

**Tring School**  
***Complaints Policy***

**Policy Date: March 2014 October 2015**

**Issue No: 2 3**

**Changes from Herts CC dated: July 2015**

**Recommended Good Practice:** Herts CC Model *Procedures for Dealing with School Based Complaints*

**Approved by: Full Governing Body** (*Resources Committee*)

**Date: March 2014 October 2015**

**Attachments to the policy for are:** *Formal Complaints Form*

*HCC Model Policy*

# Tring School Complaints Procedures

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Tring School has adopted the Herts County Council model policy to deal with any complaints as quickly and as efficiently as possible. It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage and we will always aim to work with parents to ensure this is the case. The usual stages of any complaints procedure are outline below:

## **Informal Stage**

### **Complaint Heard by Staff Member**

Raise your concern with an appropriate member of staff – Subject teacher, Tutor or Head of Year/House. This can be done in person, by phone or in writing. They will try to resolve your concern quickly and effectively. We would always aim to work with you to resolve your concerns at this stage and achieve an outcome which ensures all parties feel satisfied that all the concerns have been addressed.

## **Stage One**

### **Complaint Heard by Headteacher**

If your complaint cannot be resolved at the informal stage you should refer it to the Headteacher who will acknowledge your complaint within 5 school days.

The outcomes of the investigation and Headteacher's actions will be fed back to the complainant, where possible in person within 10 days of the complaint being received.

If your first contact is with individual Governors, they will advise you to take up your concerns with the appropriate member of staff or Headteacher. A Governor should not be made aware of a potential complaint as they may be required to sit on a Panel in the event of a formal hearing (Stage Two) and should be impartial.

If your complaint is about the Headteacher, you should **write to the Chair of Governors**. If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) you might find it helpful to talk to our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) or your child's named Special Needs Officer at the Local Authority. The SEND Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS – formerly Parent Partnership) may also be able to help you.

## **Stage Two**

### **Formal Complaint**

If your complaint is not resolved you will need to write to the Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint and what aspect they feel the school has not resolved at Stage One. This must be submitted on the Formal Complaints Form (**Letter Annexe A**)

The Chair will acknowledge your complaint within 10 school days and convene a complaints panel hearing within 28 days.

A hearing will take place with a panel set up by the academy trust, comprising at least 3 people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the school. Parents will be invited to attend the panel and be accompanied if they wish.

The panel can

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- recommend changes to the school systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

Your complaint should be responded to within 5 school days following the hearing.

### **The Role of the Chair of the Panel**

The Chair of the panel is a key role, ensuring that

- the remit of the panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption
- the issues are addressed
- key findings of fact are made
- parents and others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease
- the hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy
- the panel is open minded and acting independently
- no member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions
- written material is seen by all parties
- if new issues arise the chair will determine how/whether this will be used in the hearing. If it is to be considered all parties must have the opportunity to consider and comment on it.

### **The format of the hearing**

**Stage A** Introductions of everyone present and clarification of the conduct of the hearing. Panel Chair checks that everyone has copy of this format.

**Stage B** Parent present complaint highlighting points made in their written complaint and other documentation. Panel may question parent to clarify the points they make.

**Stage C** Headteacher (or member of the Leadership Team) presents the facts as they perceive them – highlighting points made in the written response and other documentation. Panel may question Headteacher/LT Member to clarify the points they make.

**Stage D** Parents summarise their case highlighting evidence including anything which has emerged in the questioning.

**Stage E** Headteacher/LT member summarise the case for the school highlighting evidence including anything which has emerged in the questioning.

**Close** Panel Chair thanks parents and School for attending and gives an indication and when they can expect to hear the outcome.

Parents and school representatives leave the room together. Panel considers all the evidence and comes to its conclusion.

The outcome of the panel hearing will be communicated to all parties within 5 days.

Parents wishing to escalate a complaint about an Academy which has not been satisfactorily resolved through the Academy's complaints procedure should contact the Secretary of State at the Department for Education and request that the complaint be passed to the Education Funding Agency.

The contact details for the Secretary of State are as follows:

The Secretary of State  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT  
Telephone: 0870 000 2288  
Website: [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

In the case of complaints about **Special Educational Needs provision**, you may complain further to the Local Authority. This should be done by writing to the Children's Services Complaints Manager.

It should be noted however that if you wish to pursue this route, you must do so within **20 working days (4 weeks)** of receiving the written outcome of the hearing into your complaint. After **20 working days (4 weeks)**, neither the school nor the Local Authority is under any obligation to investigate or progress your complaint any further.

### Useful contacts

#### **Advisory Centre for Education**

Education Advice & Training  
72 Durnsford Road  
London  
N11 2EJ  
Web: [www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk)  
Phone: **0300 0115 142**

#### **POhWER**

Hertlands House  
Primett Road  
Stevenage  
SG1 3EE  
Web: [www.pohwer.net](http://www.pohwer.net)  
Phone: **0300 456 2370**

#### **Children's Legal Centre**

Riverside Office Centre  
Century House North  
North Station Road  
Colchester  
Essex  
CO1 1RE  
Web: [www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)  
Phone: **0345 345 4345**

#### **National Youth Advocacy Service**

(NYAS)  
Egerton House  
Tower Road  
Birkenhead  
Wirral  
CH41 1FN  
Web: [www.nyas.net](http://www.nyas.net)  
Phone: **0345 345 4345**

**SENDIASS** (Special Educational Needs & Disability Information Advice Support Service – formerly Parent Partnership)

Registry Office Block  
CHR102  
County Hall  
Hertford  
SG13 8DF  
Web: [www.hertsdirect.org/parentpartnership](http://www.hertsdirect.org/parentpartnership)  
Email: [parent.partnership@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:parent.partnership@hertfordshire.gov.uk)  
Phone: **01992 555847**

#### **Family Lives**

##### **(Formerly Parentline Plus)**

15-17 The Broadway  
Hatfield  
Hertfordshire  
AL9 5HZ  
Web: [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)  
Phone: **0808 800 2222**

**Formal Complaint Form**

**Name**

**Address**

**Postcode**

**Email address**

<b>Telephone No.</b>	<b>Day</b>	<input type="text"/>
	<b>Evening</b>	<input type="text"/>
	<b>Mobile</b>	<input type="text"/>

**What is it you want to complain about?**

<b>Have you complained to the Headteacher?</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
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<b>When did you do this?</b>	<b>Date:</b>
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**What happened when you complained to the Headteacher?**

**What would you like us to do to put things right?**

<b>Signed</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

**Please return this form to the Chair of the Governing Body**