



Complaints Procedure

Version Control			
Date		October 2016	
Review Date			
Authorised by the Governing Body			
Version	Author	Date	Changes
0.1	SLT	5-10-2016	Pre-Edited Document
1.0	CW	6-10-16	Additional stage of complaint procedure added

Achieving excellence together

Aldridge School An Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, students and volunteers to share in this commitment.

**Aldridge School
An Academy**

Complaints Procedure

Introduction

It is important that all steps are taken to deal with concerns seriously because this will reduce the numbers which develop into formal complaints.

Concerns should normally be referred to the appropriate staff member. The aim will be to reach resolution at that stage.

Formal procedures will only be invoked when informal attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further. A formal complaint may be initiated by writing to the school.

Our complaints procedure aims to:

- Encourage resolution of problems by informal means
- Be publicised and accessible
- Be simple
- Be impartial
- Be non-adversarial
- Be time limited
- Keep people informed
- Ensure full and fair investigation
- Respect confidentiality
- Provide effective response and redress if necessary
- Provide information to inform future practice

Investigation

Therefore **at each stage** when an investigation takes place, it is important to:

- Establish what happened
- Establish who is/was involved
- Understand nature of complaint
- Meet with the complainant (if the complainant wishes it)
- Establish what redress is expected (it must be realistic)
- Interview those involved, allow them to respond and be represented
- Be open minded
- Keep records

Resolution – might be one of, or combination of:

- Acknowledge the complaint is not valid in whole/part
- Acknowledge complaint is valid in whole/part and/or provide
- An apology
- An explanation

Achieving excellence together

Aldridge School An Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, students and volunteers to share in this commitment.

- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently
- An assurance that it will not recur and steps taken to achieve this
- A review of school policy

Vexatious Complaints

Our aim is to resolve matters and therefore limit the number of complaints that become protracted. However, there will be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to re-open the same issue, the Chair of Governing Body will inform them, in writing, that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

It must be noted that certain complaints will fall outside the remit of these procedures.

These are likely to include:

Staff grievance, staff disciplinary, staff dismissal and any other issues already covered by the other policies drawn up by the Governing Body.

The formal complaints procedure

If the complaint has not been dealt with by informal means the following will occur:

Stage 1 – Complaint heard by staff member (but not the subject of the complaint)

- At this stage the staff member will use the steps set out in the investigation and resolution sections of the introduction
- It should normally be possible to define the outcome of the complaint within 15 school days of the start of this stage.

Stage 2 – Complaint heard by Faculty Leader/Senior member of staff (but not the subject of the complaint)

- At this stage the staff member will use the steps set out in the investigation and resolution sections of the introduction.
- It should normally be possible to define the outcome of the complaint within 15 school days of the start of this stage.

Stage 3 – Complaint heard by Headteacher (if not the subject of the complaint)

- At this stage the staff member will use the steps set out in the investigation and resolution sections of the introduction.
- It should normally be possible to define the outcome of the complaint within 15 school days of the start of this stage.

Stage 4 – Complaint heard by the relevant Committee of Governing Body or Complaints Panel.

Achieving excellence together

Aldridge School An Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, students and volunteers to share in this commitment.

- At this stage the committee will use the steps set out in the investigation and resolution sections of the introduction.
- It should normally be possible to define the outcome of the complaint within 15 school days of the start of this stage.

Procedure for Governing Body Committee or Complaints Panel to deal with a complaint at Stage 3.

When a complaint is referred to the panel will meet within 15 school days of the complaint. Therefore the Clerk will:

- Set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible.
- Collate any written materials and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing
- Meet and welcome the parties as they arrive at the hearing
- Record the proceedings
- Notify all parties of the panel's decision within 5 working days of the meeting.

The Chairman of the panel will ensure that:

- The remit of the panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption
- The issues are addressed
- Key findings of fact are made
- Parents and others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease.
- The hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy
- The panel is open minded and acting independently
- No member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- Each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions
- Written material is seen by all parties. If a new issue arises it would be useful to give all parties the opportunity to consider and comment on it.

The meeting will follow the set procedure.

- The hearing is as informal as possible
- Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence
- After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses.
- The headteacher may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each spoken.

- The headteacher is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witness
- The complainant may question both the headteacher and the witnesses after each has spoken
- The panel may ask question at any point
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint
- The headteacher is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
- The chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within a set time scale.
- The notification will normally be in writing not less than 5 school days after the hearing

The Panel or Committee can only:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- Recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.