

School Complaints



Redbridge Community School

Person responsible -	Richard Taylor, Assistant Headteacher
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1. Introduction

1.1 This policy should be used for:

Complaints relating to the schooling of your child

Complaints about the education and care provided to pupils at the school

Complaints about the school's operational arrangements

1.2 This policy is limited to matters which can reasonably be investigated and therefore complaints should relate to matters which have occurred within the last 12 months.

This policy should not be used for:

- a) Complaints by staff relating to grievances about their employment
- b) Complaints about the actions of a governor
- c) Complaints about the actions of another parent
- d) Allegations of abuse
- e) Issues between the school and community groups/PTA

1.3 These matters will be dealt with by:

- a) Complaints by staff relating to grievances about their employment (There is a separate staff grievance procedure)
- b) Complaints about the actions of a governor (This should be reported to Chairman of the Governing Body in the first instance, **and considered with reference to the Southampton City Council Governors Code of Conduct**)
- c) Complaints about the actions of another parent (This should be reported to the Headteacher who will investigate whether action can be taken by the school)
- d) Allegations of abuse (Any allegations of abuse should be discussed with the Headteacher or a senior staff member in the first instance. **For a definition of abuse, refer to the school's Child Protection/Safeguarding policy(s).**)
- e) Issues between the school and community groups/PTA (These will be resolved informally by discussion)

2. Status

Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 states the need to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school and to any community facilities or services the school provides. The law also requires the complaints procedure to be publicised.

2.1 Purpose

The school's values are concerned with meeting the needs of pupils, parents and other stakeholders. The governing body believes that feedback is an important ingredient in self-evaluation and raising standards. All stakeholders should feel that their concerns or complaints can be voiced and will be considered seriously.

The school takes informal concerns seriously and aims to resolve them at the earliest stage in order to reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints.

The underlying principle is that concerns will be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures. The requirement to have a complaints procedure will not in any way undermine efforts to resolve the concern informally. Staff will endeavour to resolve issues on the spot.

Formal procedures will be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

2.2 Applicability

The policy shall apply to all employees and governors of the school. It is the shared responsibility of the Headteacher and the Chairman of the Governing Body to ensure that these groups are made aware of the policy and procedure.

3. The Complaints Procedure will:

- a) encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- b) be easily accessible and publicised;
- c) be simple to understand and use;
- d) be impartial;
- e) be non-adversarial;
- f) allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress;
- g) ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent panel where necessary;
- h) respect people's desire for confidentiality;
- i) address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary;
- j) provide information to the school's senior management team so that services can be improved.

4. Monitoring and evaluating the policy

All documentation regarding complaints (including notes of any related meetings and telephone calls), the action taken and the final outcome will be recorded and a summary included in the Headteacher's next report to governors.

The governing body will monitor the level and nature of complaints and review the outcomes on a regular basis to ensure the effectiveness of the procedure and make changes where necessary. Complaints information shared with the whole governing body will not name individuals.

The monitoring and review of complaints by the school and the governing body is a useful tool in evaluating the school's performance, and will contribute to school improvement. Any underlying issues identified will be addressed.

5. Record Keeping

– All complaints will be responded to in writing.

Only complaints relating to the schooling of a specific child would be kept within the child's files. Other issues will be filed separately in a secure location and will be retained for a period of 7 years.

SCHOOL'S COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

To be used in conjunction with the Redbridge Community School Complaints Policy

Guidance on how to deal with concerns or complaints relating to your child

At Redbridge Community School we firmly believe in communication, between parents, students and the school staff. All kinds of questions arise on a daily basis. We have prepared this guidance to help parents/carers know what to do if you have a concern or complaint relating to your child.

If you have a concern

For Parents/Carers, staff at the school will usually make every effort to respond to your call/letter/email within 48 hours. Due to the nature of some issues it is not always possible to resolve matters within 48 hours, but staff will at the very least contact you and let you know who is dealing with the matter.

When telephoning the school office, please be aware that most staff will be teaching and Concerns and routine queries should be raised with Tutors in the first instance. On many occasions you will be asked to leave a message. A message will then be sent to the relevant member of staff. Alternatively you can email staff with your concern.

Due to their large teaching commitments, it is not possible to meet with a member of staff without a prior appointment. It is always better to make an appointment with a teacher as they have limited free time during the school day.

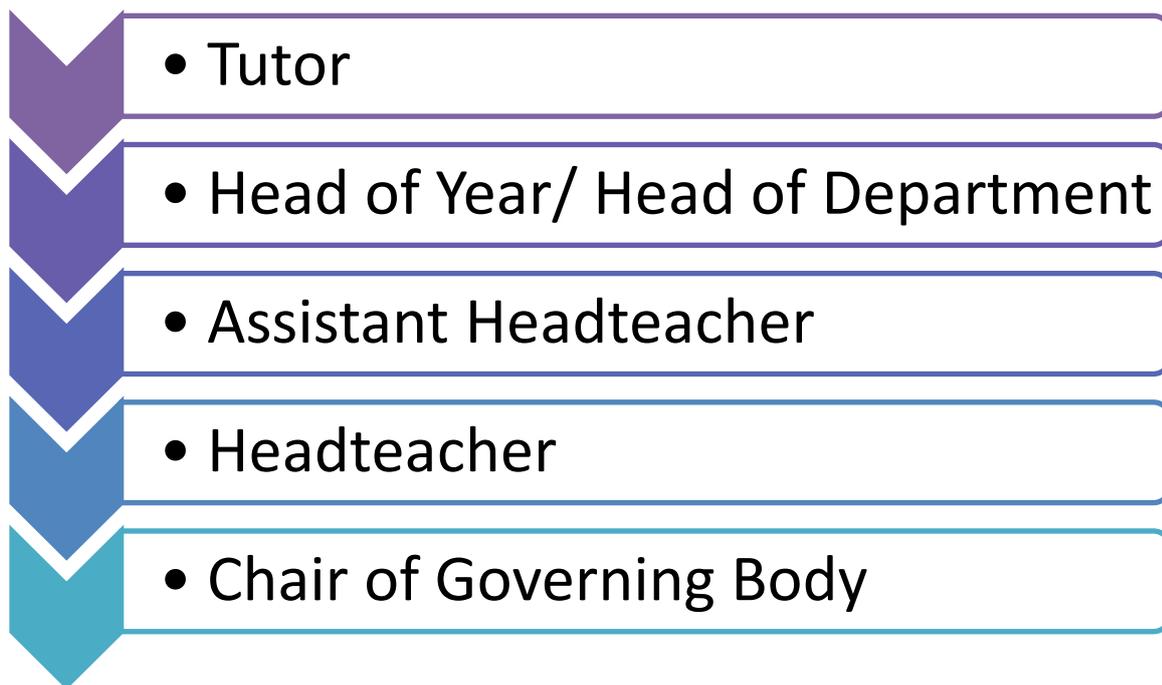
If you are not sure of the name of the person you want to speak to, the office staff can tell you who you need to contact.

