



Complaints Procedure

Purpose of the Complaints Procedure

This procedure aims to reassure parents and others with an interest in the academy that:

- Any complaint against the academy will be dealt with in a fair, open and responsive manner, with the aim of achieving a speedy and satisfactory resolution
- The academy recognises that a willingness to listen to questions and criticisms and to respond positively, can lead to improvements in academy practises and provision for pupils.

This policy is made available on the school website for parents and carers to access. The procedure will also be discussed during the admissions process and a copy provided for those who cannot access the internet.

Scope of the procedure

A complaint is defined as *“a clear statement of dissatisfaction about any specified aspect of the academy’s work”*.

Any complaint brought to the attention of the headteacher/ nursery manager that suggests that a child has been at risk of significant harm through violence, emotional abuse, sexual interference or neglect. These may be referred without notice to the social services authority for the area in which the child lives. If the social services authority decides to investigate a situation this may postpone or supersede investigation by the headteacher/ nursery manager.

Complainants may be anyone e.g. parents, guardians, grandparents, neighbours, members of the community or anyone with an interest in the work of North Road Academy. However, it is expected that it will be mainly parents or guardians who will make use of this procedure. The term ‘parent’ is therefore used throughout the procedure as a generic term but the procedure also applies in relation to any other type of complainant.

Complaints may be made by telephone, email, in person or be written.

General

Records of all conversations and meetings with parents to resolve complaints will be kept strictly confidential. At a Complaint Panel (CP) meeting, minutes will be taken. To help prevent recurring complaints, copies of correspondence and notes will be kept on file in the academy’s records, separately from individual pupil records.

If at any stage in the procedure it becomes apparent that the complaint falls outside of this general complaints procedure, parents will be informed.

There may be rare occasions where, despite all stages of the procedure having been followed, a parent remains dissatisfied. If the parent seeks to re-open the same issue, the academy reserves the right to inform him/her in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter is closed.

Stage 1: Informal Stage

On occasions, a parent may raise a concern directly with academy staff without any formality. At this stage, it may be unclear whether the parent is making a complaint, seeking information or has misunderstood a situation. In any event, the academy aims to resolve the concern at this point in a speedy and effective way.

However, if the concern is not resolved immediately and complaint is confirmed by the parent, the opportunity to discuss the matter with an appropriate member of staff will be given e.g. headteacher/ nursery manager, deputy head. In the case of a complaint against the headteacher/ nursery manager, this stage will always be heard directly by the director

The member of staff will discuss the issue with the parent and those involved in academy, with the aim of resolving the complaint as soon as possible. The parent will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and what action, if any, the academy proposes to take.

If the informal process has been exhausted and no satisfactory solution has been found, the parent will be asked by the member of staff dealing with the complaint whether he/she wishes the complaint to be considered formally at stage two of this procedure.

If wishing to proceed with the complaint, the parent will be invited to put the complaint in writing to the headteacher/ nursery manager using the form attached at Appendix 1. The form should be sent to the headteacher/ nursery manager within **ten academy days**.

Stage 2: Referral to the Headteacher/ nursery manager:

Where another staff member has addressed the complaint at stage one, this stage will be heard by the Headteacher/ nursery manager. In the case of a complaint against the Headteacher/ nursery manager, it will be heard directly by the director.

The Headteacher/ nursery manager will acknowledge the written complaint **within five academy days** of receipt and provide an opportunity to meet the parent to discuss the complaint.

The Headteacher/ nursery manager will investigate the complaint and a written response will normally be made within **ten academy days** of receipt of the complaint. If this is not possible, a letter will be sent explaining the reason for the delay and providing a revised target date.

The written response will include full reasons for the conclusions reached by the Headteacher/ nursery manager and what action, if any, the academy proposes to take to resolve the matter.

If the parent still remains dissatisfied, he/she will be advised that, in order to progress the complaint further at stage 3, he/she must notify the Management Committee in writing within **ten academy days**, copying the original complaint form.

The Management Committee will then ensure that the parent is offered the opportunity of taking the complaint to a Complaints Panel at Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3: Review by the Complaints Panel

At this stage the Complaints Panel (**established according to the suggested composition detailed in Appendix 2 and consisting of no less than three appointed members of whom at least one person shall have no involvement with the management of the school**) will consider complaints.

The parent complainant may be allowed to attend the panel hearing upon request, made in writing to the Management Committee no later than 3 academic days before the hearing. The parent may be accompanied by one person.

A written acknowledgement of the complaint and the request for it to be heard at stage 3 of the procedure will be sent to the parent by the Management Committee within **five academy days**.

The letter will inform the parent that the complaint will be heard by the Complaints Panel (CP) within **twenty academy days** of receiving the complaint. It will also inform the parent of the right to submit any further documents other than the complaint form and that these must be made available to the Headteacher/ nursery manager within **five academy days** of receipt of the acknowledgement letter. The right to call witnesses to the meeting, subject to the approval of the Management Committee, and the right of the parent to be accompanied by a companion of his/her choice, will also be explained in the letter.

