

Complaints Procedure

MAYFLOWER COMMUNITY ACADEMY PLYMOUTH POLICIES

Mayflower Community Academy Plymouth October 2019

VERSION CONTROL SHEET

POLICY NAME: Complaints Procedure

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Document date	Filename	Meeting submitted	Summary of changes required
July 2013		July PSG	New policy
January 2016		Policy Review Day	Minor wording changes for clarity
December 2017		December FGC	Minor wording changes for clarity
October 2019		20/11/19	Updated 11/10/19

Date for policy review:

January 2020

Guidance Document for Parents - What to do when things go wrong

Mayflower Community Academy is committed to encouraging the involvement of parents in the community of the Academy, and in their children's education. As part of this commitment, we recognise that from time to time things may occur which cause parents concern, and that it is important that parents know what steps to take to make sure that any problems are resolved. These notes are intended to provide guidance to help parents with this process.

Who should I talk to?

Most concerns can be dealt with most quickly and effectively through informal discussion with members of staff at the academy. You are always welcome to come into the academy to discuss any concerns or problems that have arisen, and are encouraged to talk to your child's teacher in the first instance as the teacher, having knowledge of both your child and events in the academy, is often the person best placed to help. It's best if you can arrange to see your child's teacher at the end of the academy day, but you can arrange other times if it's convenient for both of you.

Will what I say be kept confidential?

You can expect that matters you raise will be treated in confidence, but parents also need to understand that to resolve problems, and find the best way forward, the teacher may have to make further enquires and begin a chronology. Dependent on the nature of the complaint, the Chair of Governors may need to become involved. When this is the case, you can expect that this will be done with care, and that teachers will be sensitive to how such circumstances may affect your child. This is true for any investigation undertaken by the academy, at any time.

What if it is difficult to talk to my child's teacher about my concern?

Sometimes you may feel that approaching your child's teacher could be awkward, especially if the matter you wish to discuss may affect a member of staff. If this is the case, or if talking to the teacher on a previous occasion does not seem to have resolved a particular problem, you should seek help from the Headteacher. The Headteacher has responsibility for the day to day running of the academy and will recognise that situations like this can be difficult and sensitive. You can expect the Headteacher to take the appropriate steps to follow up your concerns, and to discuss the outcome with you. Obviously, time needs to be allowed for this to take place but, in most cases, the Headteacher will contact you again within a relatively short space of time (usually within 3 working days). You can arrange to see the Headteacher through the academy office.



Can I talk to somebody who is independent of the school staff?

It is always possible to approach the Chair or Vice Chair of Governors (these details can be found on the school website or from the school office) with a concern however Governors will always encourage you to approach your child's teacher or the Headteacher first. This is because the Headteacher is responsible for the day to day running of the academy, and is therefore best placed to follow up and deal with concerns. The Governors will support you in doing this, if you feel that this may be helpful, or you may wish to ask a friend to help you with this. You can approach Governors directly or via the academy office.

What is the difference between an informal and a formal complaint?

An informal complaint is usually about a less serious matter concerning your child's progress or wellbeing and good communication and discussion of the problems will allow issues to be dealt with quickly. The process will be documented but usually only directly involves you, as the parent, and a member of staff or the Headteacher. Dealing with matters informally does not mean that the concerns are not taken seriously, or that agreed actions will not be followed through.

A complaint becomes formal when you feel that your concern is too serious to be dealt with informally, or when you feel that informal approaches to the academy have not been adequately dealt with.

What happens if I need to make a formal complaint?

Formal complaints need to be made to the Headteacher, in writing, using the form available from the academy office. If the complaint itself relates to the Headteacher, then the complaint needs to be made in writing to the Chair of the Academy Council. In either case, please pass the completed complaint form to the academy office who will then ensure that it is actioned appropriately. You can expect to receive written acknowledgement of your complaint within 3 working days of receiving your letter.

Certain types of complaint are already covered by Statutory Procedures laid down by Plymouth City Council and the Government: these cover complaints about the curriculum, admissions and exclusions of pupils from the academy. If the complaint is covered by one of these Statutory Procedures, the academy will provide you with details of how these procedures work.

You will also be offered an opportunity to discuss the process, and to provide the academy with any further information you think should be considered. This will happen whether or not your complaint is covered by the statutory arrangements, because the academy follows similar principles (summarised in the flow chart at the end of this document) to deal with complaints about other aspects of academy life.



What happens next?

When you receive the formal acknowledgement of your complaint, you will also be given an estimated date by which you can expect a full response. You will be provided with an opportunity to discuss the process, and to add any additional information you feel is important. Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure the matter is investigated, and written records of the investigation will be kept.

