



Complaints Policy

Principal:	Shereka James
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1. Introduction

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.

2. Definition

A Concern may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.

A Complaint may be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the Complaints procedure. The Academy takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

3. How to Raise a Complaint

This Complaints Policy is not limited to parents or carers of students that are registered at the Academy. Any person who has a **legitimate interest in the Academy provision** may make a complaint to the Academy about any provision of facilities or services that we provide.

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. Complaints should be sent to enquiries@skinnersacademy.org.uk or by post to the Academy addressed to the Principal.

Informal Stage

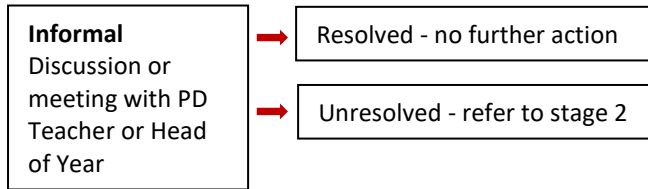
Complaints at this stage do not need to be put in writing although parents/carers may do so if they wish. Any complaint/issue that is put in writing should be written clearly, outlining all the issues and what it is hoped the preferred outcome should be. All complaints will be acknowledged in writing within 10 Academy 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 Personal Development (PD) teacher/Head of Year. If in doubt as to whom should receive the complaint, please

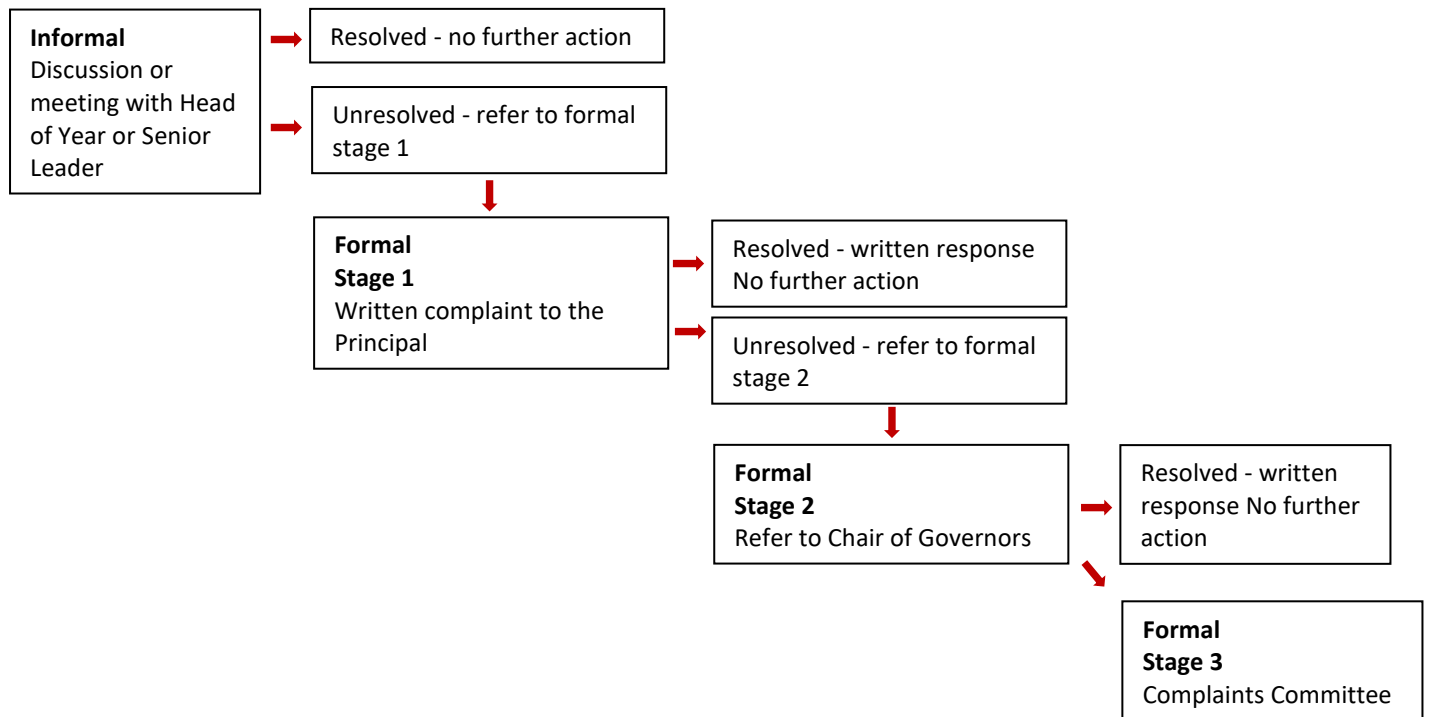
send the complaint to enquiries@skiddersacademy.org.uk and it will be sent to the relevant person who will reply in line with process set out below.

