

Sherburn High School



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

Next Review Date October 2012

Including:

General School Complaints Procedure

Guidance Notes for Parents

Formal Complaints Form



SHERBURN HIGH SCHOOL
SHERBURN IN ELMET
LEEDS LS25 6AS
Head: Mr M Sibley B.Sc
Chair of Governors: Mr C Lewis



Telephone: 01977 682442, Fax: 01977 682752
E-Mail: admin@sherburnhigh.n-yorks.sch.uk

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction

This is the agreed formal procedure for dealing with complaints about Sherburn High School.

This procedure was approved by the Governing Body of the School on 30th March 2006

<p>*NB This complaints procedure does not apply when wishing to appeal on issues relating to school admissions, school exclusions, those SEN matters which can go to Tribunal, section 409 complaints, disciplinary procedures for teachers, financial impropriety cases, and child protection procedures.</p>
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GENERAL SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. The purpose is to set out how anyone with a complaint can have that complaint dealt with, and the action which should be taken by those in the school receiving the complaint.
2. The procedure covers complaints made by parents about the service provided by the school or the performance of duties and exercises of power by the Governing Body. It does not cover complaints which come within the scope of the statutory procedure published by the LEA *(see above) or other matters for which the law makes particular provision.
3. The formal procedures will not cover complaints about incidents which happened more than three months before unless there are obvious reasons why the complaint could not have been taken up before then.
4. All complaints will be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible, the period of consideration will vary with the gravity and complexity and the urgency with which it needs to be settled.
5. Although Governors will wish to be helpful, reassuring any concerned parent that any issues will be handled fairly, taking part in such discussions can later prejudice their involvement. Governors are, therefore, advised to either:
 - a) make this difficulty known and refer the parent to the Head, or
 - b) listen in order to help resolve the concern but accept this will prejudice their impartiality if the issue develops
6. A parent may want a preliminary discussion with an agreed appropriate member of staff about an issue to help decide whether he or she wishes to take it further.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

All complaints will be investigated fully and discreetly.

Anyone who is the subject of a complaint has the right to know and will be informed at an early stage of any allegations made and have the opportunity to respond.

At all stages complainants may be accompanied by a supporter.

The main aim at all times will be to ensure that any complaint is resolved to the satisfaction of all parties.

STAGES IN COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This procedure defines the five stages or levels at which a complaint could be considered

Stage 1 - The Informal Stage

Stage 2 - Formal Complaint

Stage 3 - Formal Complaint - referral to the Governing Body

Stage 4 - Review by Local Education Authority (NB Only applies to Curriculum and Religious Worship Complaints)

Stage 5 - Beyond the Local Education Authority

Stage 1 - First Contact (Informal Stage)

- a) Parents should be provided with an opportunity to discuss any concern with the appropriate member of staff who will try to clarify with the parent the nature of their concern and assure them that the school wants to listen. The member of staff may explain to the parent how the situation happened. It can be helpful to identify at this point what sort of outcome the parent is looking for.
- b) If the member of staff first contacted cannot immediately deal with the matter they should note the details of the concern and refer it to the appropriate person with responsibility for the particular issue raised, e.g. Head of Year or Head of Department.
- c) The member of staff dealing with the concern will make sure that the parent is clear what action has been agreed, arranging for the matter to be put in writing if it seems the best way of making things clear. Any communications must be placed on the pupil's school file
- d) If parental concerns are clearly not satisfied, the matter will then be referred to a member of the Senior Management Team. The member of staff will seek any necessary clarification of the concerns including interviewing the parents where this would be helpful. They will advise the parents of the outcome of their consideration. At this point the complaint is still at the informal stage.
- e) Where no satisfactory solution has been found within 10 working days parents will be made aware by the member of the Senior Management Team of the procedure for considering their concerns further.

Stage 2 - Formal Consideration

- a) Where a parent (or other) has made an approach to the school through the informal stage and is not satisfied with the outcome, they should write to the Head (or fill in the Formal Complaint Form), giving details of their concerns.
- b) Although the formal complaint form need only be a simple statement, parents who feel unable to complete it may contact the Area Education Office (01757 213366) who will be pleased to help.
- c) All complaints reaching this stage will be logged and acknowledged immediately by the Clerk to the Governing Body.
- d) The Head will seek any clarification necessary about the complaint, including interviewing the parent where necessary
- e) The parent will be notified in writing of the outcome of the complaint within 15 working days of receiving the formal complaint.
- f) Where a parent (or other) is not satisfied with the outcome of this, first formal stage, they have 5 weeks from the date of the Head's letter to register the complaint with the Chair of the Governing Body of the School.

