



# **The Holt School Complaints Policy**

**November 2018**

<b>Version</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
1	October 2015	Policy review
2	November 2018	Policy review

Reviewed	November 2018
Responsibility	Co-Headteachers
Committee	Strategic Planning
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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 All complaints will be treated seriously and will be investigated within a fair and open process which gives voice to complainants and to members of The Holt School community.
- 1.2 The School will not normally investigate anonymous complaints or allegations.
- 1.3 No complainant will be adversely treated as a result of making a complaint.
- 1.4 All complaints will be treated confidentially.

## **2 Concerns and complaints**

- 2.1 There is a difference between a concern and a complaint: a concern being an expression of something someone is worried about and a complaint being an expression of dissatisfaction. The Holt School appreciates that taking concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the number that develop into formal complaints.

## **3 General principles**

- 3.1 All concerns and complaints received from parents, guardians and other members of the community will be recorded and investigated by a Head of Year, a Head of Department or member of the Senior Leadership Team and the Co-Headteachers will be informed
- 3.2 Complaints about specific incidents or specific classes will always be investigated with the full knowledge of any member of staff involved in the complaint. The member of staff involved will always be aware of the nature of the complaint and if appropriate they will receive a copy of any documentation containing a complaint.
- 3.3 Complaints made by students will be investigated by a Head of Year or a Head of Department as appropriate and escalated to the Senior Leadership Team if necessary.
- 3.4 All written complaints will be acknowledged within 2 working days and a response given within 10 working days.
- 3.5 All complainants must act in a reasonable manner at all times. Threatening or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated and will be reported to the police if appropriate.

## **4 Procedure when an issue is raised by a parent, guardian or other member of the community**

### **4.1 First Stage (Initial Contact)**

- 4.1.1 E-mails, letters and telephone calls received by Heads of Year and Heads of Department raising a concern or a complaint from a parent, guardian or other member of the community will be recorded in the

running records and investigated through discussion with relevant staff, who will be informed of the response to be made. Where issues of a serious nature are raised, advice will be sought from a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

- 4.1.2 Letters and phone calls received by the Senior Leadership Team will be acknowledged in the first instance and further information collected before any response is made. Copies of letters will be passed to relevant staff on a confidential basis, with the opportunity to comment either orally or, if preferred, in writing.
- 4.1.3 When responding to concerns or complaints, staff will be as objective as possible and give as much information as is relevant. Staff comments will be kept with a copy of the concern/complaint. Senior staff will follow up the staff member's comments if further clarification is needed or if particularly serious issues are raised.
- 4.1.4 The concern/complainant will receive a response within 10 days. Staff will receive a copy of the response made if it is sent in writing or be informed of what is to be said if an oral response is made.
- 4.1.5 When the response is given to the concern/complaint the attention of the person who has expressed the concern or complaint will be directed to this Policy.

## **4.2 Stage 2 (Co-Headteacher)**

- 4.2.1 If a person who has raised a concern/made a complaint is dissatisfied with the initial response of the member of staff dealing with it in accordance with stage 1 set out in section 4.1 above, then the complainant may wish to put his/her concerns in writing to the Co-Headteachers. He/she should make it clear if he/she wishes the matter to be dealt with as a complaint.
- 4.2.2 The Co-Headteachers will investigate the concern/complaint and provide a written response. This will normally be within 10 school days of receipt of the written complaint, but the complainant will be kept informed if, for example, more time is needed to complete the investigation.
- 4.2.3 If the complainant's original concern was about an action by one or both of the Co-Headteachers personally, and the complainant has already discussed it at stage 1 with the Co-Headteacher(s), then he/she should put his/her complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors (stage 3 below).
- 4.2.4 For the avoidance of any doubt, if a concern or complaint is raised directly with a Co-Headteacher that the Co-Headteacher considers ought to be dealt with initially by a Head of Department, Head of Year or member of the Senior Leadership Team, then the Co-Headteacher will refer the concern or complaint to the relevant member of staff for stage 1 set out in section 4.1 above to be followed.

## **4.3 Stage 3 (Chair of Governors)**

- 4.3.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with the Co-Headteachers' response, he/she may contact the Chair of Governors via the Clerk to the Governors at the school. The Chair of Governors will investigate the complaint and, in most cases, seek to resolve the matter through discussion with the complainant and the Co-Headteachers.
- 4.3.2 At the end of this stage the Chair of Governors will provide the complainant with a written response. This will normally be within 10 school days, but the complainant will be kept informed if more time is needed.

#### **4.4 Stage 4 (Governing Body)**

- 4.4.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with the Chair of Governor's response at the end of stage 3, then the complaint can be referred to the Governing Body by the complainant writing to the Chair or Clerk to the Governing Body.
- 4.4.2 The Governing Body will ask a small panel to investigate the complaint. This will consist of a minimum of three governors. This panel will normally be arranged within 15 school days of the complaint being received, depending on the availability of all concerned. The complainant will be invited to speak to the panel at a meeting and can be accompanied by a friend or representative.
- 4.4.3 After the meeting the complainant will be advised of the outcome in writing. This will normally be within 10 school days of the meeting.
- 4.4.4 For all complaints the decision of the Governors is the last step in the procedure. However if the complainant is not satisfied with the Governing Body's decision the complainant could contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency but it can only intervene if the correct procedure has not been followed. Where this happens, it can require that the procedure be changed, amended or adhered to. The Education and Skills Funding Agency has no power to overturn a properly reached decision made by The Holt School.

### **5 Procedure where issue raised by a student**

- 5.1 In the interest of continuous improvement the school may receive complaints from students.
- 5.2 Complaints from students will be followed up by the appropriate member of staff.

### **6 Complaints to the Governing Body**

If a complaint is made directly to the Chair of the Governing Body or another member of the Governing Body and that complaint has not yet been addressed to a member of staff and/or the Co-Headteachers, the complainant will be directed to this Policy and invited to address his/her concerns in the first place to the appropriate member of staff or Co-Headteachers.

## **7 Annual Report**

An annual report of complaints logged will be reviewed by the Strategic Committee of the Governing Body at its summer term meeting. The report will focus on the number of complaints escalated to the Co-Headteachers and the type of complaint without referring to names. It will include recommendations where appropriate in order to review practice and achieve continued improvement. The report will be completed by the Co-Headteachers.

## School Complaints Procedure Flowchart Summary of Dealing with Complaints