Concern or Complaint?

If a concern is raised and is not resolved, it becomes a complaint. Complaints of a serious nature should immediately be referred to the Headteacher or members of the Senior Management Team. If the complaint refers to the Headteacher, the complaint should be addressed to the Chair of Governors.

Procedure for raising a complaint

- Your complaint should follow the following procedure. If it is regarding any of the people in the chain then the complaint should go to the person above i.e. if your complaint is about a Tutor/Teacher it should go to the Head of Year/ Head of Department and so on.



The Tutor

We place a great emphasis on the role of the Tutor. It is the Tutor who has the most regular contact with your child, monitoring attendance, academic performance and the general welfare of your child. The tutor should be able to resolve the complaint.

Head of Year/ Head of Department

If you are unhappy with the response of the tutor then you should aim to contact the Head of Year. If the Head of Year is unable to resolve the situation they will seek assistance from their immediate Senior Management Team line manager.

Assistant Headteacher

Each member of the Senior Management Team has direct responsibility for a year group and specific department areas. If therefore you are unhappy with the responses that you have received so far, please do not hesitate to contact an Assistant Headteacher.

The Headteacher

If after having responses from all of the above you still feel the complaint is unresolved, you should then contact the Headteacher. It is usually best to discuss such problems face to face, and for this you will need an appointment. This can be done by telephoning and asking to speak to the Headteacher's Secretary, to whom you may speak in confidence. It is always useful if the Headteacher is made aware of the nature of the complaint before he meets with parents as it enables him to make some initial investigations on your behalf. You will also be asked if you have followed the complaints procedure before coming to the Headteacher.

Formal Complaints

We will do all that we can to resolve matters straight away, certainly within 5 working days. If you are not entirely satisfied with the Headteacher's response you can make a formal complaint to the Governors. This should be made in writing to our Chair of Governors, Mr D Whalley. You can contact him in confidence by writing to him at the following address:

Mr D Whalley
c/o Redbridge Community School
Cuckmere Lane
Southampton
SO16 9RJ

The Chair of Governors will contact you to discuss the problem. Usually you will be invited to a meeting. You may wish to bring a friend or someone else with you. The Chair of Governors will then carry out an investigation into the complaint. You will receive a written response to your complaint.

Vexatious Complaints

The Headteacher and staff deal with specific complaints as part of their day-to-day management of the school in accordance with the **School's Complaints Procedure**.

The majority of complaints are handled in an informal manner and are resolved quickly, sensitively and to the satisfaction of the complainant.

However, there are occasions when complainants behave in an unreasonable manner when raising and/ or pursuing concerns. The consequences are that the actions of the complainants begin to impact negatively on the day-to-day running of the school and directly or indirectly the overall well-being of the children or staff in the school. In these exceptional circumstances the school may take action in accordance with this policy.

The school's actions in case of persistent or vexatious complaints or harassment

In the first instance the school will verbally inform the complainant that his/ her behaviour is considered to be becoming unreasonable/ unacceptable and, if it is not modified, action may be taken in accordance with this policy.

If the behaviour is not modified the school will take some or all of the following actions as necessary, having regard to the nature of the complainant's behaviour and the effect of this on the school community:

- a) Inform the complainant in writing that his/ her behaviour is now considered by the school to be unreasonable/ unacceptable and, therefore, to fall under the terms of this policy
- b) Inform the complainant that all meetings with a member of staff will be conducted with a second person present and that notes of meetings may be taken in the interests of all parties
- c) Inform the complainant that, except in emergencies, all routine communication with the complainant to the school should be by letter only
- d) (in the case of physical, or verbal aggression) take advice from LA HR/ Legal Services (services purchased by the Governing Body) and consider warning the complainant about being banned from the school site; or proceed straight to a temporary ban;
- e) Consider taking advice from the LA on pursuing a case under Anti-Harassment legislation;

- f) Consider taking advice from the HR/ Legal Services of the LA about putting in place a specific procedure for dealing with complaints from the complainant, i.e. the complainant will not be able to deal directly with the Headteacher but only with a third person to be identified by the governing body of the school, who will investigate, determine whether or not the concern/ complaint is reasonable or vexatious and then advise the Headteacher accordingly.

If a complainant's persistent complaining/ harassing behaviour is modified and is then resumed at a later date within a reasonable period of time, the school may resume the process identified above at an appropriate level. In these circumstances advice may be sought from the HR/ Legal Services of the LA.