

THE RIDGEWAY SCHOOL
Complaints Procedure

Consultation History

Governors / Staff	Date
Executive (Leadership Group)	June 2003
Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff	July 2003
Pupils Committee	July 2003
Full Governing Body	July 2003
Next Review of Policy	

Policy

The Governors are committed to ensuring that the highest standards are maintained at The Ridgeway School, both in the provision of education to pupils and in every other aspect of the management of the School. A Complaints Procedure is an important part of the management of a well-run school, in allowing parents the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have through appropriate channels.

This Procedure has been adopted by the Governing Body to ensure a systematic and fair approach to the resolution of such concerns. The Procedure is designed to allow parents of registered pupils at the School a means of making complaints which they can be confident will be addressed properly.

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

Communication with Parents Policy; Curriculum Policy; Curriculum Complaints Procedure; Grievance Procedure; Appeals Procedure; Confidential Reporting Policy

Procedure

There are two stages in The Ridgeway School's Complaints Procedure:

- A. An Informal Stage, when the Headteacher or a delegated member of staff will try to resolve the problem;
- B. A Formal Stage, when the matter is referred to Governors, if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the first stage.

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A. Informal Stage

1. Most parents' concerns can be adequately resolved by discussion with the subject teacher or Team Leader or Form Tutor 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 complaint should be addressed to the Headteacher, although it is expected that difficulties may be resolved informally with the relevant teacher or line manager, before being referred to the Headteacher.
3. The informal stage of the Procedure should be exhausted before the matter is referred to the formal stage. If any substantial complaint is received by a member of staff it should be referred to the appropriate Line Manager or to the Headteacher as appropriate, if it cannot immediately be resolved by the member of staff to the satisfaction of the parent.
4. 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.
5. 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 pupils and to call for any relevant documentation.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.

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9. 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.
10. Any complaint will be kept confidential unless it is necessary to involve other parties.

B. Formal Stage

11. A parent who raises a complaint must be informed of the right to refer the matter to the Governing Body if he or she is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal stage of complaint.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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.
15. 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

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16. 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.

17. 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 further stage of an independent appeal or review, usually involving the Local Authority.