



Be part of the family

The Regis Academy

Version 1.0

Complaints Policy

Date	September 2021
Date of Review	August 2022
Approved By	A Pincher

Introduction

This Complaints Policy is for use by parents/carers who have children that attend The Regis Academy.

This policy is designed to meet the standards set out in the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014 and guidance issued 27 January 2015. This means that parents must be offered:

- An opportunity to resolve a complaint with the relevant school staff on an informal basis for example through discussion with a senior member of staff
- A formal complaint stage where a complaint is made in writing
- A hearing with a panel appointed by or on behalf of the Board of Governors and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom must be independent of the management and running of the school.

The exceptions to this requirement are complaints relating to the Curriculum, Collective Worship and Religious Education; some Special Educational Needs issues and Admissions issues; and others where Local Authorities have statutory responsibilities, such as Safeguarding. The Head can give information and advice about complaints in these areas.

There are certain other complaints which fall outside the remit of this complaint's procedure; for example, staff grievances or disciplinary procedures. Any complaints concerning the conduct of foundation staff will be handled in accordance with the schools internal disciplinary procedures. The details of such an internal investigation will remain confidential.

Allegations of abuse involving a member of school staff must be reported to the Head immediately. Allegations of abuse involving the Head must be reported to the Chair of Governors immediately.

The school reserves the right to seek external advice and support at any time that it is considered necessary or appropriate in respect of either a complaint or concern.

The Head of Centre provides the Governors with a termly report outlining matters of concern or complaint and action taken by the school (wherever they have been resolved or not).

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints is kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests to access them.

These records will be available for inspection on the school premises.

The Foundation's Complaints Officer is Debbie Digger – Telephone: 0121 565 4012 or email: Debbie.digger@albionfoundation.co.uk

Stage 1: Concerns Procedure

Concerns are matters that can usually be resolved informally; if a concern is not resolved then the complainant will have the opportunity to put the complaint in writing and the formal complaint

procedure will then be engaged. It is in everyone's interest that matters are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The experience of the first contact is crucial in determining whether the concern will escalate. Concerns may be expressed verbally or in writing, via letter, email or fax. Members of staff are aware of the procedures; they know what to do when a concern is registered.

All matters of concern are documented in a log.

Stage 1:

Informal concern – meeting with lead member of staff to discuss issues – solutions discussed with implementation and strategies considered and agreed.

If agreement is not reached, then the formal procedure can begin with a written complaint.

Written records will be kept of all complaints where the parent/carer is not satisfied with the response on an informal basis.

All complaints are documented in a log held by the Complaints Officer. A written confirmation of the discussions held and the resultant outcome will be made to the person expressing a complaint within five school days from completion of the relevant stage.

Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure will usually be considered by a senior staff member, but it may be delegated to a more appropriate person if the circumstances warrant this.

- The complaint must be in writing
- It will be responded to within five school days following receipt of complaint
- If the complainant is satisfied, the matter will be deemed to be closed
- If the complainant is not satisfied, then a written account to explain why the complainant is not satisfied must be submitted within five school days of receipt and the complaint will escalate to Stage 3

A **Stage 3** complaint will usually be heard by the Head or delegated to a more appropriate person if circumstances warrant this.

- The complaint will be responded to within five school days
- If the complainant is satisfied, the matter will be deemed to be closed
- If the complainant is not satisfied, then a written account to explain why the complainant is not satisfied must be submitted within five school days of receipt and the complaint will escalate to Stage 4

Records will be kept on whether complaints are resolved following a formal hearing or whether it needs to proceed to a panel hearing.

The **Stage 4** complaint will be dealt with by the Chair of Governors or, if he/she directs, delegated to another more appropriate Governor to deal with if circumstances warrant this.

