



Complaints Policy

Staff Responsible: Head of School

Approved by: Jane Norris

Date: 20/09/19

Last reviewed on: 07.09.20

Next review due by: Sep 2021

Ripplevale School Complaints Procedure

‘Ripplevale School provides a caring, learning environment where our students make meaningful progress, relative to their individual starting points. Our aim is to encourage them to develop appropriate personal, social and employable skills enabling them to become confident, independent and aspiring young people.’

Introduction

The Directors of Ripplevale School have produced this policy after consultation with staff and parents. It sets out the way in which this school will deal with complaints.

It is in the interests of everyone that all parties involved in any complaint conduct themselves in a professional, courteous and respectful manner at all times.

It is in the interests of everyone that complaints and responses are dealt with promptly, at all stages.

Definition of a complaint

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’*

A complaint or concern may be made by a person or persons with a legitimate interest in the school about the practices or policies of the school, the conduct, action or omissions of members of staff employed at the school or about the standard of teaching.

Complaints and concerns may be written or verbal and must be addressed to the Head of School. It is not always appropriate to ask for complaints to be put in writing as this might unnecessarily formalise the situation, resulting in the complainant taking a more defensive or entrenched position and making the conflict more difficult to resolve.

The Head of School will endeavour to deal with the complaint or concern in the same manner to the satisfaction of all parties concerned.

Responsibilities

The conduct of the school is under the direction of the Directors. The Head of School is responsible for the internal organisation and leadership of the school.

- This makes the Head of School responsible for investigating written complaints in the first instance and if appropriate referring complaints to other members of staff to deal with.

- The Directors may be called upon to consider, resolve and or adjudicate if complaints are referred to them by the Head of School or by a complainant who is not satisfied with the initial outcome of an investigation.
- If the complaint is not resolved at school, the interested parties have recourse to the Directors or to the legal process.

In the event of a complaint being made direct to a member of the Directors, the complainant should be advised to speak to the Head of School, so that an attempt can be made to resolve the issue less formally. Directors must not prejudice themselves by discussing the complaint, as this would prevent their participating in a panel at a later stage. If at any point it appears that there are issues regarding school staff that may need to be dealt with under the disciplinary or other staffing procedures, personnel advice should be sought.

Aims

- To underpin the school's aims and objectives by giving due consideration to the complaints.
- To ensure that all complaints are considered fully, fairly, confidentially, promptly, thoroughly and in the first instance, on an informal basis.
- To ensure that there is an effective partnership between school, staff, parents and other interested parties.
- In the absence of a resolution to the satisfaction of the complainant to issue a clear decision that will enable the complainant, the Head of School or the Directors to consider how, if at all, the matter should be taken further.
- To ensure that all members of the school community can have their points of view heard.

The Directors may be called upon to consider, resolve and or adjudicate if complaints are made to them by the Head of School or by a complainant who is not satisfied with the result of the informal process.

Possible Outcomes at the Informal Stage

- The matter is resolved.
- When informal procedures have been exhausted, complainants should be informed clearly by the Head of School that the matter about which they complained has been dealt with appropriately by staff within the context of the school policies and procedures.
- The complaint has been found by the Head of School to be valid and that the Head of School within his/her responsibility for the overall internal leadership of the school will take appropriate action.
- The Head of School or the complainant will refer the matter to the Directors for their consideration.

The Formal Procedure

- If informal attempts to settle the complaint have failed to satisfy the complainant, they should set out the complaint fully in writing and submit this to the Directors. Where this is not possible because of literacy or second language considerations, the complaint should be made orally and where necessary arrangements for interpretations should be made.
- The Directors will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within three days.
- The Directors will be provided with copies of the complaint and all other relevant documentation.
- Directors will investigate the complaint and write to parents/carers with outcomes
- Where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with above and formally request a hearing, this must take place before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved on the matter detailed in the complaint;
- At least five working days' notice of any hearing will be given to all concerned
- Ensure that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one member is independent of the leadership and running of the school
- All parties involved in the dispute may be accompanied, if desired, by a friend, representative or an interpreter and may call witnesses.
- The panel, to make findings and recommendations and that a copy of those findings and recommendations is:-
 - i) Sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and is
 - ii) Available for inspection on the school premises by the Directors and the Head of School.

