



The Macclesfield Academy Complaints Procedure

Date policy approved:.....

Date policy due for review:.....

Signed by Chair of Governors:

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The Macclesfield Academy Complaints Procedure

Aim:

To set out a procedure for resolving parental concerns and complaints which accords with DfE guidance in that it:

- encourages resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- is easily accessible and publicised;
- is simple to understand and use;
- is impartial;
- is non-adversarial;
- allows swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress;
- ensures a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary;
- respects people's desire for confidentiality;
- addresses all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary; and
- provides information to the school's senior management team so that services can be improved.

Raising Concerns

1. Parents will be encouraged to raise any concerns directly with the member of staff concerned so that they can be resolved as quickly and informally as possible. The Academy will publish details of the members of staff with whom such concerns should most appropriately be raised both through the Academy newsletter and on the Academy website.
2. Where parents raise concerns with any other member of staff including, for example, the academy office or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, they will seek to refer them to the member of staff concerned for informal resolution. If this is clearly not possible, the parent should be referred to the Academy complaints coordinator, who will explain the complaints procedure.
3. The normal Academy standard will be that members of staff aim to make an initial response to concerns raised by parents within 24 hours. Where this does not prove possible, an explanation will be given for any delay.
4. Members of staff dealing with concerns should record any concerns raised and the steps taken to deal with them. Unless it is clear that the parent is completely satisfied, they should be given a copy of the written complaints procedure which includes a form for making written complaints.

Formal Complaints

1. Any member of staff dealing with a concern which is not fully resolved must provide the parent with a copy of the complaints procedure including the form for making written complaints.
2. The first stage of a formal complaint is for the parent to meet with the Academy complaints coordinator. Such a meeting will normally take place within three working days of the parent indicating that they wish to make a complaint.
3. The complaints coordinator will first offer to arrange to mediate the complaint by meeting with the parent and the member of staff about whom the parent has expressed a concern.

4. If such mediation is not possible, or if it does not resolve the concern to the parent's satisfaction, the complaints coordinator will explain the complaints procedure and provide any support and guidance which may be required to complete the application form.
5. Within five working days of receiving a written complaint, the complaints coordinator will write to the parent making the complaint and explain how and by whom the complaint is to be investigated. The letter will also give a date by which the outcome of the investigation will be reported to the parent in writing. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, this will be within ten working days of receipt of the written complaint.
6. In most cases, the complaint will be investigated by the complaints coordinator. If the complaint concerns the conduct of the complaints coordinator, the complaint will be investigated by the Headteacher. If the complaint concerns the conduct of the Headteacher, the complaint will be investigated by the Chair of Governors.
7. The person investigating the complaint will seek to:
 - 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 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 interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
 - keep notes of all interviews undertaken.
8. The person investigating the complaint will be responsible for ensuring that a written report of their findings is made to the complainant and that a full record of the investigation, including the original written complaint and the written report is kept on file. This record is confidential to the parent, the members of staff involved in the investigation of the complaint and the Headteacher.
9. The letter reporting the outcome of the investigation will explain that, if the parent is not happy with the outcome, they have a right of appeal to a panel of three members of the Governing Body who have not been involved in dealing with the complaint. The letter should ask parents to indicate within five working days whether or not they wish to appeal.

The Appeal Panel

1. If parents indicate in writing that they wish to appeal against the outcome of the investigation into their complaint, the Chair of Governors is responsible for convening a meeting of an Appeal Panel within fifteen working days of receipt of written indication of the intention to appeal.
2. The Appeal Panel will normally consist of the Headteacher, a member of the Governing Body not employed by the Academy or involved in any way in the day to day running of the Academy. If the Headteacher was involved in the investigation of the complaint or if the complaint concerned the conduct of the Headteacher, the Headteacher will not be eligible to be a member of the Appeal Panel.
3. The Appeal panel will be chaired by a member of the Governing Body not employed by the Academy or involved in any way in its day to day running.
4. The Appeal Panel will be clerked by the clerk to the Academy Governing Body.
5. The clerk to the Appeal Panel will write to the parent giving at least ten days notice of the date and time of the meeting of the Appeal Panel and advising them of their right to attend and to be accompanied if they wish.

6. The letter giving notice of the Appeal Panel meeting will also include copies of any documents necessary to understand the outcome of the investigation into the original complaint. Such documents may be edited to avoid identifying any students involved.
7. At the meeting of the Appeal Panel, the person who investigated the original complaint will outline the process of the investigation and explain the outcome. At the end of this explanation, the parent will be invited to ask any questions. The parent will then be asked to add any comments of their own and, in particular to explain what they would like to be done in response to their complaint.
8. After the person who investigated the original complaint and the parent have spoken and answered any questions put to them by members of the panel, they will withdraw and the panel will consider its decision.
9. The panel will consider whether or not they are satisfied with the outcome of the original investigation. If they are satisfied that the outcome was wholly reasonable, the Chair will write to the parent explaining the panel's decision. A copy of this letter will also be sent to the member of staff about whom the original complaint was made. If they decide that there are flaws in the way the investigation was conducted or in the outcome, they will set out their findings and consider whether or not it is appropriate to offer one or more of the following:
 - 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.
10. The clerk to the Appeal Panel will ensure that a full record of the panel meeting, including copies of all the papers, is stored at the Academy. All these records are confidential to the parent, the panel members and the members of staff involved in the original complaint and its investigation.

Monitoring Complaints

1. The Headteacher will report on the operation of the Complaints Procedure to the Governing Body once a year. This report will include:
 - the number of formal complaints that have been made
 - the number that have been satisfactorily dealt with at the point of the original investigation
 - the number of occasions on which the Appeal Panel has met
 - any significant amendments to school policy or practice as a result of the complaints made
 - any issues that have arisen in the operation of the Complaints Procedure.
2. The Headteacher's report will respect the confidentiality of the individual complaints procedures.
3. In the light of the Headteacher's report, the Governing Body will consider whether or not the complaints procedure should be amended in any way.



Complaint form

Please complete and return to Mr Richard Hedge, Headteacher (Complaints Co-ordinator) who will acknowledge receipt and explain how your complaint will be investigated.

Your name:	
Student's name:	Tutor group:
Your relationship to the student:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Day time telephone number:	Evening telephone number:
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 do you feel the Academy might do to resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

For official use only

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Further action taken:

Complaint referred to:

Date: