



HILBRE HIGH SCHOOL HUMANITIES COLLEGE

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction:

Hilbre High School will treat all complaints seriously and confidentially in accordance with this Complaints Procedure.

Correspondence, statements and records will be confidential unless requested by the Secretary of State or requested by a body conducting an inspection, where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or any other legal obligation prevails.

For a member of the public wishing to make a complaint, the procedure should commence at Stage 2: Formal.

If the complaint/concern relates to the Headteacher, the complainant will be advised to contact the Chair of Governors and to commence the procedure at Stage 3: Chair of Governors.

As the Headteacher has responsibility for the day-to-day management of Hilbre High School, the Headteacher has responsibility for the implementation of a complaints procedure, including decisions about his/her own involvement. A reason for having different stages of a Complaints Procedure, is to reassure complainants that their grievance may be heard by more than one person.

Stage 1: Informal

It is anticipated that the majority of concerns and complaints will be resolved informally. If parents/carers have a concern/complaint, they should normally contact their child's Form Tutor, subject teacher or House office accordingly. Contact details for staff can be found on the school website in the 'Contact Us' section.

In most cases, it is anticipated that the matter will be resolved quickly, by this means and to the satisfaction of the parent/carer.

If the staff member initially receiving the complaint/concern is unable to solve it alone, they will consult with more senior staff with the aim to procure a solution without requiring more formal procedure.

In relation to any of the following: a written complaint/concern; a meeting with the complainant; the outcome of an investigation; the conclusion of any further meeting with the complainant or Appeal stage hearing, the school aims to answer within a maximum of fifteen working days. If, for any reason, the above is not possible, the complainant will be provided with a revised timescale for dealing with the complaint.

If, after Stage 1, the matter is still not resolved to the parent/carer's satisfaction, they will be referred to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Formal

If the matter cannot be solved at Stage 1: Informal, or the complainant considers their complaint warrants immediate senior staff intervention, a complaint may be directed to the Headteacher. The complaint should be made in writing by the complainant, or by another person on their behalf and with their consent and addressed to the Headteacher.

The Headteacher or a nominated member of staff will acknowledge the complaint orally and/or in writing within three working days, confirming the exact nature of the complaint. A target date will be set for providing a response to the complaint. This will normally be within fifteen

school days; if this is impossible, a letter will be sent explaining the reason for the delay and giving a revised target date. The Headteacher will normally seek to invite the complainant to meet and discuss the concerns.

It will be made clear to the complainant that if the complainant so desires, the complainant may be accompanied to any meeting by a friend, relative, representative or advocate who can speak on the complainant's behalf; and that interpreting facilities are available, if required.

If necessary, the Headteacher or nominated member of staff will carry out a full investigation into the issues raised. A response will be provided after the conclusion of the meeting, or any investigations carried out. If the complainant refuses the offer of a meeting, a response will be provided based on available information only, or the Headteacher may consider the complaint to be unsubstantiated by reason of non-attendance.

A written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they are received will be made and retained.

If the matter has not been resolved or parties have failed to reach a satisfactory resolution, the complainant will be advised that they have the option to proceed with their complaint to Stage 3 of the procedure.

Stage 3: Chair of Governors

If a complaint remains unresolved after following the previous stages, a letter should be sent to the chair of Governors, detailing the concerns/complaints for consideration.

If a complaint has been referred directly to the Chair of Governors and the preceding stages have not been followed, the Chair may refer the complainant to preceding stages of this procedure or ask the Headteacher to undertake the investigation in the first instance.

The Chair or nominated Governor may offer to meet with the complainant to discuss their concerns. The Chair will review any previous investigation and/or the Headteacher's decision.

The Chair may: confirm the Headteacher's decision; reach a different decision regarding all or a part of the complaint; seek an investigation or further investigations relating to a whole or part of the complaint.

If needed, the school may choose to seek advice from its HR Advisors.

The Chair of Governors will provide a written decision as soon as is reasonably practical to do so; if the complainant remains dissatisfied, they will be referred to the Appeal Stage outlined below.

Stage Four: Appeal Stage

If the complainant has exhausted Stages One to Three, the Chair will ask the Clerk to Governors to convene a Complaints Review Panel so that the complaint can be considered. The panel will consist of at least two Governors, who have not previously been involved in matters detailed in the complaint. The Complaints Review Panel will not be made up solely of Governing Body members, because they are not independent of the management and running of the academy. The Chair of Governors will identify a suitably independent individual who will fulfil the role and responsibility of being the independent member of the Panel.

If it is considered necessary, the Chair of the Panel may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter may be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars should be supplied to all parties, no later than three school working days prior to the meeting.

A complainant may be accompanied to the meeting by one other person of the complainant's choice. Legal representation will not normally be considered appropriate at this stage.

Where possible, the Panel meeting will look to resolve the issue immediately. However, if after hearing all parties relevant to the complaint, the Panel considers further investigation is required, the Panel will determine how this will be conducted and the meeting may be adjourned to a later date to allow such investigations to take place. After due consideration of the facts considered relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and make recommendations. The written decision of the Panel, together with its reasons, will be issued to the complainant. The Panel's decision will be final. The complainant will have no further right to appeal this decision within school.

Further Information:

Before complaining to an external body, it is expected that all aspects of this procedure, as outlined above, will have been followed.

The school reserves the right to reject frivolous or vexatious complaints at any time, such as:

- Complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious.
- Insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and / or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason.
- Insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner.
- Complaints designed to cause disruption or annoyance.
- Demands for redress which lack any serious purpose or value.

If a complainant believes Governors have acted unreasonably, a complaint can be made in writing to the Secretary of State for Education and will be dealt with by the Education Funding Agency.

Ofsted has powers to investigate certain types of complaint from parents/carers to help decide whether to inspect a school.

Information for Parents/Carers whose child is SEND:

Wirral SEND Partnership:

The Wirral SEND Partnership is an impartial, independent and confidential service which gives free information, advice and support about matters relating to Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) and is for parents or carers of children aged 0-25, and young people aged 16-25 with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The service gives practical, factual and impartial information, advice and support to enable you to participate fully in decisions about education, health and social care.