- The Chair (or delegated Governor) will organise a Panel of three members to hear the complaint, one of whom will be independent of the Governors and management of the school. This is called the Governors Complaints Panel
- The complainant may present the complaint in person to the Panel
- The complainant may be accompanied to the panel hearing if they wish
- The complaint will be heard within 10 school days of receipt
- The complainant will be given two alternative dates for the hearing
- A third date will be offered in the event of the first two dates being unacceptable to the complainant. If this is still unacceptable a fourth date will be arranged, and the complaint hearing will go ahead without the complainant present if they are unable to attend. However, the complainant will have the opportunity to send a personal representative or submit information in writing if they so wish
- The outcome will be confirmed in writing within five school days of the hearing
- The panel may determine recommendations as a result of findings from the hearing and in this circumstance, a copy will be sent to the complainant
- If the complainant is satisfied, the matter will be deemed to be closed
- If the complainant is not satisfied, it will be for the complainant to seek appropriate third-party advice to ascertain what further course of action they might take

Concerns or complaints specifically about the Head of Centre:

A decision that the Head of Centre has made as a result of a Stage 3 complaint does not become a complaint about the Head. If the complainant feels the complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily, he/she should proceed to Stage 4, a Governor Complaints Panel.

If the concern or complaint is specifically about the Head of Centre and is not resolved at Stages 1-3, then it will be necessary for the complainant to proceed to Stage 4 and formally complain to the Chair of Governors. The complainant should write to him or her at the school address marking the envelope "Confidential". The Chair of Governors should acknowledge the complainant's letter in writing within five school days of receipt and decide on what action should be taken. In the event that the Chair of Governor's is not available within the stated time period the Complaints Officer will refer to the Director of The Albion Foundation for guidance.

Additional Notes:

The Regis Academy staff and Governors will always work with parents to try and secure a satisfactory outcome following a complaint. However, there may be occasions when the expertise within the school staff is not able or sufficiently knowledgeable to deal with a specific complaint. In such rare cases the school reserves the right to refer complaints to experts in chosen fields at any of

the three stages in the process. Any such third parties may then respond to the complainant on the school's behalf.

In circumstances where the nature and extent of a complaint are unusually complex, The Regis Academy also reserves the right to amend the timescales used in the complaints procedure to ensure that adequate time is made available to try and resolve the complaint satisfactorily.

Part of the Complaints Officer's role is to assist the complainant in the process and the complainant should feel free to take advice, as appropriate, Complaints Officer at any time during school hours.

Correspondence sent by post will be deemed to have been received the day after posting when sent by first class post or two days after posting when sent by second class post.

Parents/carers who are not satisfied about the handling of their complaint have recourse to the ESFA via:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure>

The Remit of the Governor's Complaints Panel

Whilst the Governors Complaints Panel hearing is a formal process, and held in private, every effort will be made to allow the proceedings to be as informal and constructive as possible, focusing on resolution of the complaint to everyone's satisfaction. All parties will be expected to act with respect, courtesy, understanding and tolerance, particularly if a child is in attendance.

The Chairman will direct the proceedings and may permit adjournments at any time to allow for reflection, private discussion or the comfort and wellbeing of attendees etc. The aim will be to resolve all matters at a single meeting.

All parties at the meeting will have access to the same documentation which, so far as is possible, will be distributed in good time before the meeting date. All parties will have the opportunity to state their case or position and to ask questions.

The Panel can:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur

Complaints Officer will remain the contact point for the complainant and 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.

An Administrator will attend the Panel meeting and will record the proceedings. A template, **Appendix A**, is attached to assist the complainant if they wish.

APPENDIX A - Complaint letter template

<p>Your name:</p> <p>Pupil's name:</p> <p>Your relationship to the pupil:</p> <p>Address:</p> <p>Telephone number(s):</p>
<p>Details of the complaint</p>
<p>What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint</p>
<p>What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?</p>
<p>Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.</p>
<p>Signature:</p> <p>Date:</p>

Please complete and return to the Head of Centre or Chair of Governor's (for Stage 4) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.