



**KELVINSIDE
ACADEMY** 1878

GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

Kelvinside Academy aims to establish relationships of trust between staff, pupils and parents. Pupils and parents should therefore feel able to make the school aware of any concerns they may have in the certain knowledge that such information will be dealt with sensitively. It is important that pupils and parents who have a complaint or concern should be able to express their views and feelings and obtain a fair hearing and a prompt response to any complaint which they make. It is hoped that most concerns can be sorted out quickly and informally by speaking to the appropriate member of staff.

It is also important that Kelvinside Academy should have due regard for the rights of all who work there and that any complaints against members of staff should be handled professionally. When an issue has been identified following a complaint, the school will take appropriate action to address the issue.

Complaints

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem and requires a response. It may be made about the school's procedures or methods of operating or about a specific member of staff. It may be made if it is thought that the school or a member of its community has, for example:

- done something wrong
- failed to do something that should have been done
- acted unfairly.

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively and will be recorded in the appropriate log by the recipient.

The procedures will be flexible enough to handle both formal complaints and the informal raising of issues.

The school will review and revise its complaints procedures in the light of experience. When dealing with complaints, the school will be guided by ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) guidelines.

Procedures

The basic guidelines for handling complaints, verbal or written, are that they should be dealt with promptly, thoroughly and professionally. Some issues raised may involve ongoing discussions and may require some time to investigate and for a resolution to be sought.

The initial complaint

- Written complaints should be acknowledged, if at all possible, within 24 hours of receipt, with the promise of effective enquiry, and, if appropriate, action. When complaints are first received, they should be referred to the member of staff most directly involved with the subject of the concern/complaint. In most instances, the member of staff will be able to resolve the concern.

- If staff are approached about a matter which lies outside their remit, they should refer it to the appropriate person and advise the parents of this referral or of appropriate channels for them to use. (The appropriate member of staff may contact the parents to inform them that the matter has been passed on to them.)
- It may well be that the complaint can be easily resolved by the relevant member of staff and, depending on the circumstances, the member of staff may telephone with the outcome, reply in writing or, if the matter is of a more serious nature, invite the complainant to a meeting to discuss the matter more fully.
- The complaint should be formally logged and the recipient should record the action taken.
- Steps should be taken, as necessary, to ensure that the appropriate member of the School's leadership team is kept informed and that correspondence is centrally filed.
- All allegations of behaviour which might be categorised as a child welfare concern should be reported immediately in accordance with the School's Child Protection Guidelines.

Referral to Rector/Deputy Rector/Head of Junior School

- Although most issues will be resolved by the appropriate member of staff there may be some occasions when the matter is more appropriately reported directly to the Rector/Deputy Rector/Head of Junior School. For example, if the complaint is significant, or cannot be easily or quickly resolved, it should be reported to the Rector/Deputy Rector/Head of the Junior School. In most cases, the complainant would be invited to a meeting to discuss the matter more fully.
- Members of staff who have a complaint against other staff (eg discrimination, harassment or bullying) should report it to the Rector/Deputy Rector/Head of Junior School directly.
- If the complainant alleges professional incompetence or neglect against a member of staff, then the Rector/Deputy Rector/Head of Junior School should at once be informed.
- The Rector/Deputy Rector/Head of Junior School will take steps to ensure that the allegation is fully and properly investigated, according to the principles of natural justice, with regard always to the best interest of the person(s) involved. If the complaint concerns a member of staff, he/she will be informed immediately, unless there are compelling reasons not to do so.
- In all cases, the Rector/Deputy Rector/Head of Junior School will convey to the complainant, as fully as is appropriate, the outcome of the investigation of the complaint and any measures being taken to address the issue.
- In the case of a serious issue where a meeting has taken place to outline concerns, the Rector/Deputy Rector/Head of Junior School will seek to give any indications at the meeting regarding interim measures being put into effect, so long as they are not prejudicial to the investigation. Every effort will be made to reassure the complainant that, while a full investigation may take some weeks, whatever short-term action that can be effected will be put in place immediately, where possible and appropriate.

Referral to the Chairman of Governors

- If the complainant remains dissatisfied, he/she may appeal to the Chairman of Governors.
- On occasion, where a complaint has not been resolved, the Rector will refer the matter, on a confidential basis, to the Chairman of Governors and advise the parents that this stage has been reached.
- Should a complaint be raised against the Rector, the complainant should express the complaint in writing to the Chairman of Governors, who will investigate appropriately.

Referral to the Conciliation Committee

- If the complainant remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further, the complainant should advise the Chairman of Governors who will refer the matter to the Conciliation Committee (consisting of a maximum of three Governors and, if appropriate, an external adviser) and nominate one as Chairman. The Chairman of the Conciliation Committee will write to the complainant explaining the procedure and its timescale (including the opportunity to submit written statements and attend the hearing) as well as how the Committee's decision will be intimated.
- The Conciliation Committee will meet as soon as reasonably practicable.
- The Conciliation Committee's decision will be final and such decision will be communicated by the Chairman of Governors to the complainant within seven days of the Committee meeting.

Daniel J Wyatt

Rector

Reviewed: November 2023

Appendix 1

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is important for pupils, parents and staff. It is essential that any complaint is treated in a professional and sensitive manner, with respect both to the complainant and to any persons against whom the complaint is made.

If parents wish to discuss a particular member of staff they may fear that their child will suffer in some way because they have complained. It should be made clear to all concerned that it is the school's policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their children and, similarly, complaints raised by pupils should not rebound on themselves or on others.

The question of confidentiality should be discussed sensitively with parents who voice concerns/complaints, and the school's policy should be carefully explained. The School should explain to complainants that it may be possible to deal with a problem without naming individuals, but that, even if no names are given, the source of the complaint may be clear. The nature and circumstances of the complaint might make it impractical to investigate without identifying the member of staff or the child.

Staff members will be informed of any complaints made about them. Such complaints will be known only to themselves and to those who have to be consulted.

Parents should be assured that knowledge of their complaint will be limited to the Rector (or Head of Junior School) and to those directly involved. In some instances, the Chairman of Governors may need to be informed. It may be necessary to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint. This would happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the police. If there is a question of the child's safety or a possible situation involving the police, the guidance on confidentiality in the Child Protection Guidelines should be followed.