



**A C A D E M I E S**

# **Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy**

<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Andrew Martin
<b>Ratified by:</b>	QAT Board
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<b>Reviewed:</b>	May 2021
<b>Next review date:</b>	September 2022

## **Mission Statement, Values, and Ethos**

This policy covers compliments, complaints and concerns of a general nature raised by parents/carers.

At the Q3 Academies Trust we are committed to providing a high-quality service for all students.

We would like to hear from parents/carers if:

- ✓ they are happy with the service we provide and would like to compliment staff and/or students;
- ✓ they have any suggestions about how we can improve the quality of our provision – at Academy or Trust level;
- ✓ they have a complaint or concern. All complaints will be taken seriously and given full and proper consideration. Where things go wrong, we aim to resolve concerns wherever possible without the need for a formal written complaint.

## **Expressing approval**

When things go well, it is helpful if parents/carers express their approval. Maintenance of high levels of staff commitment, morale, and motivation are important in ensuring the provision of the best possible education for all students. Parents/carers can express their approval through an email to the child's Personal Tutor, through the Academy website, or in writing to the Head of School or the CEO or the Trust.

## **Raising a concern**

At each stage in the procedure, we want to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- ✓ an explanation;
- ✓ an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- ✓ an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur;
- ✓ an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made;
- ✓ an undertaking to review Academy policies in light of the complaint;
- ✓ an apology.

## **Raising a concern – informal stage**

In the first instance parents/carers should raise their concern with the most relevant member of staff. This will usually be the child's Personal Tutor. It is anticipated that at this stage the concern would be initiated verbally. If a Senior Leader is contacted at this stage, it is likely that the concern will be passed to a more appropriate member of staff for them to respond, because they have a particular responsibility or are familiar with the circumstances of the concern. Response from an appropriate member of staff would be within ten working days, but ideally the Academy would wish to expedite possible resolutions as soon as possible. Most concerns will be successfully resolved at this stage. Depending on the nature of the concern the member of staff spoken to may refer it to a more senior colleague, who will initiate appropriate action. In all cases it would be anticipated that the member of staff would inform their line manager of the concern and the outcome.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if requested by a complainant.

## **Making a formal complaint**

A formal complaint must be received within 3 months of the incident/concern occurring.

This policy does not apply where the complaint may lead to disciplinary proceedings against a member of staff, admissions, exclusions, SEND, or child protection procedures.

These matters have separate procedures and resolutions. Details of the outcomes of these procedures may not be shared with complainants.

### **Step 1 – the Head of School**

If the parent/carer is not satisfied that their concern has been resolved informally then they should inform the Head of School in writing that they wish to make a formal complaint. The Head of School will then take appropriate action and respond within ten working days, this may include investigation by a designated senior member of staff.

If the concern is about the Head of School or the Chair of the Local Governing Body of the school, then the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) should be approached. If the complaint relates to the Chief Executive Officer, then this should be reported to a Trustee or the Trust Board to pursue.

### **Step 2 – the Local Governing Body**

In the unlikely event that the Head of School cannot resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the complainant then a formal complaint can be made, in writing, to the Local Governing Body. This can be done by writing to the Chair of Governors at the Academy address. The panel hearing will take place within 15 working days of receipt of the formal complaint. There is a form which complainants can choose to fill in for this purpose if they wish. (see appendix A).

The panel will consist of at least three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the Academy (i.e. from another governing body).

The complainant/s may attend the panel hearing and be accompanied if they wish. The panel will make findings and recommendations with a copy of the outcome information being provided to the complainant and, if relevant, the person complained about. The outcome information will be available for inspection on the Academy premises by the proprietor and the Head of School. Written records will be maintained of all complaints including details of how they are resolved, and the action taken by the Academy as a result of the complaint. Records relating to individual complaints will remain confidential except under certain circumstances including Secretary of State requests and inspections.

You will receive a written response from the governing body within 5 working days of the meeting.

### **Step 3 – Q3 Academies Trust**

If the complainant is not satisfied that their complaint has been considered properly and reasonably by the Local Governing Body, then the matter can be raised with the Multi-Academy Trust. However, it should be noted that the Trust will review the process of the complaint, not the complaint itself, and will only under exceptional circumstances, overturn a decision of the Local Governing Body. It is important to realise that this is not a general right for any complainant who disagrees with the governors' decision.

### **Step 4 - the Role of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)**

Should the complainant still remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint after Stage 3, the complainant is able to refer the matter to the Education and Skills Funding Agency, who will consider whether the Academy followed an appropriate procedure in dealing with the complaint.

Education & Skills Funding Agency  
Cheylesmore House  
5 Quinton Road  
Coventry  
CV1 2WT

In your letter please explain:

- a) what your complaint to the governors was;
- b) what response they have made to it;
- c) why you think that the governors have not followed a proper procedure in considering your complaint, and/or;
- d) why you think that their consideration of it was unreasonable.

Whilst it is appreciated that matters may not come to light immediately, the Academy nor the Trust will be unable to effectively investigate and resolve complaints relating to historical matters older than three months.

Complainants have a responsibility to act with civility and rationality before, during, and after they raise a complaint. The Trust can invoke its Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints Policy in the event that a complainant falls short of these expectations.

## Appendix A: Complaints Form

<b>Your name:</b>	
<b>Student's name (if relevant):</b>	
<b>Your relationship to the student (if relevant):</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Postcode:</b>	
<b>Day time telephone number:</b>	
<b>Evening telephone number:</b>	
<b>Please give details of your complaint</b>	

**What action, if any have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? (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 acknowledgement sent:**

**By who:**

**Complaint referred to:**

**Date:**

## **Appendix B: Procedure for Governing Body Committee or Complaints Panel to deal with a complaint at Stage 3**

When a complaint is referred to the panel will meet within 15 working days of the complaint.

The Clerk will:

- ✓ Set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible;
- ✓ Collate any written materials and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing;
- ✓ Meet and welcome the parties as they arrive at the hearing;
- ✓ Record the proceedings;
- ✓ Notify all parties of the panel's decision within 5 working days of the meeting.

The Chairman of the panel will ensure that:

- ✓ The remit of the panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption;
- ✓ The issues are addressed;
- ✓ Key findings of fact are made;
- ✓ Parents/carers and others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease;
- ✓ The hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy;
- ✓ The panel is open-minded and acting independently;
- ✓ No member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure;
- ✓ Each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions;
- ✓ Written material is seen by all parties. If a new issue arises it would be useful to give all parties the opportunity to consider and comment on it.

The meeting will follow the set procedure:

- ✓ The hearing is as informal as possible;
- ✓ Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence;
- ✓ After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses;
- ✓ The Head of School may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken;
- ✓ The Head of School is then invited to explain the Academy's actions and be followed by the Academy's witness;
- ✓ The complainant may question both the Head of School and the witnesses after each has spoken;
- ✓ The panel may ask questions at any point;
- ✓ The complainant is then invited to summarise their complaint;
- ✓ The Head of School is then invited to summarise the Academy's actions and response to the complaint;
- ✓ Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues;
- ✓ The chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within a set time scale;
- ✓ The notification will normally be in writing no less than 5 working days after the hearing.