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

Stage 1



Stage 2



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 with 5 Academy days of an informal discussion or meeting.

The Principal will acknowledge receipt within 5 Academy 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 Academy 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 – Jocelyn Mitchell at the Academy address and the Clerk of Governors - Ammar Ahmed should be copied in. 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 acknowledge receipt within 10 Academy 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 Academy 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.

Stage 3

If the complaint is still not resolved to the parent/carer's satisfaction, the Chair of Governor 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 governors, who are not directly involved in the matter being complained about.

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. Those attending has

the right to be accompanied if they wish. However, only in exceptional circumstances is it appropriate for the Academy or the complainant to bring legal representation. The hearing is not a form of legal proceedings where anyone's legal rights and freedoms will be determined. The hearing's purpose is to achieve reconciliation and to put things right that may have gone wrong.

In certain exceptional circumstances (and at the Panel Chair's absolute discretion) legal representation may be allowed, for example where an Academy employee is a witness in a complaint, they may be entitled to bring legal or union representation. 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 including the findings and recommendations that it has made, in writing, within 10 Academy days after the meeting, along with the reasons for their decision to: the complainant, and where relevant, the person complained about. It will also ensure that a copy of those findings and recommendations are available for inspection on the Academy premises by the Proprietor and the Principal.

Complaints against the chair of governors or any individual governors are to be made to the clerk to the governing body Ammar Ahmed ammar.ahmed@skidders.org.uk

If after this Academy based process has been completed the complaint is still not resolved to the parent/carer's satisfaction, they can contact the ESFA as follows:

- calling the National Helpline on 0370 000 2288
- using the ESFA's contact form at:
https://form.education.gov.uk/service/Contact_the_Department_for_Education
- writing to it at the address below:
Academy Complaints and Customer Insight Unit
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Cheylesmore House
5 Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

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 in writing, directly to the Principal.

A written record of all formal complaints will be kept by the Academy in a central log which will indicate whether it was resolved following a formal procedure or proceeded to a panel hearing. 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. We will only consider complaints outside of this timeframe in exceptional circumstances.

4. Timescales

You must raise the complaint ideally **within 10 Academy days** of the incident and certainly within **three months**; where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame only if exceptional circumstances apply.

5. Complaints Outside of Term Time

An Academy day is defined as a calendared school day during term time. We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first Academy day after the holiday period.

6. Scope

This policy covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by the Academy, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures including:

- Admissions; Exclusions; Statutory Assessment of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND); matters likely to require a child protection conference; whistleblowing; staff grievances; staff conduct complaints.

Complaints about services provided by other suppliers or service providers who may use Academy premises or facilities; withdrawal from the curriculum (parents and carers can withdraw their child from any aspect of Religious Education, including the Daily Act of Collective Worship without explaining why should be considered under this policy). Details of these procedures are available from the Academy.

7. Resolving Complaints

At each stage of the procedure, the Academy wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- An explanation
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- An assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- An explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- An undertaking to review Academy policies in light of the complaint
- An apology

8. Withdrawal

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.