



Sir James Smith's Community School

Aspiration • Ambition • Achievement

COMPLAINTS POLICY *

MARCH 2018

- 1.0 Introduction*
- 2.0 Stage 1 - Informal Resolution*
- 3.0 Stage 2 – Formal Written Complaints*
- 4.0 Stage 3 – The Governing Body*
- 5.0 What can I do if I am not happy with the schools and governing body's responses?*
- 6.0 Annual report to Governors*

APPENDIX

- 1 Complaints areas where the Children Service Authority (CSA) or others have responsibility*
- 2 Copy of 'Communicating with the school' (posted to all parents)*

Complaints Policy (Model)

1.0 Introduction

1.1. The school welcomes feedback on the services it provides. Should anyone be unhappy with any aspect of the school, it is important that the school learns about this.

1.2. As schools have legal responsibilities to deal with general complaints, this policy outlines how such complaints will be dealt with by the school. Some issues should not be dealt with by the school and these are listed in Appendix 1.

1.3. Children as well as parents have legitimate rights to express concerns or to make complaints, but maturity and understanding will vary from child to child. Therefore, the school will consider a complaint on its merits. Please note that a person does not have to be a parent or a pupil of the school to make a complaint. Please also note that anonymous complaints cannot be examined under a complaints procedure.

1.4. Governors have an important role to play in considering complaints. However, it is important for parents to understand that individual governors must not investigate complaints outside this procedure. All complaints should be addressed to the Headteacher in the first instance.

1.5. Please note that should a complaint, informal or formal, reveal an issue for which other procedures exist (for example, child protection) then it will be dealt with under those procedures rather than as a complaint.

2.0 Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

2.1. Many enquiries and concerns can be dealt with satisfactorily by the class teacher, the headteacher or other members of staff without the need to resort to a formal procedure. The school values informal meetings and discussions.

2.2. There is no suggested time-scale for resolution at this stage given the importance of dialogue through informal discussion although it would be expected that most issues would be resolved within 10 school days. Should this informal stage require more time then the school will inform the complainant of this in writing as soon as this is known.

2.3. Please note that 'in writing' means a letter or an email. The final report of any formal investigation will be sent in paper form.

2.4. Should the face to face discussions appear unlikely to resolve matters, either party may initiate a move to the next stage (Stage 2 below) of the procedure. A copy of the school's complaints policy will be forwarded to the complainant at this stage if it has not been provided as part of Stage 1.

3.0 Stage 2 - Formal Written Complaints

Complaints Policy (Model)

3.1. The complainant should set out the precise nature of the complaint in written form and return this to the Clerk to Governors. The complainant should keep a copy of this and all other relevant correspondence.

3.2. Should a complaint be about a general matter, the Clerk to Governors may be able to respond immediately, e.g. if it only requires an explanation of school policy. For complaints that relate to specific actions or events, there is likely to be a need for further investigation in order to clarify the facts. The Headteacher or their nominee will determine how best to undertake this investigation.

3.3. However, if in the early stages of the investigation, the Clerk to Governors considers that the complaint is best dealt with at Stage 3, it will be passed to the Chair of Governors (or to the clerk to the governing body for the chair's attention) and the complainant informed of this action without delay.

3.4. Should the Headteacher or a governor be the subject of a complaint, these will be dealt with under Stage 3 below. The complainant should send the form directly to the chair of governors (or to the clerk to the governing body for the chair's attention) c/o the school marking the envelope 'private and confidential'.

3.5. Should the chair of governors be the subject of a complaint, the complainant should send the form directly to the vice-chair of governors (or to the clerk to the governing body for the vice-chair's attention) c/o the school marking the envelope 'private and confidential'.

3.6. All formal complaints will be acknowledged by telephone call, email or letter within 5 school days of receipt.

3.7. Investigations at this stage should normally be completed within 20 school days of receipt of the complaint, unless there are circumstances that require a longer investigatory period. The complainant will be informed in writing should more time be required.

3.8. The school will aim to send a formal written response within 5 school days of the completion of the investigation. This gives a target of 5 school weeks for the completion of this stage of the procedure.