As soon as the relevant facts have been established, you will receive a written response, which includes an explanation of the decision that has been reached, the reasons and the actions that need to be taken to resolve your complaint. You can expect to receive your formal response within 10 working days of the original acknowledgement of your complaint. You will have the opportunity to discuss the decision at this point if you wish. If a delay is anticipated, the academy should keep you informed in writing of progress, and when you are likely to receive details of the outcome of the investigation.

I still feel that matters have not been resolved, what should I do?

It is very rare that a complaint will reach this stage, but if it does, the final step in the process is for you to appeal to the Academy Council. You should write to the Clerk to the Academy Council at the academy office within 10 days, requesting that your complaint proceeds to this stage.

The governing body's Appeals Panel will carry out an independent and impartial review of your complaint and the response you have received, and will reach an independent conclusion. The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of your complaint, and will explain that an Appeals Panel will meet to review your complaint within 10 academy days. The Appeals Panel will consist of three Governors who have had no prior involvement in the matter in question. All relevant documents relating to the complaint will be provided to the Appeals Panel beforehand. You will receive notification of the date that the Appeals Panel will meet 5 days in advance of the meeting. You will also be invited to the meeting, and you may be accompanied by a friend, representative or interpreter. The Headteacher will also be invited to attend the meeting.

Whilst discussions at the meeting will be documented (usually by the Clerk), the meeting will be as informal as possible, with the main aim being to resolve the problem raised, and to achieve reconciliation between you and the academy. It provides an opportunity for you to explain your complaint and concerns, for the Headteacher to explain the academy's response, and for all people present to seek clarification through questions and discussion. Once the discussion has ended, everyone apart from the Appeals Panel will leave the meeting, and the Appeals Panel will review matters and reach its final decision.

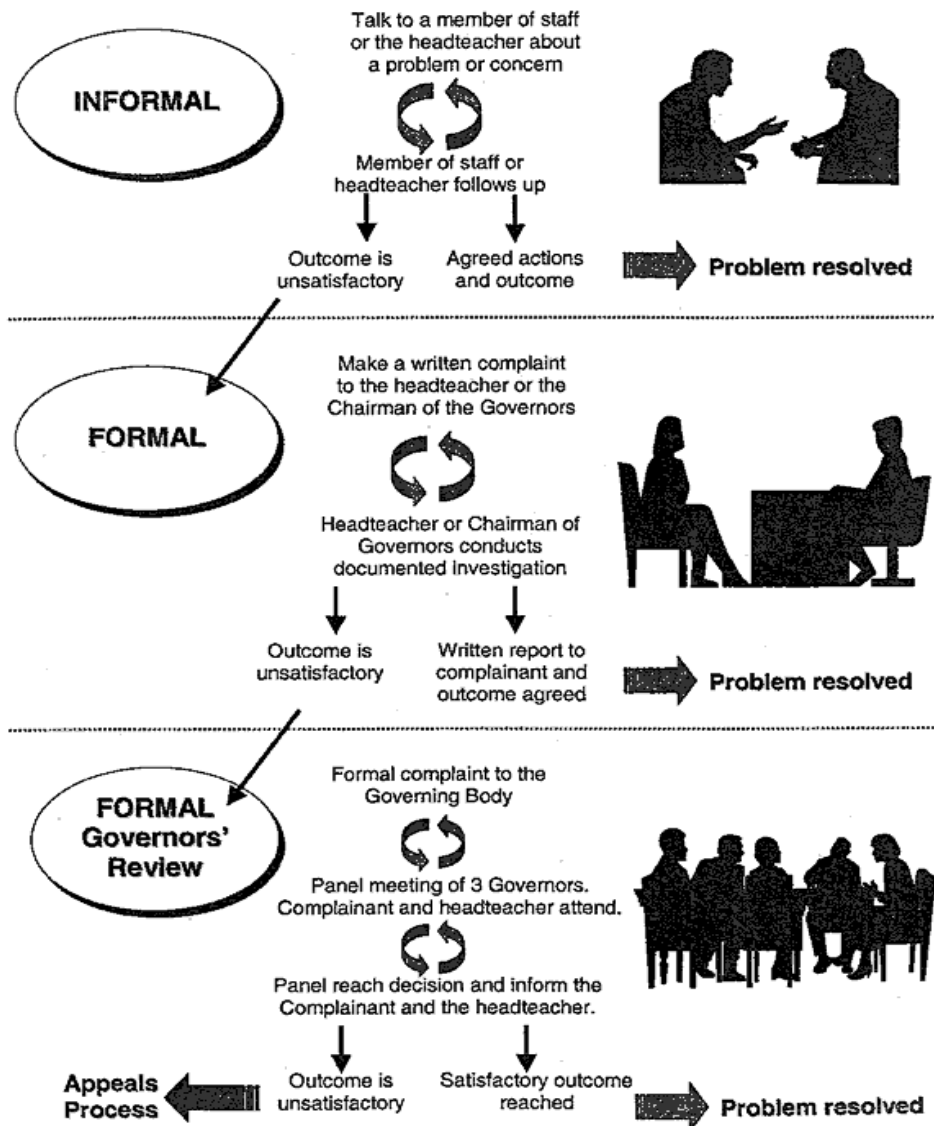
The Appeals Panel's decision on the complaint will be provided to both you and the academy in writing within 15 working days. The Appeals Panel's decision is final, and the complaint will not



