



Stephenson Academy

Complaints Policy

Reviewed: March 2015
Date for Review: March 2017

Date approved: _____

Signed by: _____
S Clark, Chair of Governors
On behalf of Stephenson Academy Governing Body

School Complaints Procedure

Who can make a complaint?

Anyone who has contact with the school's overall provision may make a complaint. For example, young people at the school, their parents/carers, social workers, members of staff, or indeed any other person who may have come into contact with the school.

Complaints should be raised as soon as possible. Any complaint raised more than one year after the original incident will not be considered unless there are exceptional circumstances.

What might people want to complain about?

People may want to complain about anything within the overall provision of the school. For example, within the school a student may make a minor complaint about the food on offer, or a sanction that has been given. On the other hand, the complaint may be more significant, for example a parent may be unhappy about a provision the school makes for their child, or that they or their child is being unfairly treated.

What if your complaint is not about the school?

You may wish to complain about other people or agencies which are not directly connected to the school. If this is the situation, we will try to advise you on the best course of action to deal with the complaint.

How does a minor complaint differ from a more significant complaint?

A minor complaint is often something that can be dealt with by a member of the staff team and does not involve anyone being at risk of harm, either from another person or from themselves. A more significant complaint might be a view that there has been a lapse in an agreement of what the school agrees to offer, or that the school is not working within current legislation and guidance, or that a decision has been made by the school which is felt to be unfair or goes against equality of opportunity.

Minor Complaints

Who should a minor complaint be made to?

Initially you should speak to the relevant member of staff about making a minor complaint, but if they are not available you may speak to any other member of staff.

How long will it take to deal with a minor complaint?

We aim to resolve all minor complaints within two working days or sooner. If we are unable to resolve the complaint within two days we will inform you in writing within five working days of receipt of the complaint. Additional time may be required during school holiday periods.

What will the member of staff do about the complaint?

If your complaint is a minor one, then you can either speak about it or put it in writing. If you need help to do this you only need to ask reception and we'll find a person that you feel happy with to help you. Depending on the nature of the complaint the following action will be taken:

- They will talk through the complaint with you to make sure that they have the full information so that whoever deals with the complaint has all the facts in order to make an informed decision.
- They will speak to the other people connected to your complaint (if applicable) and call a meeting with all parties concerned so you can discuss the situation.
- If the complaint is about a class matter it may be discussed with the tutor, relevant class teacher or during tutor time.

- It may be that your complaint is relevant to be discussed by the School Council, but this would only be done with your agreement.
- It may be relevant to refer your complaint to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- It may be relevant to refer your complaint to the Governors of the Academy Trust.

What if you are not happy with how the member of staff deals with the complaint?

You should follow the guidelines set down in the Worries and Complaints leaflet and speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. If you do not want to do this, you can take it to another responsible person within the school. If you are not happy with this, then you can ask an organisation outside of school, such as Childline, to act on your behalf (see last page for contact information).

Significant Complaints

What should you do if you have a significant complaint?

If your complaint or concern involves a person being at risk of harm, whether from another person or themselves; if you know of a situation where a person may put themselves at risk; if you feel that there has been a lapse in what the school agrees to offer, or that it is not working within current legislation and guidance; or if you are being unfairly treated, then you have a number of options available to you:

- You may wish to speak about it directly to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- If your complaint is about a member of the Senior Leadership Team other than the Executive Principal you can speak to the Executive Principal.
- If your complaint is about the Executive Principal you will need to contact the Chair of Governors. You can contact the Chair of Governors directly by telephone or in writing (see last page for contact information).
- If you feel none of the above individuals linked to the Academy can deal with your complaint you can contact the Chair of the Stephenson Trust. (see last page for contact information) His contact details are at the end of this document.
- Alternatively, you may wish to take your complaint to a responsible person or organisation outside of school to act on your behalf, we would however like to think that matters can be dealt with before it reaches this stage.

Will your complaint be dealt with confidentially?

Yes, where possible. We should however make you aware that the nature of your complaint may mean that we need to share it with others in order to collect all of the relevant information for the complaint to be dealt with fully. If this is the case then we will ask your permission to do so. If you do not consent to this, it may mean that we will be unable to proceed any further or that we will have to consider another form of investigation, whatever happens we will always attempt to give you a fair hearing.

How will you know who to contact if you want to make a complaint?

Contact information can be found at the end of this policy. Similar information can be found on the display boards around the Academy and in the Academy's Worries and Complaints leaflet.

What will the person you have spoken to do about the complaint?

Again, you can either speak about your complaint or put it in writing. If you need some help to do this you only need to ask and we will find a person that you feel happy with to help you. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the following action will be taken.

