



**PARK HOUSE SCHOOL
COMPLAINTS POLICY**

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Author:	Derek Peuple	Sign & Date:	
Headteacher:	Derek Peuple	Sign & Date:	
Review Body Chairman:	Mark Larby	Sign & Date:	

CHANGE HISTORY

Version	Date	Description
Issue 1	July 2007	Revised Policy
Issue 2	March 2014	Revised Policy
Issue 3	February 2018	Revised Policy
Issue 4	February 2018	Further revision
Issue 5	February 2018	Further revision
Issue 6	February 2018	Further revision

LINKED DOCUMENTS

[See opening statement of Policy](#)

PARK HOUSE SCHOOL



Complaints Policy and Procedure

Certain types of complaint are subject to statutory procedures that are separate from this general complaints procedure. These include: Admissions; Exclusions; Freedom of Information & Data Protection; Child Protection/Safeguarding; Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN); Complaint by a member of school staff.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with our Home/School Agreement and the DFE Guidance: Academy Complaint Procedure

General:

We try to make it easy as possible for parents to contact us to raise a concern via the office@parkhouseschool.org email address, by telephone, or letter. In addition, there is a monthly opportunity to meet with the Headteacher at the Head's Surgery Day. It is therefore extremely rare for us not to be able to resolve issues.

However, the Governing Body of Park House School is required by the Education Act 2002 to have a policy for dealing with formal complaints from parents, students or the community. The School's complaints policy aims to allow complaints about school issues to be dealt with efficiently and sensitively, and at the appropriate level.

Complaints can cover a wide variety of matters. The school expects ALL complaints to be taken seriously and to be dealt with comprehensively and as far as possible in confidence.

Aims:

The policy aims to ensure that:

- All complaints are dealt with as quickly and sensitively as possible, and by the person best able to do so.
- Complainants receive a response, even if not the final response, to their complaint within 48 hours of having made the complaint.
- Complainants are informed of the procedures for making complaints and appealing against decisions.

Types of Complaint:

The majority of complaints received by the school fall into the following categories:

- **academic** (matters relating to course programme, quality of teaching, volume of homework, progress in a particular subject)

- **pastoral** (matters relating to discipline/indiscipline, inappropriate sanctions, bullying, overall progress of the child, unhappiness of child etc)
- **child protection** (allegations against staff, handling of sensitive issues)

Responsibilities:

Governing Body: for approving the policy, procedures, and guidelines, hearing and deciding on appeals, receiving reports, and advising the Head.

Head: for the efficient implementation of the policy and procedures in school, for training staff on how to deal appropriately with complaints, for hearing parental appeals from decisions taken by other staff, for presenting the school's case where the parent appeals to the Governing Body, and for reporting on complaints annually, or as required, to the Governing Body.

Senior Staff (Assistant Headteachers, Deputy Headteacher-): for acting as the first point of referral in relation to complaints which remain unresolved as a result of the actions of Heads of Department & Learning, and for referring relevant cases to the Headteacher.

Heads of Department/Subject: for dealing with and, where possible resolving, complaints about academic matters/programmes of study/teaching methods.

Heads of Learning: for dealing with and where possible resolving complaints concerning overall pupil progress, discipline issues, pastoral care within a Year Group.

Named Senior Member of Staff: for child protection issues.

All staff: for hearing any complaints initially brought to them by parents, acting to resolve any matters within their immediate area of responsibility/competence and reassuring them that their complaints will be dealt with as soon as possible by the appropriate member of staff, and for informing the relevant staff of the complaint.

Procedure (see also Appendix 1)

The Park House School Complaints Procedure has four main stages.

- Stage 1 – A concern is raised with a staff member
- Stage 2 – Complaint referred to the Headteacher
- Stage 3 – Complainant contacts the Chair of Governors
- Stage 4 – Complainant refers matter to Independent Complaints Panel via the Clerk to the Governing Body or Chair of Governors

In General

All information relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential, unless the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requires access to them.

The Clerk to the Governors will keep a log of all complaints received. The log will contain the following:

- The details of the complaint and the complainant
- The findings and any recommendations from the complaint
- At what stage of the complaints process was resolved
- What actions the Park House School initiates regardless of outcome of the complaint

The findings and any recommendations will be copied to:

- The complainant and, where appropriate,
- To the person or persons who were subject of the complaint

Stage 1

If the matter is within the competence of the member of staff to resolve quickly this should be done. Otherwise the parent should be reassured that the complaint will be passed to the relevant Head of Department/Year or Senior Staff, and the relevant person should be informed by the member of staff as soon as possible, and within 5 working school days as a maximum.

NB: If a simple oral complaint is made it might be possible in most cases to resolve it immediately. In more serious cases, or where a member of staff is uncertain, parents should always be asked to put their complaint in writing. This is to ensure that there is no conflict in determining what the complaint consists of and the action taken by the members of the school staff.

If the Head of Department considers the issue to be serious (but is not a child protection issue) he/she should inform the relevant senior member of staff, and inform the parent of the action taken.

If the senior member of staff considers that he/she can deal with the complaint he/she should attempt to do so.

Stage 2

If a resolution cannot be found the member of staff should inform the parent of their right of appeal to the Head, and inform the Head of the action taken.

A complaint at Stage 2 should be put in writing (letter or email) and addressed to the Headteacher. The school will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within three school working days of receiving it. The Headteacher, or a designated Senior Teacher, will investigate and arrange to discuss the complaint. This meeting will normally take place within 10 school working days. The aim will be to resolve the matter as speedily as possible.

If the Head is unable to resolve the issue it is open to the complainant to take the complaint to the next stage; referral to the Chair of Governors.

Stage 3

The Chair of Governors will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within three school days. The Chair will then meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint. He will investigate and then respond within 10 school days.

Should your complaint still not be resolved, the complainant should inform the Chair of Governors or Clerk to the Governors of their wish to proceed to Stage 4 and wish the complaint to be heard by an 'Independent Complaints Panel'.

Stage 4

The Clerk to the Governors (govclerk@parkhouseschool.org) will set up an Governing Body 'Independent Complaints Panel' at a mutually convenient time within 15 working school days of the referral. The complainant may be accompanied to the Panel meeting.

The panel will compose at least 3 persons all of whom will be independent of the complaint. The panel may include one or more governors and a minimum of one independent person invited from the local community for the purpose of hearing the complaint. The independent person(s) will be independent of the running and management of the school.

The 'Independent Complaints Panel' hearing is the last school based stage of the complaints process. If the matter is still not resolved at Stage 4 the final course of action available is to either:

- a) refer the matter to the DFE by writing to the Education Funding Agency, c/o Academies Central Unit, Education Funding Agency, Ealsden Park, 53055 Butts Road, Coventry, CV1 3BH (e-mail: academyquestions@efa.education.gov.uk)
- b) for complaints regarding admissions appeals, write to the same address/e-mail.

If the complaint concerns a child protection issue or involves an allegation of abuse by a member of the school staff the 'named person responsible for child protection complaints' should be informed. The named person will inform the Headteacher who will obtain written details of the complaint and refer the matter for initial consideration by the LEA Lead Officer.

Monitoring and Review:

The Head is responsible for monitoring the working of the complaints procedures and for refining them in the light of experience.

The Head will review the system annually, and can propose changes to the governing body following consultation with the staff and Governors.

APPENDIX 1: COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE – SUMMARY

