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PARKWOOD HALL CO-OPERATIVE ACADEMY

Parkwood Hall Co-operative Academy

"Growth through Personal and Social Learning"

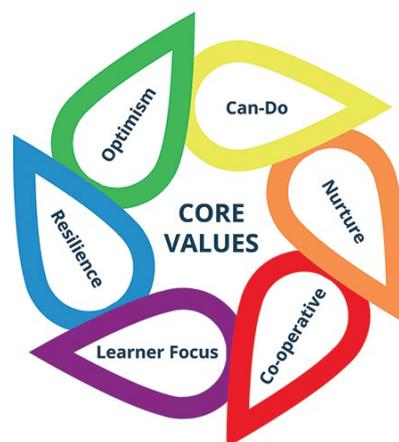
Statutory Policy File

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Index No: 04 v1.0

Parkwood Hall Co-operative Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment'

Our Core Values



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COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Parkwood Hall is a Co-operative Academy and we have adopted the values of the co-operative movement to assist us as we govern the school. We have also developed values for learning and teaching that inspire our students and staff alike.

Our co-operative values are self help, self responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, solidarity, honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others. These are the ways in which we do things at our school and they sit at the heart of all our policy development.

In this policy the following values are particularly relevant:

In respect of complaints made to the school, both informal and formal all complaints will be dealt with **equally** and in line with the procedures set out in the policy.

We commit to **honesty** and **openness** in our communications and management of all issues of complaint.

We value our relationship with parents and all members of the school and local community. If you have a concern we want to know about it so that it can be dealt with immediately. Most concerns can be dealt with easily and quickly but to ensure that all concerns are handled effectively the Governing Body has adopted a complaints policy and procedure.

The School's Complaints Procedure is devised with the intention that it will:

- usually be possible to resolve problems by informal means;
- be simple to use and understand;
- treat complaints confidentially;
- allow problems to be handled swiftly;
- inform future practice so that the problem is less likely to recur;
- reaffirm the partnership between parents, staff and governors as they work together for the good of the students in the school;
- actively encourage strong home-school links;
- ensure that any person complained against has equal rights to a fair investigation
- regularly review systems for monitoring concerns and complaints received from parents.
- Help us to learn from complaints and comments by production of an annual report to Governors on "Learning through feedback from parents"

1 LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This document meets the requirements set out in part 7 of the schedule to [the Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which states that we must have and make available a written procedure to deal with complaints from parents of pupils at the school.

It is also based on guidance published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on [creating a complaints procedure that complies with the above regulations](#), and refers to [good](#)

[practice guidance on setting up complaints procedures](#) from the Department for Education (DfE).

This guidance states that the details of the complaint, including the names of individuals involved, will not be shared with the whole governing board in case a review panel needs to be organised at a later point.

Where the governing board is aware of the substance of the complaint before the review panel stage, the school will (where reasonably practicable) arrange for an independent panel to hear the complaint.

Complainants also have the right to request an independent panel if they believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings. The decision to approve this request is made by the governing board, who will not unreasonably withhold consent.

2 EXPRESSING A CONCERN: NOTES FOR PARENTS

2.1 If you have a concern

We would like you to tell us about it so that we can talk with you and see how best to resolve your concern. The majority of concerns can be resolved informally by speaking to a member of staff. We welcome suggestions for improving our work in the school. Whatever your concern, please know that we shall treat it as strictly confidential.

Be assured that no matter what you wish to share with us, our support and respect for you and your child in the school will not be affected in any way; please do not delay telling us of your concern. It is often difficult for us to investigate properly an incident or problem which is more than a day or two old.

After hearing your concern we will act as quickly as we can; we will let you know the timescale within which you may expect a response. Please allow time for any action we may take to be effective. If, as sometimes happens, we need additional time to properly investigate your concerns, we will let you know and give you an indication of when you might expect a response. Our procedure is in four stages outlined on the next page.

2.2 What to do first (Stage 1 Informal)

Talk to the Student Liaison Manager (SLM)

Please contact Clare Hollick and arrange a time when you can discuss your concern. It may be possible for you to see her straight away but normally it is better to make an appointment so that you can sit and talk things through. It may be possible for her to give you a response immediately, but where any investigation or information is required, a response will be normally be given within five working /school days.

