



Inspiring Learners for their future

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE 2010

UPDATED JULY 2010

Consultation History

Governors/staff/parents/students	Date
Executive (Leadership Group)	
Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff	
Curriculum Committee	
Full Governing Body	
Next Review of Policy	



The Ridgeway School and Sixth Form College Complaints Procedure

Policy

The Ridgeway School and Sixth Form College is committed to allowing parents of registered students a means of making complaints which they can be confident will be addressed properly in a systematic and fair way.

All complaints at both informal and formal stages will be dealt with as effectively and swiftly as possible.

Concerns should initially be discussed with the subject teacher, mentor, team leader, Head of Year or other relevant member of staff. A concern may be verbal or in writing (email or letter), by taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage we aim to reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints.

Complaints relating to the curriculum should be addressed under the separate Curriculum Complaints Procedure and any complaints by staff should be addressed under the School's Grievance Procedure.

Linked Policies

Curriculum Policy; Curriculum Complaints Procedure; Grievance Procedure; Appeals Procedure; Confidential Reporting Policy and Behaviour for Learning Policy

Procedure

There are two stages in The Ridgeway School and Sixth Form College's Complaints Procedure:

Firstly, an Informal Stage, when the Headteacher or a delegated member of staff will try to resolve the problem;

Secondly, a Formal Stage, when the matter is referred to Governors, if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the first stage.

It is important not to confuse concerns with complaints.

Informal Stage

Although a complaint is at the informal stage a record of discussions and outcomes will be recorded by the member of staff concerned and recorded in SIM Event Log. The complaint should be clearly defined and the person making the complaint should be asked what they feel the school needs to do to resolve their complaint.

1. Complaints should initially be discussed with the subject teacher or Team Leader or Mentor or Head of Year or with another relevant member of staff. A complaint at the informal stage may not necessarily be in writing.
2. In general, any written (email or letter) complaint should be addressed to the Headteacher, although it is expected that difficulties are at first discussed informally with the relevant teacher or line manager, before being referred to the Headteacher.
3. If the concern is not met to the parent's satisfaction by discussion, then the initial recipient of the complaint should refer the matter to the Headteacher or an appropriate designated member of the Senior Team, depending on the content of the complaint. It may be appropriate at this stage for the complaint to be put in writing. A complaint form is available (from the Clerk to the Governors) as a preferred option.
4. The Headteacher or a designated member of the Senior Team will investigate the circumstances of the complaint and may find it appropriate to ask for written statements from staff or students and to call for any relevant documentation.
5. If the complaint is against a member of staff, that member of staff has a right to be given details of the complaint and the opportunity to make representation about it. These will be taken into account by the person investigating the complaint.
6. The Headteacher or designated member of staff will respond to the parent with the outcome of the investigation, normally within 10 school working days of receipt of the substance of the complaint. The response may be in writing or at a meeting with written confirmation of the outcome.
7. The parent must be informed of his or her right to have the matter referred to the Governing Body, if the outcome of the informal stage is not satisfactory. Any such request by a parent should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governors at the School, and so becomes a complaint under the Formal Stage heading.

8. Parents will be kept fully informed of the handling of any complaint. However, a complaint may result in disciplinary action by the School against a member of staff, which would be confidential between that member of staff and the School.
9. Any complaint will be kept confidential unless it is necessary to involve other parties.

Once all informal procedures have been exhausted and the complaint is not resolved the Formal Stage may be invoked.

Before moving to the Formal Stage the matter should have involved the Senior Leadership Team member responsible for the area of the school that the complaint refers to.

Formal Stage

After the Senior Team have been involved and the complaint has not been resolved, the complaint must be put in writing to the Clerk to the Governors. The complainant should be given a Complaint Form to complete.

1. Formalise a complaint it must be put in writing and a Complaints Form completed by the complainant. This is available from the Clerk to the Governors. (Stated already Informal stage point 3).
2. When a formal request for the Governors to consider a complaint is received by the Clerk, the Clerk may refer the matter in the first instance to the Chairman of Governors or in his or her absence, to the Vice Chairman of Governors, who may liaise with the Headteacher to find out whether, and how, the School has responded to the complaint at the informal stage. The Governors have a duty to investigate any complaint referred and may appoint a panel to hear it.
3. Where a parent raises a formal complaint specifically against the Headteacher, the complaint should be sent to the Clerk to the Governors. The Clerk will refer the matter to the Chairman of Governors, or in his or her absence, to the Vice Chairman of Governors.
4. If a hearing is requested, the Clerk will write to the parent, the Headteacher and the Chairman of Governors giving details of the meeting of the Governors' Complaints Appeals Panel convened to hear the complaint, and requesting copies of any documents to be put before the meeting and names of any witnesses who may be asked to attend by either party. The parent will be informed of the right to be accompanied by a friend. The hearing will be held at reasonable notice, as soon as practicable after receipt of the referral.

5. The procedure at the hearing will be appropriate for the circumstances. The format of the hearing will include:
 - a. The presentation of the complaint
 - b. A reply by the Headteacher or a governor
 - c. Questioning by all parties
 - d. Representation about ways to resolve the complaint satisfactorily
6. The Panel will withdraw to consider their findings on the facts of the evidence put before them, and to form their conclusions, which may include measures to redress the problems identified. All parties will be notified of the panel's decision in writing.
7. Where a parent remains unsatisfied by the findings of the Panel or the response to the complaint, he or she may take the complaint to the Local Authority, who will review the process but make no recommendation on the decision.

The Ridgeway School and Sixth Form College Complaints Procedure – Form

Please complete and return to the Clerk to the Governing Body who will
acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your Name	
Student's name	
Your relationship to the student	
Address	
Postcode	
Daytime telephone number Evening telephone number	
Please give details of your complaint	
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak to and what was the response)?	

<p>What action do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?</p>	
<p>Are you attaching any paperwork?</p> <p>If so, please give details.</p>	
<p>Signature</p>	
<p>Date</p>	
<p>Official use</p>	
<p>Date acknowledgement sent</p>	
<p>By whom</p>	
<p>Complaint referred to...</p>	
<p>Date</p>	

School Complaints Procedure Flowchart

Summary of Dealing with Complaints