3.9. Following the stage 2 investigation, the Headteacher will decide on one of two outcomes:-

1. Recommend that appropriate remedial action necessary to resolve the complaint be undertaken,
or

2. Confirm that all internal investigative measures have been exhausted and uphold the original informal response if this had occurred.

3.10. The decision is confidential to the complainant and to the governing body.

3.11. The complainant may take the complaint further if they are unhappy with the Stage 2 outcome by giving notice of their intention within 10 school days of their receipt of the formal outcome. This notice

Complaints Policy (Model)

should be made in writing to the chair of governors (or to the clerk to the governing body for the chair's attention) c/o the school marking the envelope 'private and confidential'.

4.0 Stage 3 - The Governing Body

4.1. Where the Headteacher is unable to resolve a complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant or where there is a complaint against the Headteacher or a governor, the complainant should write to the chair of governors (or to the clerk to the governing body for the chair's attention) c/o the school marking the envelope 'private and confidential' including copies of all relevant documents.

4.2. Should the chair of governors be the subject of a complaint, the complainant should send the form directly to the vice-chair of governors (or to the clerk to the governing body for the vice-chair's attention) c/o the school marking the envelope 'private and confidential'.

4.3. A panel of three governors must be convened by the chair (or vice-chair) of governors to investigate the complaint.

4.4. All formal complaints will be acknowledged within 5 school days of receipt.

4.5. Investigations at this stage should normally be completed within 20 school days of receipt of the complaint, unless there are circumstances that require a longer investigatory period. The complainant will be informed in writing should more time be required.

4.6. The school will aim to send a formal written response within 5 school days of the completion of the investigation.

4.7. This gives a target of 5 school weeks for the completion of this stage of the procedure.

4.8. Following the stage 3 investigation, the panel will decide on one of two outcomes:-

1. Recommend that appropriate remedial action necessary to resolve the complaint be undertaken,

or

2. Confirm that all internal investigative measures have been exhausted and uphold the original response.

4.9. The decision is confidential to the complainant and to the governing body.

5.0 What can I do if I am not happy with the schools and governing body's responses?

Complaints Policy (Model)

Local authorities still retain responsibility for education in their area, and may be able to offer guidance and advice about state-funded schools. These include community schools, foundation schools, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools (but not academies).

Trevor Doughty
Director of Children, Schools and Families
Cornwall Council
County Hall
Truro, TR1 3AY

Telephone: 0300 1234 100
tdoughty@cornwall.gov.uk

If your complaint is still unresolved after referring to Cornwall Council and you feel that the school has behaved unreasonably about your concerns, you can write to the Secretary of State for Education. Write to:

The Secretary of State
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

Telephone: 0870 000 2288
<http://www.education.gov.uk/>

6.0 Annual report to Governors

A summary of complaints will be presented to Governors annually. The Chair of Governors will be notified when a formal complaint has been received by the school. The Clerk to Governors will keep a list of formal complaints and copies of correspondence relating to the complaint.

If you would like this in a different format please contact the school

First adopted - October 2013
Reviewed – March 2018
Reviewed by – Jon Lawrence
Governors Ratified –
Next review due – March 2019

Complaints Policy (Model)

Appendix 1

Complaints areas where the Children Service Authority (CSA) or others have responsibility (appendix 1)

The following areas are those that should not be addressed through the school complaints policy:

- i. Complaints about the curriculum and the provision of collective worship and religious education.
- ii. Complaints about the CSA's assessment of a child's special educational needs.
- iii. Appeals against refusal to admit a child to the parent's preferred school.
- iv. Appeals against exclusions (although an appeal to the governing body will be involved in the earlier stages).
- v. Complaints about provision of school transport should be directed to the School Passenger Transport Unit. Concerns regarding behavior of students whilst on the school transport should be reported to the school.

Details of the procedures for these complaints are available from the CSA.

