



CALDEW SCHOOL

GENERAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE for parents, carers and other school users of school services

*Policy legally required
Reviewed under Resources Committee
On school website
Reviewed annually
Adopted: April 2018
Next review: April 2019*

NOTE: Caldew School is an Academy and where reference is made to school(s) this should be taken to refer to 'academy' in so far as the reference specifically applies to Caldew School.

A STATEMENT FOR PARENTS, CARERS AND OTHER USERS OF SCHOOL SERVICES

We very much hope that you and your child will be very happy at our school, and that any concerns that may arise are dealt with swiftly by our staff.

However, we recognise that there may be an occasion when you are not entirely happy with an aspect of the service that we provide, and that you want the school to deal with your concern through a more formal process. This leaflet sets out what the school will do if you wish to raise that concern informally, or make a formal complaint.

Who can raise a concern or make a complaint?

Anyone who uses the school, whether a student, a parent or carer, or a provider of a service to the school, or a visitor can use this procedure. If you wish to raise a concern or complain on someone's behalf, the school will only deal with this if the person on whose behalf you are complaining is unable to do so for themselves (for example, they are too young or they have a disability that prevents them from complaining on their own behalf).

How will my concern be handled?

Our procedure has three stages, an informal, a formal stage and a panel hearing.

Informal Stage

If your concern is about something that a person has or has not done, for example a member of staff, a governor, or a volunteer, you should first speak to that individual. If it is about an aspect of school practice or policy, you should contact the headteacher. We want to resolve the concern as quickly as possible, but it may not be possible to arrange an immediate meeting: an appointment within a few days may be necessary.

If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction by the staff you have contacted, then you should take your concern to the headteacher.

If you are still dissatisfied with the response from the headteacher, or your concern is about the headteacher, you should put details of your concern in writing to the chair of governors who will arrange for it to be investigated. If your concern is about the chair of governors, write instead to the clerk to the governing body. State that you are making a formal complaint and request a copy of the school's complaints procedure.

All letters should be sent to the school address, marked 'Confidential: For immediate attention.'

Formal Stage

The chair of governors (or the clerk) will ask a nominated governor to investigate and respond to you within a set timescale.

Panel Hearing

If you are still dissatisfied and wish to appeal against the outcome of the investigation, you should write to the clerk to the governing body. The governing body will arrange for a panel of two governors to review your complaint who will be joined a third panel member who is independent of the school. You are entitled to attend this review and be accompanied if you so wish. After this review, the panel will notify you of their decision. This will include informing you that the school's procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

If you are not satisfied by the outcome of the appeal then you have the right to contact the Education Funding Agency using their complaints procedure for Academies via their schools complaints form. This guidance is available from the school.

Unreasonably persistent, abusive or harassing complainants and vexatious complaints

A persistent complainant may be anyone who engages in unreasonable behaviour when making a complaint. This will include parents and carers who pursue complaints in an unreasonable manner or insist on pursuing unjustified complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes.

The school expects anyone who wishes to raise problems with the school to:

- treat all staff with courtesy and respect;
- respect the needs of students and staff within the school;
- recognise the time constraints under which members of staff in schools work and allow the school a reasonable time to respond to your concern;

Whilst we recognise that some concerns may relate to serious and distressing incidents, we will not accept threatening or harassing behaviour, and will take steps supported by legal action as appropriate to ensure that the school can continue its work safely and securely.

A separate leaflet details our policy on this aspect of complaints.

Further Information

Contact the school directly if you wish to see full copies of our concerns and complaints procedure.

For any complaint about the following, contact the local authority on 01228 606060 for advice and information.

- an appeal against a decision relating to the admission or exclusion of a child
- an appeal against a local authority decision about a child's special educational needs.
- the curriculum, religious education syllabus or collective worship
- an allegation of a criminal offence