Stage 3 (Formal) - Referral to the Governing Body

- a) Where a parent (or other) has made an approach to the school through this first formal stage and is not satisfied with the outcome, they should write to the Clerk to the Governors giving details of their concerns and asking for the matter to be given further consideration
- b) The Governing Body of the School will only consider complaints which have already progressed through stages 1 and 2 outlined in this procedure
- c) On receipt of a written complaint from a parent the Chair of the Governing Body will:
 - immediately log and acknowledge receipt of the complaint;
 - check that the complaint has already completed Stages 1 and 2;
 - check that the 5 week period since Stage 2 was complied with;
 - seek any clarification necessary about the nature of the complaint;
 - arrange for the Governing body or relevant sub-committee to consider the complaint as soon as it is practical to do so;
 - invite the parent and any representative to the meeting
- d) A Committee of the Governing body will consider the complaint with the parent or their representative given an opportunity to address them. The Head will also be given an opportunity to address the Governors.
- e) The Clerk to the Governing Body will notify, in writing, the outcome of meeting to the parent and Head within 15 working days. This concludes the process for considering a general complaint.

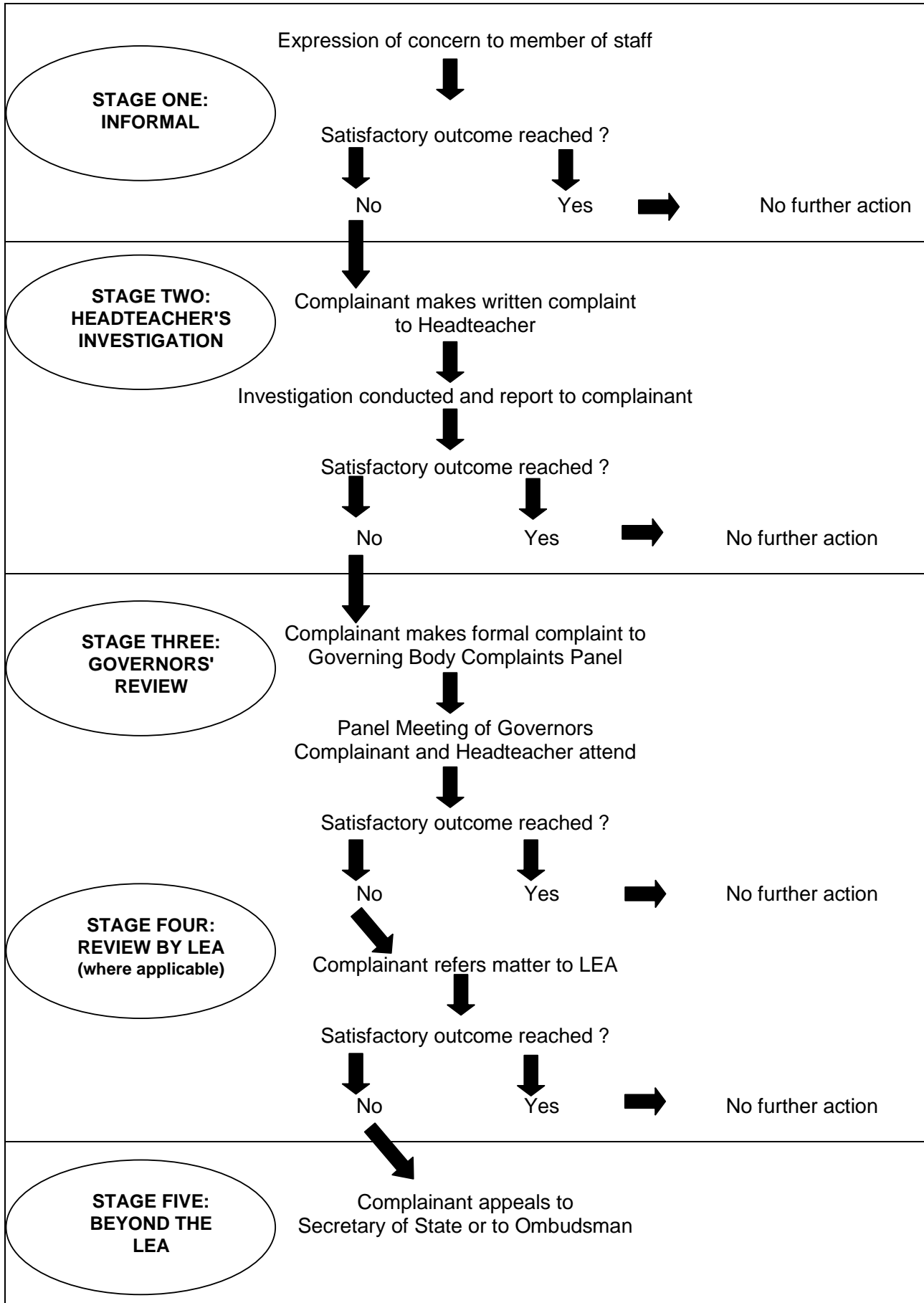
Stage 4 - Review by LEA (*Refer to LEA Guidelines*)