Clare may also decide with your agreement that it would be helpful for you and her to sit down with a particular member of staff and deal with your concern that way. If this is the case, she will arrange a time which suits both you and the school. She will take notes at the meeting, which will serve as a record of what has been agreed, and these will be circulated after the meeting.

2.3 What to do next if you are not satisfied (Stage 2 Informal)

Talk to the Principal

If you are still unhappy you can ask for an appointment to meet with Jacqui Tovey. It is helpful if you can give a brief outline of your concern when you make the appointment. Jacqui Tovey's PA is Linda Marsella, who can be contacted by email at linda.marsella@parkwoodhall.co.uk or by phoning 01322 618007. After your discussion with the Principal you may have to wait a short time while further investigations are carried out, in which case a further meeting will be scheduled. In most cases it is possible to resolve the complaint at this stage and where there are agreed actions or outcomes they will be recorded in writing and sent to you within 5 school days of the meeting.

2.4 Alternative Formal Action (Stage 3 Formal)

Write to the Principal

As an alternative to meeting with the Principal, you may choose to write a formal letter of complaint. This should be addressed to the Principal and should set out the detail of your complaint and any other information which you feel may be relevant. The Principal will investigate your complaint and will then arrange for a meeting to take place, usually within 15 school days of receipt of your letter. Every effort will be made to resolve the situation as quickly as possible and the Principal will normally send you a written response within 5 school days of your meeting. If it is not possible to respond within this timescale, the Principal will tell you when you can expect a response.

2.5 If you are still unhappy (Stage 4 Formal)

Request a panel of governors

The problem will normally be resolved before reaching this stage. However, if you still have concerns, and they have not been resolved, you may ask for a complaint to be considered by a complaints panel of the Governing Body by writing to the Chair of Governors at the School. If you prefer to email your request, please send it to: linda.marsella@parkwoodhall.co.uk and she will forward it to the Chair.

The complaints panel will be formed of three governors who have had no prior involvement in the complaint and an independent member, they will listen to you, to the Principal and, if appropriate, any others involved and come to a decision. You may bring a friend to the hearing if you wish. The role of the Governing Body is strategic, not operational, so any recommendations they make are likely to focus on how systems can be improved, although they will also come to a view about how your complaint has been handled and what actions the school should undertake. See the table below for the relevant timescales.

The table below summarises the stages of the complaints procedure:

Stage	Description	Timescale for receipt of complaint	Time-limit for School's response
Stage 1 - informal	Informal discussion with Student Liaison Manager (SLM), who may facilitate a meeting with member(s) of staff if appropriate.	It is always best if you let us know as soon as possible about any concerns. It is more difficult to resolve complaints which are more than a day or two old.	As soon as possible but no later than 5 school days.
Stage 2 - informal	Arrange a meeting with the Principal to discuss your concern.	Within 10 days of outcome of Informal Stage 1.	Meeting or hearing arranged within 15 school days. Written record of the meeting and agreed actions within 5 school days
Stage 3 - formal	Written complaint to Principal (or Chair of Governors if the complaint is about the Principal)	Within 10 school days of receipt of response to Informal Stage 1 or 2.	Acknowledgement within 2 school days. Response to written complaint normally within 5 school days, unless further investigation is needed.
Stage 4 - formal	Governors' Complaints Panel Hearing	Within 10 school days of receipt of response to stage 3	Hearing set up within 20 school days of receipt of request, with 10 days' notice of the meeting. Agenda and papers sent out 5 school days in advance. Decision letter within 5 school days.

In all cases, if any stage in the procedure is likely to take longer than publicised, parents will be informed of new timescales and the reasons for delay.

3 USE OF EMAILS TO MAKE A FORMAL COMPLAINT:

The increasing use of emails means that we will accept formal written complaints in the form of an email, as an alternative to writing a letter. However, please note that we cannot accept email conversations which have been copied (CC'd) to the Principal or the Chair of Governors as constituting a formal complaint. This is because it is often difficult to discern the precise nature of the complaint, and therefore to respond to it properly, when it is part of an email conversation with someone else. We would also advise that you do not copy email conversations regarding complaints to other members of the Governing Body, since this would mean that the individual being copied into emails would not be able to sit on a complaints panel.

