

**DARRICK WOOD SCHOOL
POLICY FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS**

Annual Review date: February 2015

Full review date: February 2017

Person responsible: The Head Teacher

MISSION STATEMENT

Our policy is to deal swiftly and fairly with all complaints, satisfying the complainants as far as possible and improving the service offered by the School.

GOALS

Customer Goal

To resolve disagreements and maintain harmonious relationships.

Curriculum Goal

To demonstrate the need for cooperation and understanding in life.

School Community Goal

To give responsibility for customer satisfaction to as wide a range of staff as possible.

Quality Goal

To leave no-one with the feeling that they have been unfairly treated.

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

1. PRINCIPLES

1.1. Application

1.1.1. These procedures apply to complaints from parents and other members of the community. Complaints from members of staff will be dealt with by the normal School processes including, where appropriate, the Disciplinary or Grievance Procedures.

1.2. General

1.2.1. All complainants should be treated with courtesy and wherever possible the complaint should be dealt with on the spot. If it is not possible to meet the complainant's wishes a clear explanation of why this is so should be given.

1.2.2. No complainant should have to wait more than 24 hours for an acknowledgement and one week for a considered response.

1.2.3. If the School is at fault this should be acknowledged - a courteous apology and the correction of a fault can turn a complainant into an advocate!

1.2.4. Details of discussions should be kept confidential as far as possible and pupils should never receive comments from staff about parents' complaints.

2. PRELIMINARY STAGE

2.0.1. Most concerns, problems and complaints are dealt with as they arise in the normal day-to-day discussions which are commonplace in the School. Only where complainants remain dissatisfied with the outcome of these discussions are further steps necessary.

3. INFORMAL STAGE

3.1. General

3.1.1. The seriousness of the complaint will determine the managerial level at which it should be dealt with but as a general rule the level should be as low as possible. The nature of the complaint will determine whether pastoral or academic staff should be involved.

3.1.2. The points at issue should be thoroughly investigated before the complainant is invited to a meeting and before any conclusion is drawn. Where necessary, written statements should be produced by those involved.

3.1.3. In difficult circumstances the complaint should be passed on to a higher managerial level but complainants should not be repeatedly asked to return for informal discussions.

3.1.4. In most cases it will help in the resolution of a complaint against a member of staff if that member of staff is present at the informal discussion. However, professional judgement will need to be applied on this issue by the person dealing with the problem, since hostile confrontation and entrenched defensive positions may make the situation worse.

3.1.5. It is unlikely that the presence of pupils at meetings between members of staff and complainants will help in the resolution of complaints. Pupils should never participate in discussions where they may witness confrontations between adults.

3.2. Complaints about the Head Teacher

3.2.1. Any complaint about the Head Teacher should be referred immediately to a Deputy Head Teacher. If the complaint is considered valid it must be passed on by the Deputy Head Teacher to the Chairman of Governors. The Chairman of Governors will then take whatever action seems appropriate, consulting with Personnel Services for advice if necessary.

3.3. Complaints made directly to the Governing Body

3.3.1. Any Governor receiving a complaint should advise the complainant to address the matter to the appropriate member of staff (unless the complaint is against the Head Teacher, in which case the Chairman of Governors should be notified).

3.3.2. If the complainant is unwilling to do this the Governor concerned should inform the Head Teacher or one of the Deputy Head Teachers. The complaint will then be investigated according to the procedures given in Section 3.1 and the Governor informed of the result.

3.3.3. If the complaint becomes subject to formal proceedings, the Governor who received the complaint will not be eligible to sit on either of the sub-committees involved. (See Section 4.2).

3.4. Outcome of the informal stage

3.4.1. When the informal processes have been exhausted, complainants should be informed clearly that:

- the matter has been dealt with properly and appropriately within established School policies and procedures; or
- the complaint has been found to be valid and that steps will be taken to resolve it; or
- the complaint has been found to be valid and its nature is such that the matter will be referred to the Governing Body.

3.4.2. If complainants remain dissatisfied they may be advised by the Head Teacher that they have the option of making a formal complaint to the Governing Body.

4. FORMAL STAGE

4.1. Hearing

4.1.1. The complaint will be heard by the Governors' Staff Committee, following the procedures set out for the formal stage of the School's Grievance Procedure.

4.2. Appeal

4.2.1. Any appeal against the decision of the Staff Committee will be heard by the Governors' Appeal Committee, again following the procedures set out for the formal stage of the Grievance Procedure.