If the Complaint is Against the Head of School:

- The complainant will present his or her case and call any witnesses.
- The Directors and Head of School will have the opportunity to question the complainant and witnesses.
- The Head of School will have the opportunity to respond to the complaint and call witnesses if appropriate.
- The panel and the complainant will have the opportunity to question the Head of School and witnesses.

- The Head of School, followed by the complainant, will summarise their positions.

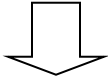
All but the Directors and independent panel member/s will withdraw while a panel decision is reached.

When the evidence has been fully considered the panel will make findings and recommendations. The panel will notify, in writing, all interested parties of the outcome including the complainant, person complained about (where relevant), Head of School and Proprietors. An explanation will be given of the conclusion, the reason for it, and any action taken, including details of any requests made of those complained against to take particular actions in respect of the complaint. This will be done as quickly as possible but within a maximum of five working days.

Written records of how all complaints, informal, formal and those going to panel hearing, are resolved will be maintained. **All** correspondence statements and records kept are to be confidential with the exception of access being granted for the Secretary of State and Ofsted Inspectors. Copies of any findings will remain on the school premises and be made available as required.

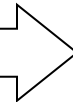
Informal

Complaint at school level – complainant should try and resolve the problem with the school. The school will respond to any complaints at this level within five days.



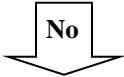
Resolved?

Yes

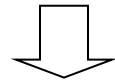


No further action

No



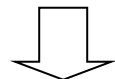
Complainant will be given copy of the complaint form and an offer of support in completing it if required.



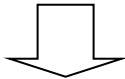
Formal – Stage 1

Completed form received by school.

Is complaint about areas of the Head of School's responsibility?



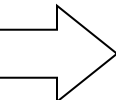
Head of School responsibility; Head of School deals with the matter or designates senior members of staff to investigate; this would usually be PA to the Senior Leadership Team, the school's complaints coordinator.



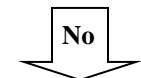
Resolved?

Yes

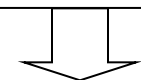
No further action.



No



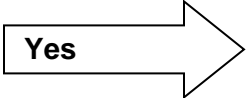
Complainant wishes to move to stage 2 of the formal complaint procedure and notifies the school in writing within 15 working days.



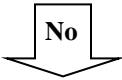
Formal – Stage 2

Complaint form passes to the nominated complaints Director to review whether the complaint has been properly dealt with.

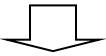
Resolved?



No further action.



A complaints panel is set up to consider the complaint within 15 working days of the complaint being passed to the Directors. The panel consists of two Directors who are independent of Ripplevale School who will have no prior knowledge of the complaint and they will consider written and verbal submissions from the complainant and the Head of School.



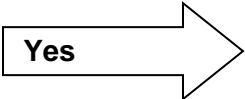
The panel meets to consider the complaint and make a final decision on behalf of the school.



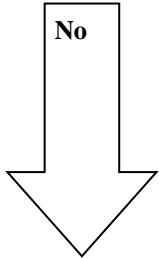
Panel writes to complainant with its conclusion within 5 working days of the meeting.



Resolved?



No further action.



The complainant may wish to write to Ofsted if they feel the school has acted unreasonably or not followed the correct procedures.

Concern Form

Please complete and return to Jane Norris, Head of School, Ripplevale School who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address: Postcode: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number:
Please give details of your concern, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Concern referred to:

Date:

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UPDATE SCHEDULE

Version	Reviewed	Reason for update
1	June 2017	Statutory update
2	November 2019	Statutory update
3	07.09.20	Annual review