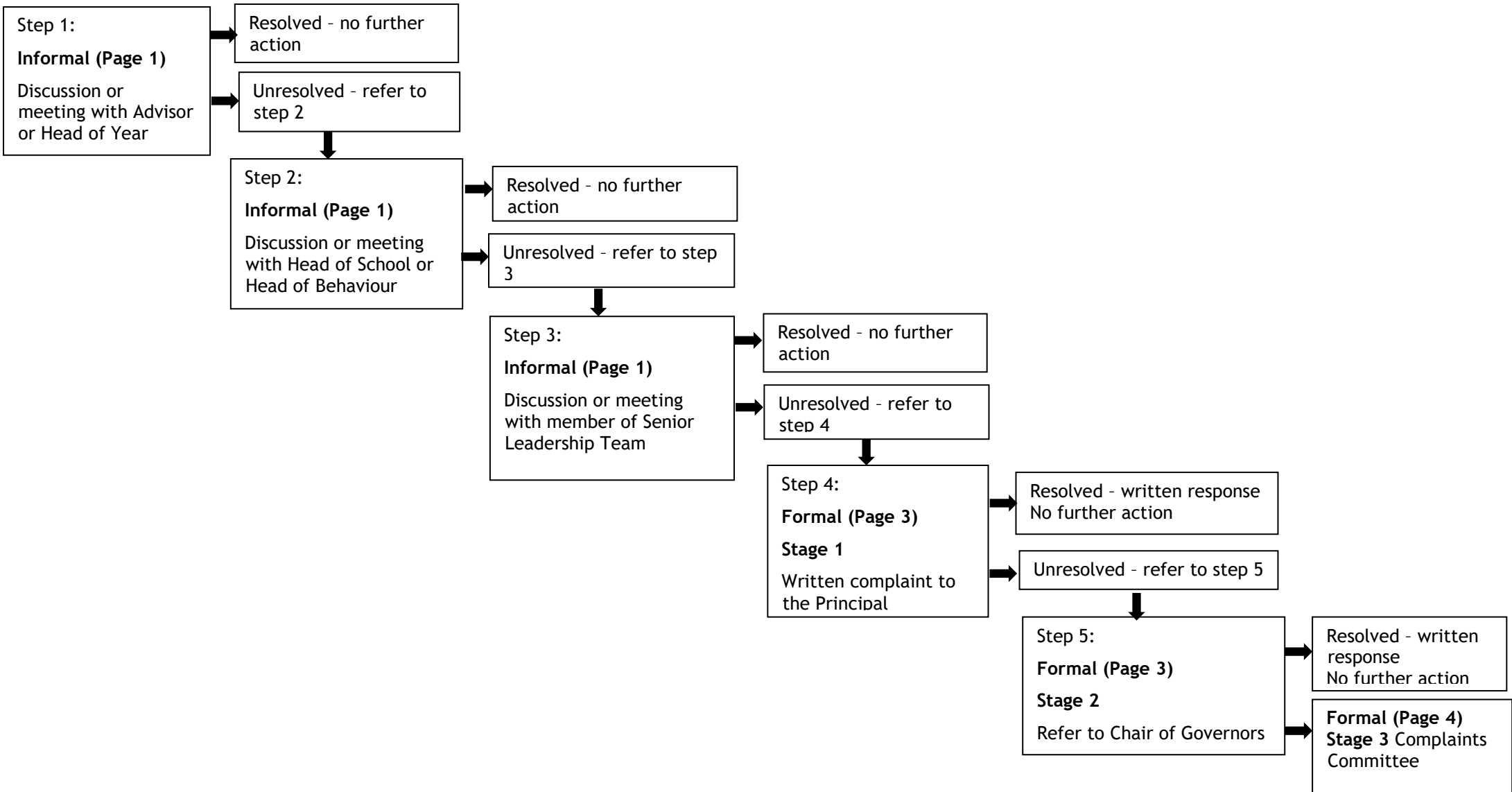
Most complaints/issues can be resolved informally and quickly by discussion with the member of staff concerned or the Principal.

