



Complaints Policy & Procedure

Created by: Sep 2020
Next review: Sep 2021

Policy Statement at iMedia School we believe that:

- We work in partnership with parents and seek to improve our school by paying close attention to their concerns;
- All complaints from parents should be received courteously;
- Parents should feel that their complaint has received full attention;
- All complaints should be fully investigated;
- Parents should receive prompt feedback;
- Urgent complaints should receive immediate attention;
- Complaints, wherever possible, should be resolved through open, informal discussion between the parent and the class teacher.

Complaints Procedure

Timescales

These guidelines have been written to ensure that all complaints will be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible by the school. The length of the period of time to respond to and resolve complaints will vary with the gravity and complexity of the complaint and the urgency with which it needs to be settled. The intention is that all complaints should be settled within a period which is considered reasonable by all parties and where appropriate indicative timescales have been identified.

Concern or complaint?

Any concerns expressed by parents and others about the school curriculum and related matters should be addressed by informal discussion with the teacher(s) and deputy head teacher/head teacher in the first instance.

Levels of complaint

There are 4 levels which define the procedure for making a complaint:

- Level 1 – informal complaint to the teacher, senior member of staff or head teacher
- Level 2 – formal complaint to the head teacher
- Level 3 – formal complaint to the school's governors body (chair of governors).
- Level 4 – formal complaint to the Secretary of State via the Education Funding Agency¹

Level 1

- If parents have any concerns about their child's educational progress they should first discuss their concerns with the class teacher. This usually enables the problem to be sorted out swiftly and to everyone's satisfaction. Class teachers will share concerns/complaints, as appropriate, with their deputy head teacher and head teacher.
- If, following discussion with the class teacher, the parent is still not satisfied; they may wish to bring their concerns to the attention of the deputy head teacher or the head teacher. Full investigation and discussion should enable most complaints to be resolved at this stage.
- Expressions of concern or complaints at this stage may be verbal or in writing.

Level 2

- Where complaints cannot be resolved informally the matter may then be considered to be the subject of a formal complaint and the complainant may then refer it to the head teacher.
- The formal complaint should be made in writing and a suggested format for the complaint is provided in Appendix A.
- Acknowledgement of receipt of this complaint will be made within 5 school days.
- The head teacher will fully investigate the complaint and respond, in writing, within 10 school days.
- Where a formal complaint concerns the head teacher then it should be referred to the chair of School's Governors.

Level 3

- Where complaints cannot be resolved by the head teacher the matter may then be considered to be the subject of a formal complaint to the governing body.
- If any complaint is received by individual School's Governors, including the chair, before the above stages have been completed, those Governors should refer the parent to the teacher, deputy headteacher or the head teacher and to the published Complaints Policy.
- A formal complaint to the School's Governors will need to be in writing to the clerk or chair of the governing body. A suggested format for making a formal complaint is provided in Appendix A. Acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint will be made within 5 school days.
- Depending on the nature of the complaint, it may be that action will need to be taken by the chair before the panel meets. This may include the resolution of the complaint without proceeding to a School's Governors' panel hearing.
- A panel of School's Governors will be established to investigate and hear the complaint. The panel will not previously have been involved in any detailed discussion of this complaint.
- Urgent cases will be considered as a priority and the time between receipt of the complaint and the panel hearing should not normally exceed 15 school days. Guidelines relating to the panel hearing are included in Appendix B.
- The complainant may wish to make an oral presentation in support of their complaint and may wish to be accompanied by a friend or representative.
- The panel will consider the complaint and the chair of the panel will notify the complainant, in writing, of the panel's decision within 5 school days.

Level 4

- A complainant who remains dissatisfied after their formal complaint has been fully considered under the arrangements described in this policy will be able to make a complaint to the Secretary of State through the Education Funding Agency (EFA).
- The EFA will normally only consider a complaint about the School after the School's own complaints procedure has been exhausted. The EFA cannot review or overturn decisions about complaints made by academies. It can only investigate whether the School considered the complaint appropriately. If the EFA finds that the School did not consider a complaint appropriately, it can request the School to re-consider the complaint.

Nature of complaint

Complaints about the education provided for pupils are to be considered as complaints about the governing body's responsibilities in respect of the school curriculum, but will not cover complaints about the actions of individual teachers or the head teacher. If, in the course of consideration of a complaint, the head teacher and/or governing body conclude that disciplinary or other proceedings should be initiated, they should take separate action as appropriate.

Policy Monitoring & Review

Recording complaints

- The head teacher will monitor all written complaints and keep a copy of all relevant correspondence.
- If there are a number of complaints about the same issue, or a rise in the number of complaints overall, the head teacher will ensure a full investigation is undertaken.

School's Governors's review

- The School's Governors will monitor the level and nature of all written complaints and review the outcomes on a regular basis to ensure the effectiveness of the procedure and make changes where necessary. The process of listening to, and resolving complaints should contribute to school improvement.
- Wherever practicable, complaints information shared with the whole School's Governors will not name individuals.

Further Information

Complaints Procedure Toolkit (Department for Education, 2011) Available on the DfE website

Complaints about academies Procedure for dealing with complaints about Academies (Education Funding Agency, 2012) Available on the DfE website

Contact details for complaints to the Education Funding Agency:

Academies Central Unit (School Complaints)
Education Funding Agency
Earlsdon Park
53-55 Butts Road
COVENTRY
CV1 3BH
Schoolquestions@efa.education.gov.uk

Notes

- **iMedia School has received ZERO number of formal complaints during the last school year**

- A copy of the findings and recommendation from any complaints appeal hearing will be made available during inspection.

Appendix A – Formal Complaint Form

If making a complaint in writing the following form identifies the key information required.

Name:	
Pupil's name:	
Relationship to the pupil:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Day time telephone:	
Evening phone:	
Please give details of your complaint	
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? (i.e. Who did you speak to and what was the response?)	
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?	

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.
Signature:
Date:

Official use:

Date note of receipt sent:	
Sent by:	
Complaint referred to:	
Date:	

Appendix B – Complaints Panel Guidelines2

The Complaints Panel

- The school’s Governors will nominate a number of members with delegated powers to hear a formal complaint.
- The panel will consist of an uneven number of the School’s Governors, usually 3.
- No School’s Governors may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or the circumstances surrounding it.
- In deciding the make-up of the panel, every effort will be made to try and ensure that it is a cross-section of the categories of the School’s Governors and sensitive to the issues of race, gender and religious affiliation.
- The complaints panel will select their own chair.