(NB Only applies to Curriculum and Religious Worship Complaints)

Stage 5 - Beyond the LEA (The Secretary of State) (*Refer to LEA Guidelines*)

(A complaint may be made to the Secretary of State on the grounds that the Governors have acted, or propose to act, unreasonably, or that they are failing to carry out their duties. The Secretary of State will not entertain a complaint if it has not been considered by the Governors)

Chart: Stages for Handling Complaints





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FORMAL COMPLAINT

To:

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Name and address available from the Clerk to the Governing Body

1. From: Name:

Address:

Tel No.: Home: Work:

2. Nature of Complaint:

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Please continue on a separate piece of paper if necessary

3. What date or period of time does your complaint relate to:

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Witnesses (if appropriate)

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continued over

4. To whom have you already complained informally, and when?

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5. Please give details of any information you have to back up your complaint, such as letters or reports. If you cannot send photocopies, please send the original paper, which will be photocopied and returned to you.

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6. Do You have a solution that you wish to suggest?

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Complainants Signature:

Date:

Date of Reporting Officer's Ruling: *(attached)*

Date of Receiving Appeal against Ruling:

Date of Appeal Hearing:

Summary of Outcome of Hearing:

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CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS - GUIDANCE NOTES FOR PARENTS

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If you have a concern or complaint

1. We would like you to tell us about it. We welcome suggestions for improving our work in the school. Be assured that no matter what you want to tell us, our support and respect for you and your child in the school will not be affected in any way. Please tell us of your concern as soon as possible. It is difficult for us to investigate properly an incident or problem which has happened some time ago.

What to do first

2. Most concerns and complaints can be sorted out simply by speaking with your child's Form Tutor or Head of Year. Any teacher or the school secretary can help you find the right member of staff. If you have a complaint which you feel should be looked at by a Senior Member of Staff in the first instance you can contact them straight away. It is usually best to discuss the problem face to face. You may need an appointment to do this, and can make one by ringing or calling in to the school office, (01977 682442). You can bring a friend or relation to the appointment with you if you would like to.
3. All staff will make every effort to resolve your problem informally. They will make sure that they understand what you feel went wrong, and they will explain their own actions to you. They will ask what you would like the school to do to put things right. Of course, this does not mean that in every case they will come round to your point of view, or be able to do what you would like, but it will help both you and the school to understand both sides of the question. It may also help to prevent a similar problem arising again.

What to do next

4. If you are dissatisfied with the responses you have received so far you can make a complaint to the Head. Your complaint should now be made in writing. This can be in the form of a letter to the Head or by submitting a Formal Complaints form.
5. You may also find it helpful at this stage to have a copy of the full statement of the general complaints procedure as this explains in detail what procedures are followed. This is available from the school office.
6. The Head will arrange to meet you for a discussion of the problem. Again you may bring a friend or someone else with you if you wish. The Head will conduct a full investigation of the complaint and may interview any members of staff or pupils involved. You will receive a written response to your complaint from the Head within 15 working days of your meeting with him.

If you are still unhappy

7. The problem will normally be solved by this stage. If you still feel that the matter you have raised has not been resolved at all or you are dissatisfied with the Head's actions in response to your situation then the Head will explain the procedure by which a formal complaint may be made to the Governing Body.
8. You should either write to the Chairman of Governors or ask for the letter or completed complaints form already given to the Head to be forwarded to the Chairman. The Clerk to the Governing Body will record this and acknowledge receipt of the complaint.
9. The Chair of Governors will arrange for the complaint to be investigated by a designated panel of not less than 3 governors who have no previous knowledge of the problem and so will be able to give it a fresh assessment. You will be invited to attend and speak to the panel at a meeting which the Head will also attend.
10. This panel will meet to consider the complaint within 20 working days following receipt of the complaint by the Chairman.

Further Action

11. When the complaint has been fully investigated and considered, the chair of Governors will inform the complainant in writing of the outcome. This will include an explanation of the conclusion, and any action taken or proposed.
12. Complaints about school problems are almost always settled within schools but there are some cases which can be taken on to the LEA. The school will explain which these are. If you feel the Governors have acted unreasonably, or have failed to carry out their responsibilities, you can take your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education and Employment.

Chart: Stages for Handling Complaints