Any complaint/issue that is put in writing should be written clearly, outlining all the issues and what it is hoped the preferred outcome should be. All complaints will be acknowledged in writing within 5 working days.

Parent/carers should make an appointment to discuss their concerns with the member of staff who knows about the issue or incident. If the complaint relates to a student, ideally the member of staff concerned should be directly involved with the student, for example, class teacher or house advisor.

The member of staff will usually write notes during the meeting. Parents/carers can ask for a copy of these notes.

Flowchart of procedure



1) FORMAL STAGE

There are three formal stages:

Stage 1

If a parent/carer is still dissatisfied after the informal stage, they, or the member of staff shall refer the matter to the Principal. This should be done in writing, as this will often make the situation clear to all involved parties.

The Principal will respond within 5 working days either verbally or in writing.

If the issue is complex the Principal may need to speak to other staff and students to investigate the concerns. This should happen within 10 school days. If this timescale cannot be met, the Principal will inform the parent/carer that this will take longer, explain the reasons for this and give a timescale for when the investigation will be completed.

Stage 2

After the Principal's investigation, if the complaint is still not resolved to the parent/carer's satisfaction, it shall be referred to the Chair of Governors. This should be in writing to the Chair at the Academy address. The Principal can also refer the complaint to the Chair of Governors.

If the Principal is the subject of the complaint, it should be addressed to the Chair of Governors and miss out Stage 1.

The Chair of Governors will respond within 10 working days and will, at his/her discretion, either;

- offer to meet with the parent/carer or other complainant, at a mutually convenient time;
- delegate this responsibility to another governor; or, move the process immediately to Stage 3.

The Chair of Governors has 15 school days to investigate the complaint. If it cannot be resolved within this time, the Chair will inform the complainant and explain why it is taking longer. Reasons for this may be that the complaint is complex and needs more time or someone involved is absent through sickness or holidays. The Chair of Governors will, however, give a realistic timescale for when the complaint should be resolved. The Chair will inform the complainant of when it is expected that the investigation should be completed.

If the Chair of Governors can resolve the complaint there is no need to move to Stage 3.

As far as possible it is recommended that action under Stage 3 and the referral to a Complaints Committees is used as last resort.

Stage 3

If the complaint is still not resolved to the parent/carer's satisfaction, or the Chair of Governors feels that it is necessary, s/he can set up a Complaints Panel to consider the complaint.

The Chair of Governors can appoint an investigating officer to gather evidence and conduct preliminary interviews on the Chair's behalf. The investigating officer will provide a detailed report of his/her investigation of the complaint. Parents/carers will be given a copy of this report. It is important that the investigating officer is seen as impartial, so if the investigating officer is another governor, s/he cannot be a member of the associated Complaints Panel.

The Complaints Panel is made up of three people, two members of the Academy's governing body who were not directly involved in the matter being complained about, and one person who is independent of the management and running of the Academy.

The Complaints Panel should meet at a time convenient to all parties. The complainant, the Principal and any member of staff the complaint is about will be invited to the meeting. Any person invited can bring a friend if they wish. This friend will usually be a work place colleague or union adviser. The Chair of the Panel will need to decide how to consider any new evidence which either party wishes to submit at this stage. The Complaints Panel will consider any written material, and also give the person making the complaint, the Principal, and staff an opportunity to state their case and to question others present. The committee will ensure that all present are treated fairly. The meeting will be minuted by the Clerk to Governors and everyone present will be given a copy of the minutes.

The Panel will give its decision, in writing, within five Academy days after the meeting, along with the reasons for their decision.

If after this Academy based process the complaint is still not resolved to the parent/carer's satisfaction, they should write to the Secretary of State, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT.

If a complaint is not from a parent/carer of a student of the academy (an example being a member of the public) this should be made directly to the Principal, preferably in writing.

All complaints will be recorded formally by the Academy in a central log which will indicate at which stage the complaint was resolved. All correspondence, statements and records of complaints are to be kept confidential. Parents and members of the public may request details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding academic year.

It should be noted that academies do not need to consider complaints made more than one year after the incident/situation. If a complaint is made about an issue that is over a year old, the Academy will write to the complainant explaining this is the case.