

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

There may be an occasion when you need to tell us that something has gone wrong. If you have a serious concern about the safety or welfare of your child or another student it should be dealt with under our Child Protection procedures; in such circumstances, please contact Mrs Stotesbury (*Designated Safeguarding Lead*), or Mr Crofts (*Principal*). You should take any **serious concerns** about the behaviour of a staff member directly to the *Principal*; examples of serious concerns include those involving violence, anything of a sexual nature or persistent bullying or humiliation.

All other complaints, including those that may point to poor practice by a member of staff, will be dealt with through this *Complaints Procedure*. There are two sections to this procedure; *Informal Complaints Procedure* and *Formal Complaints Procedure*.

Section A – Informal Complaints Procedure

Most concerns can be dealt with by liaising with your child's Tutor or other appropriate staff in the Academy; please contact the relevant colleague directly via email (all email addresses can be found on our website) or by calling the main switchboard and asking for the relevant colleague to contact you. Your call or email will be acknowledged by the next working day. Please make sure you outline your concern fully and then allow the colleague an opportunity to address the issue and, if necessary, put it right.

Should this *Informal Complaints Procedure* not resolve a matter, you should then use our *Formal Complaints Procedure*.

Section B – Formal Complaints Procedure

Within the Trust we take complaints very seriously, and we have a four-stage *Formal Complaints Procedure* to ensure they are handled properly. You must ensure that the process outlined below is followed and each stage exhausted before moving to the next.

[If your complaint is about the Principal of the Academy, you should send it in the first instance to the CEO of the Trust, Mr Smith, via admin@tct-academies.org.]

Stage 1

You should put your complaint in writing to the Deputy Principal, Mr Trehearn. Complaints must be made within three months of the event. Complaints after this period will not be considered. Within two working days of receipt of your complaint, the Deputy Principal will inform you of the action to be taken to investigate your complaint, the expected time it will take to do so and commit to providing a written response at the end of the investigation.

Following the investigation and written response from the Deputy Principal, if no further communication is received from you within ten working days, then it is deemed the complaint has been resolved and is ended.

[If your complaint is about the Deputy Principal, Mr Trehearn, you should send it in the first instance to the Principal of The Quest Academy, Mr Crofts, via Acrofts@thequestacademy.org.uk.]

Stage 2

Within ten working days of receipt of the written response from the Deputy Principal in response to Stage 1, should you feel the actions taken under Stage 1 of this procedure have not resulted in a full investigation of the cause of the original complaint, or if the evidence suggests the Deputy Principal has come to an incorrect judgement, you can begin Stage 2 of this procedure. To enter Stage 2, you must outline to the Principal in writing and within ten working days of the written response to Stage 1 the reasons why you feel the Deputy Principal has not carried out a full investigation of the original complaint or has come to an incorrect judgement and what further investigations you feel need to be conducted. The Principal will reply within five working days of receipt of the Stage 2 complaint outlining either:

- Why he feels the cause of the original complaint **has** been fully investigated by the Deputy Principal under Stage 1 of the Complaints Procedure and that there is no further investigation that can be carried out;

or

- the action to be taken to investigate your Stage 2 complaint, the expected time it will take to do so and commit to providing a written response at the end of the investigation. This written response will outline whether the complaint is upheld and therefore suggest a resolution, or rejected.

Following any final written response from the Principal to conclude Stage 2 of this procedure, if no further communication is received from you within ten working days, then it is deemed the complaint has been resolved and is ended.

Stage 3

If you still feel that the issue has not been fully investigated, or feel that the evidence suggests the *Principal* has come to an incorrect judgement, or you are unhappy with a proposed resolution, you may forward your complaint to the *Governance Manager* of the Trust at sara.scott@tct-academies.org within ten working days of receipt of the written response from the *Principal*. Provided the complaint is within the remit of the LGB, a *Complaints Panel* will meet within ten working days of receipt of the Stage 3 complaint and you will be invited to attend and can be accompanied if you may wish. Any supporting documents relevant to the complaint must be submitted to both parties and the panel at least five working days before the panel hearing.

The panel will consist of 3 people who have not been directly involved in the matter detailed in the complaint and one member of the panel will be a person who is independent of the Academy.

The panel will listen to your complaint or your reasons for rejecting an offered resolution, as well as hearing from the *Principal* the reasons for his decision at the end of Stage 2 of the *Complaints Procedure*. The panel can then either dismiss the complaint, or uphold the complaint, in full or in part, and offer some resolutions. You will be given a date by which a decision will be taken and you and the person complained about will be notified of the outcome in writing. The letter should be in your preferred language. As with all formal complaints a copy of the letter and supporting documentation, which will include the outcome and any resolutions, will be in a confidential file at The Collegiate Trust office and be available for inspection by the Secretary of State or any inspection body under section 109 of the 2008 Act.

This is the final stage of the academy-based complaints procedure.

Stage 4

If you are dissatisfied with the handling or the outcome you have the right to refer the case to the *Department for Education*. Further details are available from:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/complaintsprocedure/b00212240/making-complaint-school/how-to-complain>