4 COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE HEADTEACHER OR A GOVERNOR

Complaints made against the principal should be directed to the chair of governors. Where a complaint is against the chair of governors or any member of the governing board, it should be made in writing to the clerk to the governing board in the first instance.

5 REFERRING COMPLAINTS ON COMPLETION OF THE SCHOOL'S PROCEDURE

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the school's complaints procedure, they can refer their complaint to the ESFA. The ESFA will check whether the complaint has been dealt with properly by the school. The ESFA will not overturn a school's decision about a complaint. However, it will look into:

- Whether there was undue delay, or the school did not comply with its own complaints procedure
- Whether the school was in breach of its funding agreement with the secretary of state
- Whether the school has failed to comply with any other legal obligation

If the school did not deal with the complaint properly, it will be asked to re-investigate the complaint. If the school's complaints procedure is found to not meet regulations, the school will be asked to correct its procedure accordingly.

For more information or to refer a complaint, see the following webpage:

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>

6 EXCEPTIONAL PROCEDURE FOR PERSISTENT COMPLAINTS

Where a complainant tries to re-open the issue with the school after the complaints procedure has been fully exhausted and the school has done everything it reasonably can in response to the complaint, the chair of governors (or other appropriate person in the case of a complaint about the chair) will inform the complainant that the matter is closed.

If the complainant subsequently contacts the school again about the same issue, the school can choose not to respond. The normal circumstance in which we will not respond is if:

- The school has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's needs, *and*
- The complainant has been given a clear statement of the school's position and their options (if any), *and*
- The complainant is contacting the school repeatedly but making substantially the same points each time

However, this list is not intended to be exhaustive.

The school will be most likely to choose not to respond if:

- We have reason to believe the individual is contacting the school with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience, and/or
- The individual's letters/emails/telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive, and/or
- The individual makes insulting personal comments about, or threats towards, school staff, unreasonable behaviour which is abusive, offensive or threatening may constitute an unreasonably persistent complaint.

Once the school has decided that it is appropriate to stop responding, the complainant will be informed in writing, either by letter or email.

The school will ensure when making this decision that complainants making any new complaint are heard, and that the school acts reasonably.

7 RECORD-KEEPING

The school will record the progress of all complaints, including information about actions taken at all stages, the stage at which the complaint was resolved, and the final outcome. The records will also include copies of letters and emails, and notes relating to meetings and phone calls.

This material will be treated as confidential and held centrally, and will be viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint or on the review panel.

This is except where the secretary of state (or someone acting on their behalf) or the complainant requests access to records of a complaint through a freedom of information (FOI) request or under the terms of the Data Protection Act, or where the material must be made available during a school inspection.

Records of complaints will be kept for 3 years.

8 ANNUAL REPORT ON COMPLAINTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLIMENTS

The governing body will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the Principal, where appropriate, and respecting confidentiality, to determine whether there are any improvements that the school can make to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

The governing body will monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure in ensuring that complaints are handled properly. The governing body will track the number and nature of complaints, and review underlying issues as stated in section 10.

The complaints records are logged and managed by Linda Marsella (Principal's PA).

An annual report on complaints, comments and compliments which reflects on the learning gained from the feedback and is presented to the FGB within the headteachers report at the first FGB of the new school year

9 LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

Policies dealing with other forms of complaints include:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures

- Admissions policy
- Exclusions policy
- Staff grievance procedures
- Staff disciplinary procedures
- SEN policy and information report

APPROVAL

This Policy was written for Parkwood Hall Co-operative Academy and will be approved by the Curriculum and Strategy Committee on a 3-yearly cycle.

Date Policy Reviewed:	8/1/19
Date of Next Review:	8/1/22
Signature of Governor: <i>(for statutory policies only)</i>	Signature of Principal:
Date:	Date:

Version and Date		Action/Notes
1.0	8/1/19	Update of document.