1. They will talk through the complaint with you to make sure they have all the information and pass it on to the Executive Principal, or a member of the Senior Leadership Team in the Principal's absence.
2. A senior member of staff will collect information in writing from all parties involved, or in the case of a complaint against a senior member of staff, by the Chair of Governors or his/her designated person.
3. They will speak to other people connected to your complaint (if applicable) and call a meeting between you and them if necessary so that you can discuss the situation.

4. It may be relevant to refer your complaint to the Governors or to a person from an organisation outside of the Academy. We will inform you if this is the case.

What happens next?

Once all of the information has been collated, a decision will be made on how best to proceed and to consider the best course of action to be taken, if any. You will be kept fully informed throughout the process by the person leading the complaint. If your complaint has to be dealt with by others outside of the Academy it may take longer to deal with.

How long will it take to deal with a significant complaint?

The Academy will try to deal with significant complaints within ten working days and will write to you to explain how your complaint was dealt with. If the process is going to take longer than ten working days then we will write to you within ten working days to explain the reason for delay. Additional time may be required during school holiday periods.

Other Information

How do you make a complaint if you are from outside of the Academy?

You can do this in a variety of ways. For example, it may be just as simple as telling any of the people previously identified from within the Academy that you want to make a complaint and what it's about.

Alternatively, you may wish to telephone or write and arrange to see a specific person such as the Executive Principal, or another member of the Senior Leadership Team, or a Governor to discuss the matter. If you wish, you may also ask another person to make a complaint on your behalf, such as a person from the Local Authority, a Social Worker, an advocate, or any other responsible person you have chosen who will act on your behalf.

What if you do not want to talk to any member of staff at the Academy?

You can make your complaint to:

- The Chair of Governors
- The Chair of the Stephenson Trust
- An advocate

You can also talk to any of the following organisations who will be able to offer advice and guidance:

- The Milton Keynes Special Educational Needs Casework Team in Children's and Young People's Services
- Child Line
- Parent Partnership service

Or, indeed, anyone else the person making the complaint feels able to act on their behalf and who will act responsibly.

Will all complaints be dealt with solely within the Academy?

No. It may be that the nature of the complaint indicates that a person is at risk or that policy or guidance has been seriously breached and that it needs to be referred to other agencies outside of the Academy. These may be:

- The Police
- Children's Services
- The Local Safeguarding Children's Board Department for Education

What will happen if you are not happy with the way your complaint has been dealt with?

If you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint you may appeal against the decision to the Governors. In response to this they will set up a panel of three Governors to hear your complaint. You may attend the hearing and you may also bring a responsible person to accompany you. You will be notified of the outcome in writing within five working days of the end of the hearing. Alternatively, you may wish to take it to a responsible person or organisation outside of the Academy to act on your behalf.

Will a record of your complaint be kept?

Yes. All complaints are kept in a single record book and copies of all reports and information relating to the record will be kept on file for as long as a student's file is retained.

Will I receive a written response to my complaint and what the decisions are?

Yes. After you have received a personal explanation and response to your complaint, you will receive a formal letter to inform you about the outcome.

What other policies within the Academy contain information about making complaints?

- The Anti-bullying Policy
- The Race Equality Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure
- Parent Guide – Concerns and Complaints
- Student Guide – Concerns and Complaints
- The Staff Complaints Procedure
- The Equal Opportunities policy
- The Dignity at Work Policy

Contact information – Stephenson Academy

Executive Principal

Dr Neil Barrett, 01908 889400
neil.barrett@stephensonacademy.org.uk

Senior Leadership Team:

Dr Marie Ramsay (SEN/Therapeutic/Safeguarding) marie.ramsay@stephensonacademy.org.uk

Mr Ollie Sharp (Behaviour & Inclusion) ollie.sharp@stephensonacademy.org.uk

Mr Merlin Williams (Teaching & Learning) merlin.williams@stephensonacademy.org.uk

Miss Esther Martin (Business Manager) esther.martin@stephensonacademy.org.uk

Chair of Governors:

Sandra Clark, via school, 01908 889400 or
reception@stephensonacademy.org.uk

Academy address:

Crosslands
Stantonbury
Milton Keynes
MK14 6AX

Academy email:

reception@stephensonacademy.org.uk

Chair of Stephenson Trust: Michael Manley,
c/o St Paul's Catholic School
Phoenix Drive
Leadenhall
Milton Keynes
MK6 5EN
01908 669735

Contact information – Organisations

Milton Keynes SEN

Casework Team:

01908 253414
sen@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Child Line:

08001111

Parent Partnership:

01908 254518
contact@mkparents.org