



# The Holt School Complaints Policy and Procedure

October 2015

**Policy Statement:** All complaints are treated seriously and are investigated within a fair and open process which gives voice to complainants and to members of The Holt School community. The School will not normally investigate anonymous complaints or allegations.

We need to be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints. Concerns will generally be dealt with by the appropriate staff.

No complainant will be adversely treated as a result of making a complaint. All complaints will be treated confidentially.

### **Complaints to the Staff at the School**

All complaints received from parents are recorded and investigated by Head of Year, Heads of Department or members of the Senior Leadership Team and the Headteacher informed. If the complaint is justified and it is appropriate to do so, changes are made to procedures and staff are informed.

Complaints about specific incidents or specific classes are always investigated with the full knowledge of any member of staff involved in the complaint who will always receive a copy of any documentation containing a complaint.

Complaints made by students are investigated by pastoral or subject staff as appropriate and escalated to Senior Leadership if necessary.

All written complaints are acknowledged within 2 working days and a response given within 10 working days.

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.

### **Procedures**

#### **Parents, Students or Other Members of the Community**

E-mails, letters and phone calls received by Head of Year are recorded and investigated through discussion with relevant staff, who are informed of the response to be made. Where issues of a serious nature are raised, advice will be sought from Senior Staff.

Letters and phone calls received by Senior Staff are acknowledged in the first instance and further information collected before any response is made to the complainant. Copies of letters are passed to relevant staff on a confidential basis with the opportunity to comment either orally or if preferred, in writing.

When responding to complaints, staff are asked to be as objective as possible and to give as much information as is relevant. Staff comments will be kept with the complaint.

Senior staff will follow up the staff member's comments if further clarification is needed or if particularly serious issues are raised.

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.

An annual report of complaints logged will be reviewed by the Strategic Committee at the summer term meeting. The report will focus on the number of complaints 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 a Deputy Head and a copy of the report will be passed to all members of the Leadership Team

### **Stage 1 (Headteacher)**

If you are dissatisfied with the response of the member of staff (or the Headteacher if they have been involved at the informal stage) then you may wish to put your concerns in writing to the Headteacher as a complaint. You should make it clear if you wish the matter to be dealt with as a complaint. The Headteacher will investigate the complaint and provide a written response. This will normally be within 10 school days of your letter, but you will be kept informed if, for example, more time is needed to complete the investigation. If your original concern was about an action by the Headteacher personally, and you have already discussed it at the informal stage, then you should put your complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors (stage 2).

### **Stage 2 (Chair of Governors)**

If you are not satisfied with the Headteacher's response, you may contact the Chair of Governors via the Clerk to the Governors at the school (d.hampton@holt.wokingham.sch.uk). The Chair of Governors will investigate your complaint and, in most cases, seek to resolve the matter through discussion with yourself and the Headteacher. At the end of this stage the Chair of Governors will provide you with a written response. This will normally be within 10 school days, but you will be kept informed if more time is needed.

### **Stage 3 (Governing Body)**

If you are not satisfied with the Chair of Governor's response at the end of stage 2, the complaint can be referred to the Governing Body by writing to the Chair or Clerk to the Governing Body. The Governing Body will ask a small panel to investigate your complaint. This will usually consist of a few governors and one independent member. This will normally be arranged within 15 school days of your complaint being received, depending on the availability of all concerned. You may be invited to speak to the panel at a meeting and be accompanied by a friend or representative. After the meeting you will be advised of the outcome in writing. This will normally be within 10 school days of the meeting.

For all complaints the decision of the Governors is the last step in the procedure. However if you are not satisfied with the Governing Body's decision you could contact the Education Funding agency who can only intervene if the correct procedure has not been followed. Where this happens, they can require that the procedure be changed, amended or adhered to. They have no power to overturn a properly reached decision made by an Academy.

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/irj/go/km/docs/CouncilDocuments/SCC/Documents/CYP/Education%20Funding%20Agency%20academies%20complaints%20procedure%20august%202012.pdf>. "

## **Students**

In seeking continuous improvement and as part of their general education in citizenship the School receives complaints from students in a positive fashion.

Complaints from students are followed up by Form Tutors, Classroom Teachers, Head of Year, Student Support Staff or Senior Staff. Responses will depend on the nature of the complaint.

## **Complaints to the Governing Body**

Complaints to the Chairman or other members of the Governing Body will be investigated in conjunction with the Headteacher applying the same principles as those set out for investigating complaints to the School.

## **Publicising the Procedure**

There is a legal requirement for the Complaints Procedures to be publicised and this will be done on the school website.

## School Complaints Procedure Flowchart Summary of Dealing with Complaints

