



# MOULTON SCHOOL AND SCIENCE COLLEGE



Science

## Complaints Procedure

### Informal Process

The school endeavours to ensure that all members of the school community; students, parents and staff; and other users of the school's facilities and services, are fully satisfied with the quality of our provision. However, there are times when concerns will arise, and it is our aim to resolve any concerns quickly and efficiently. We would ask any person with a concern to contact the school first to discuss it informally with us.

Should it not be possible to resolve a concern quickly and informally, then the concern would have progressed into a formal complaint. The following sets out the process for addressing a formal complaint.

### Stage One: Complaint heard by a staff member other than the Headteacher

Should it not have been possible to resolve a concern informally, then the concern can be escalated to a formal complaint. The complainant is asked to complete the complaints form attached at the end of this policy and forward it to the school using the school email address.

The complaint will be forwarded to the school's complaints officer who will co-ordinate who is dealing with the complaint and ensure that the complainant is fully aware of the progress being made. The school commits to complete a stage one complaint investigation within 10 working days. Should this not be possible, then the complainant will be notified of the reason for the delay.

At stage one, the complaint will be dealt with by a staff member other than the Headteacher. This staff member will:

- establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved;
- clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information is necessary);
- clarify what the complainant feels would put things right;
- interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- keep notes of the interview.

Having completed the investigation, the member of staff will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and their findings. In order to resolve the complaint the following may be offered:

- an apology;
- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur;

- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

Following the meeting, a written summary of the findings of the investigating member of staff will be sent to the complainant.

### **Stage Two: Complaint heard by the Headteacher**

Should a complainant be dissatisfied with the outcome of a stage one complaint, then they should write to the Headteacher requesting that the complaint be further investigated. This must be done within 15 school days of receiving the outcome letter from stage one (assumed to be the day following postage). The Headteacher will then instigate a further investigation (which he/she may delegate). The school commits to complete a stage two complaint investigation within 10 working days. Should this not be possible, then the complainant will be notified of the reason for the delay.

The Headteacher will then meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and their findings. The investigation and possible outcomes are as stage one and, following the meeting, a written summary of the findings of the Headteacher will be sent to the complainant.

### **Stage Three: Complaint heard by a Governing Body Complaints Appeal Panel**

Should a complainant be dissatisfied with the outcome of a stage two complaint, then they should write to the Chair of Governors requesting that the complaint be heard by the Governing Body. This must be done within 15 school days of receiving the outcome letter from stage two (assumed to be the day following postage). The Chair of Governors will then convene a Governing Body complaints panel, which will comprise two governors (not staff governors) and one person independent of the management and running of the school. Individual complaints cannot be heard by the full Governing Body as this would compromise the impartiality of any disciplinary hearing against a member of staff, should this be necessary.

The panel will be convened within 15 working days of the Chair of Governors receiving the stage three complaint. The panel will elect its own Chair and the hearing will be clerked.

The Panel can

- 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.

The Chair of the Panel has a key role, ensuring 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 chair of the panel will then notify the complainant of the panel's decision, in writing, with the panel's response.

It is obviously hoped that any complaint will have been resolved by this point. However, there may be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. There are, however, no further stages in the complaints procedure. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the Chair of the Governing Body will then be obliged, therefore, to inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

## Annex A - Checklist for a Panel Hearing

The panel needs to take the following points into account:

- 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 has spoken.
- The Headteacher is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses.
- The complainant may question both the Headteacher and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The panel may ask questions 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.

## Annex B - Complaint Form

Please complete and return to Judith Bambrough (complaints co-ordinator) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

**Your name:**

**Pupil's name:**

**Your relationship to the pupil:**

**Address:**

**Postcode:**

**Day time telephone number:**

**Evening telephone number:**

**Email:**

**Please give details of your complaint.**

**What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak to and what was the response)?**

**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 whom:**

**Complaint referred to:**

**Date:**