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normally be re-opened. If you remained unsatisfied and believe that the Academy Council has acted unreasonably then you would have a right to complain to the Education Funding Agency.

Complaints Process Summary



Acknowledgements

Thank you to the governors and staff of West Meon School, Hampshire, for providing the basis of this document.



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Mayflower Community Academy – Complaint Form

Please complete both sides and return to the academy office. The complaints co-ordinator will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Daytime 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)?



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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 who:

Complaint referred to:

Date:



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IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN OR COMPLAINT ABOUT OUR ACADEMY

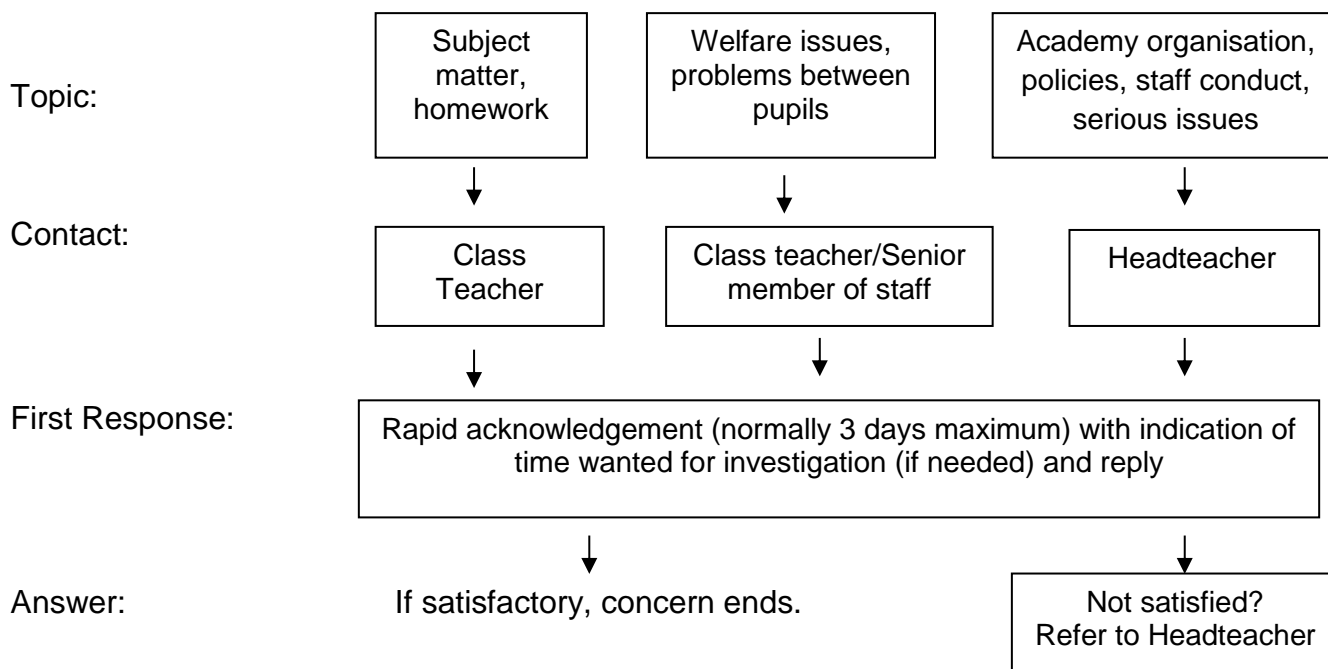
We have formulated a procedure to follow. Key information for parents is summarised below.

When to contact us: Whenever you are concerned about something at our academy or wish to complain.

Why? We want a supportive partnership in which problems are ironed out. This is far better for pupils than divisions between home and the academy.

How? Home/academy contact book if you wish. Telephone call if the issue is urgent. Letter before for a formal complaint.

Who? Depends on the nature of the issue, the main options are:



There is no formal procedure for praise. If you feel that something has been done especially well, please feel free to let us know. It is helpful to know which aspects of our academy parents particularly value.