Children, Schools and Families
New County Hall,
Truro
Cornwall
TR1 3AY

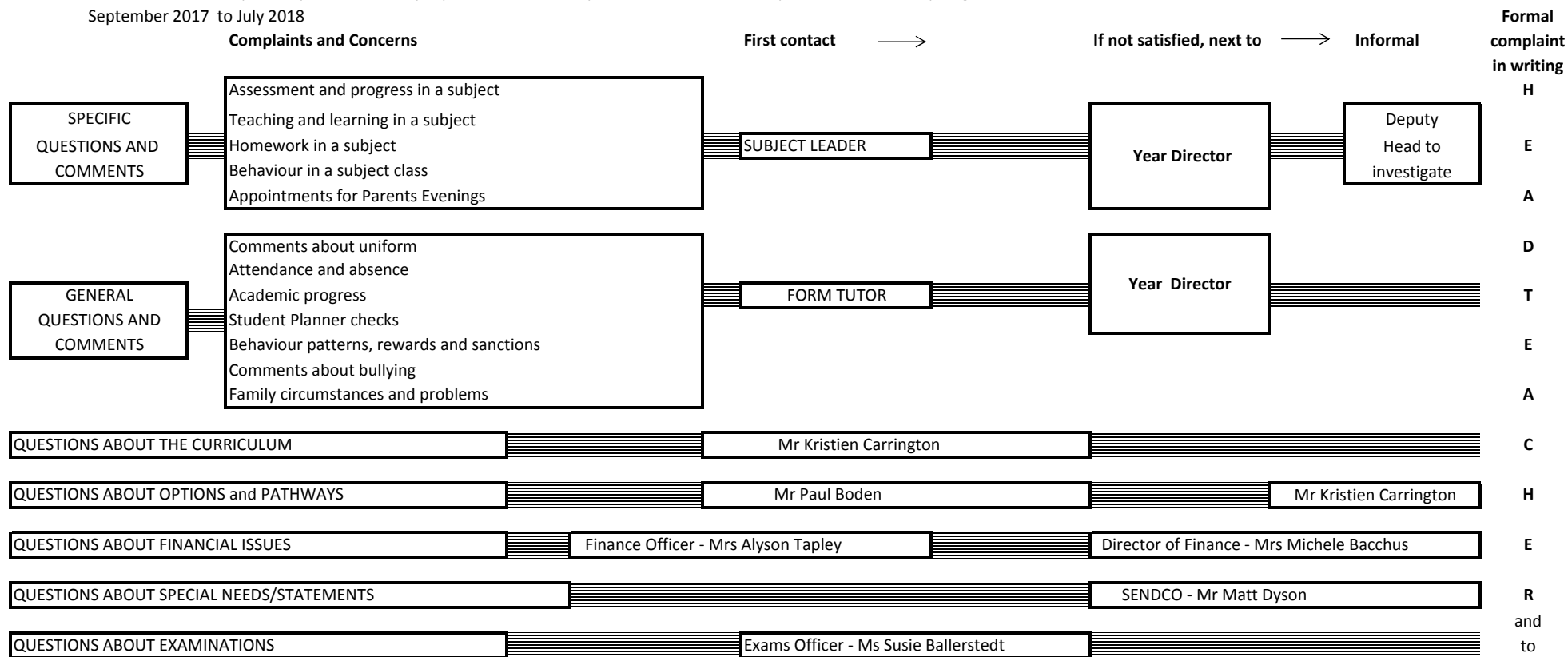
Please note that should a complaint, informal or formal, reveal an issue for which the above applies or where other internal procedures exist (for example, child protection) then it will be dealt with under these procedures rather than as a complaint.

Note to all Parents/Carers - "COMMUNICATING WITH THE "SCHOOL"

PLEASE ASK/TELL US !

Please let us know if you are pleased with any aspect of the school's performance as well as any concerns at an early stage.

September 2017 to July 2018



n.b. Requests for policy documents or questions for governors, please write to the Clerk to the Governors at the school

n.b. Questions about buses should be addressed to Principal Transport Officer, David Edwards, Cornwall Council, County Hall, Truro, Cornwall TR1 3AY - 0300 1234 100

n.b. Any complaint about the Headteacher should be addressed to Mrs Ruth Krolik, Chair of Governors, c/o Clerk to Governors,

Sir James Smith's Community School, Dark Lane, Camelford, Cornwall, PL32 9UJ

IF YOU ARE UNSURE, PLEASE JUST ASK THE MEMBER OF THE CLERICAL STAFF ON RECEPTION DUTY - 01840 213274.