The Headteacher/ nursery manager will also send a copy of the letter of acknowledgement to the Management Committee and a written report in response to the complaint will be produced to the CP within **five academy days**. The right to call witnesses, subject to the approval by the Management Committee, will also be explained.

The Management Committee will then convene a CP meeting, having consulted with all parties on convenient times. The date, time and venue for the meeting will then be confirmed at least **five academy days** in advance.

The names of all parties and witnesses (if any) to attend the meeting and all relevant documents to be referred to at the meeting will also be provided by the Management Committee, to Headteacher/ nursery manager and each panel member. This will be provided as soon as possible and, in any event, at least **five academy days** prior to the meeting.

The meeting will be held following the procedures for hearing a complaint detailed in Appendix 3.

A written decision will be sent to the parent and the Complaints Officer and/or headteacher/ nursery manager by the Management Committee within ten academy days of the hearing.

The written records of the complaints (whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a hearing panel), and correspondence and the final outcomes of all complaints must be kept by the Management Committee in a secure place and confidential.

The outcome of the complaint will be made readily available on the School premises by the Headteacher/ nursery manager and Management Committee.

The letter will explain that the decision of the Complaints Panel is final.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and as and when deemed necessary. The next review for this policy is September 2019

Appendix 1

North Road Academy & Nursery Complaints Form (for Stage 2 and/or Stage 3 complaints)

If you feel you have been unsuccessful in resolving your complaint and you wish to take the matter further, the please complete this form and send it to:

F.A.O Headteacher/ nursery manager
North Road Academy
North Road
Stoke-on-Trent
ST6 2BP

If your complaint is against the Headteacher/ nursery manager then please mark "F.A.O: Management Committee". A copy of the complete procedure can be obtained from the reception at the academy.

Name _____

Address _____

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Tel no (Home) _____

(Mobile) _____

Name of Child _____

Date of Birth _____

What is your complaint about and what would you like the Headteacher/ nursery manager to do?

(continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

When did you discuss your concern/complaint and with which member of staff?

What was the result of the discussion?

Signed _____

Date _____

Appendix 2.

Composition of the Complaints Panel

The Complaints Panel (CP) consists of three appointed panel members and the Management Committee.

No member of the CP should have had prior involvement with the complainant. At least one member should be independent from the management and day to day affairs of the school. It is suggested that this individual may be from a Mosque.

The role of the headteacher/ nursery manager would be to attend the panel hearing to give evidence as and when required. The CP may also choose to invite staff, parents and or guardians or any other persons who may be directly involved in matters raised by the complainant.

Appendix 3

Complaints Panel (CP) **Procedures for hearing the complaint**

Introduction

The aim of the meeting is to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the academy and the parent(s) and or guardian(s) or other person(s) concerned. The Management Committee will endeavour to ensure that the meeting is properly minuted.

The introduction of new information or witnesses, previously not notified to all parties, would be reason to adjourn the meeting so that everyone has time to consider and respond to the new information.

Order of Meeting

1. The Management Committee welcomes the parent(s) and or guardian(s) and or any other person(s) and further introduces the CP.
2. The Management Committee explains the purpose of the meeting, all applicable parts of the procedure, and the fact that all written evidence has and will furthermore be made available to all parties.
3. The parent(s) and or guardian(s) and or any other person(s) then are given the opportunity to explain the entity of the complaint.
4. The calling in of any applicable witnesses will be left to the jurisdiction of the chair as deemed appropriate.
5. The CP panel may question the parent(s) and or guardian(s) and or any other person(s) and any applicable witnesses in order to obtain full and clear facts in order to aid the panel's decision making process.
6. The parent(s) and or guardian(s) and or any other person(s) including any witnesses will then be requested to retire from the meeting.
7. The Management Committee welcomes the headteacher/ nursery manager to the hearing

8. The Management Committee explains the purpose of the meeting, all applicable parts of the procedure, and that all written evidence has been and furthermore will be made available to all parties.
9. The headteacher/ nursery manager is given opportunity to present his version of the events and to request any witnesses to that effect.
10. The CP panel and/ or Management Committee may question the headteacher/ nursery manager as appropriate.
11. The headteacher/ nursery manager is then requested to retire from the meeting.
12. The CP considers the complaint and reaches a unanimous majority decision. Taking all the facts and statements from all parties involved into consideration, the CP will also decide respectively what action (if any) to take to resolve the complaint and, if appropriate, recommends changes to ensure similar complaints are not made in the future.
13. When and if a decision has been made, the Management Committee may agree to recall the complainant who would have been requested to wait at the Management Committee's prior written agreement, and if applicable the headteacher/ nursery manager, whom are informed of the outcome and any action to be taken if necessary.
14. All outcomes are subsequently confirmed in writing.

Signed: *Naeem Bashir*

Naeem Bashir
Head Teacher