

# Trust Complaints Policy

DATE: 01 July 2023

DATE OF REVIEW: 01 July 2025

## **The Flying High Trust Complaints Policy**

The Flying High Trust encourages parents, carers, contractors and members of the public to contact the Trust to discuss any concerns or queries they may have. The central Trust team can be contacted using the contact details below:

Email: [info@flyinghightrust.co.uk](mailto:info@flyinghightrust.co.uk)

Telephone: 0115 989 1915

Post: The Flying High Trust, C/O Unit 2A Vickery Way, Chilwell, Nottingham, NG9 6RY

Experience has shown that the majority of questions and anxieties can be dealt with in this way, particularly if contact is made as soon as an issue arises. All staff within the Trust are keen to resolve concerns at the earliest stage without the need for escalation.

For all complaints, a written record will be kept for each case, including the outcome and whether the complaint was resolved following a formal procedure or progressed to a panel hearing. Any resulting actions taken as a result of the complaint will also be documented by the school/Trust.

### **Complaints concerning an individual Trust school:**

In the case of a complaint arising within one of the Trust schools, the complainant should follow the individual Complaints Policy of the school. Complaints policies for each can be accessed via the school website or by contacting the office team at the school.

School complaints policies address complaints using a staged approach, please refer to the policy of an individual school for full details on the procedure:

#### **Stage One: Complaint Heard by Member of Staff**

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The experience of the first contact between the complainant and the school can be crucial in enabling a timely and effective resolution to the concern identified. Where it is not appropriate for the complainant to speak with a particular member of staff, the complainant may wish to speak with a member of the school leadership team or Headteacher. Where the complaint concerns the Headteacher, the complaint should be referred to the Chair of Governors.

It is the hope and intention of all Trust staff to resolve complaints at this informal stage. Where it has not been possible to achieve a satisfactory outcome for the complainant, each school has an identified formal complaints procedure (stage two and beyond).

#### **Stage Two: Complaint heard by the Headteacher**

#### **Stage Three: Complaint heard by Local Governing Body Complaints Panel**

The Complaints Appeals Committee of the Governing Body will consider complaints where the Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors) has not been able to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant and the complainant wishes to appeal.

Any appeal must be made in writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body (the School will advise the complainant of the contact details).

The panel will be convened by the Clerk to the Complaints Appeals Committee (Governing Body) or the Flying High Trust central team, as appropriate.

The complaints panel will consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. One member of the panel will also be independent of the management and running of the school.

#### **Stage four: Trust Complaints Panel**

Where a complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant at Stage Three, the matter can be escalated to the Flying High Trust central team. The Trust will appoint an investigating officer and convene a panel of Trustees to review and agree appropriate outcomes. The complainant may be invited to the panel and/or receive a copy of the outcome(s) of the investigation and panel meeting in writing.

Should a complaint regarding an individual school not have been subject to the complaints policy of the school the Trust will refer the complainant to the school complaints policy unless the nature of the complaint requires immediate escalation to Trust level.

Complaints to the central Trust should be addressed to:

FHT Complaints Team

[info@flyinghightrust.co.uk](mailto:info@flyinghightrust.co.uk)

The Flying High Trust

Unit 2A Vickery Way

Chilwell

Nottingham

NG9 6RY

The investigating officer will contact the complainant to state the process and related timeframes in the handling of the complaint as well as to potentially request clarity or additional information in relation to the complaint.

#### **Complaints concerning the central Trust:**

##### **Stage One: Informal complaints**

The Trust aims to resolve all complaints at the informal stage. Should you wish to raise a concern please contact the central Trust team using the details on Page 1 of this policy. The Trust will refer the concern to an appropriate member of the central team who will contact you to discuss the nature of the concern and look to resolve the matter. Please raise the concern as soon as possible; experience has shown that timely intervention or clarification enables concerns to be addressed effectively.

### **Stage 2: Formal complaint to the Flying High Trust**

Where a complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complaint can be escalated as a formal complaint, submitted in writing to the Trust. The Trust will assign an investigating officer to review the complaint and identify any relevant outcomes or remedial actions.

### **Stage 3: Complaint heard by the Chief Executive Officer**

Where a complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complaint can be escalated to the Trust Chief Executive Officer. The Trust CEO will review the outcomes and compliance with procedures of previous stages of the complaint. The CEO may also refer the matter to the Trust Board of Trustees for review before responding to the complaint.

### **Stage four: Trust Complaints Panel**

Where a complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant at Stage Three, the matter can be escalated to the Flying High Trust central team. The Trust will appoint an investigating officer and convene a panel of Trustees to review and agree appropriate outcomes. The complainant may be invited to the panel and/or receive a copy of the outcome(s) of the investigation and panel meeting in writing.

Complaints to the central Trust should be addressed to:

FHT Complaints Team

[info@flyinghightrust.co.uk](mailto:info@flyinghightrust.co.uk)

The Flying High Trust

Unit 2A Vickery Way

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The investigating officer will contact the complainant to state the process and related timeframes in the handling of the complaint as well as to potentially request clarity or additional information in relation to the complaint.

### **Withdrawal of a complaint**

If you wish to withdraw your complaint, you should do so in writing.

### **Policy for Unreasonable Complainants**

1. We are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to you. We will not normally limit the contact you have with the school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

2. We define unreasonable complainants as 'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints'. The complaint itself may also be deemed unreasonable if unsubstantiated and in such cases will not be accepted as a complaint. Or if the volume of complaints is deemed to be unreasonable.
  
3. A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:-
  - refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
  - refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
  - refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
  - insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
  - introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
  - makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
  - changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
  - repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
  - refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;
  - seeks an unrealistic outcome;
  - is deemed to be acting unreasonably to the point of harassment of an individual or individuals;
  - makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.
  - complaints about matters that are being dealt with using our internal behaviour policy

4. A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically: -
  - maliciously;
  - aggressively;
  - using threats, intimidation or violence;
  - using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
  - knowing it to be false;
  - using falsified information;
  - publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.
  
5. Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with the school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.
  
6. Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.
  
7. If the behaviour continues the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact our school causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.
  
8. In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from our school.

In these cases, we will not provide responses beyond the initial complaint and will communicate our expectations, actions and communication plan.

Please also bear in mind that whilst your concerns may be valid and important to you, complaints that fall under this heading, take time away from school improvement and making every day count for the children within our school.

### **Record of Complaints**

**Academic Year 2023-24: 5**

## **Equality Duty**

In developing this policy, and in its implementation, we have had due regard to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and in particular our need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010,
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it,
- Foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The protected characteristics are sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and pregnancy or maternity.

## Appendix 1: Trust Formal Complaint Form

Once completed please return to: [info@flyinghightrust.co.uk](mailto:info@flyinghightrust.co.uk)

Your name:	
Relationship with school/Trust (e.g. parent of a pupil on the school roll):	
Pupil's name (if relevant to your complaint):	
Telephone number:	
E-mail address:	
Please give concise details of your complaint, (including dates, names of witnesses etc.), to allow the matter to be fully investigated: You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.	
Number of additional pages attached =	
What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? (i.e. who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?)	
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?	
Signed:	Date:
<b>Trust use</b>	
<b>Date form received:</b>	
<b>Received by:</b>	
<b>Date acknowledgement sent:</b>	
<b>Acknowledgment sent by:</b>	



**Complaint referred to:**

**This document will be provided at each stage of the complaints process and will be stored and disposed of in line with the school guidance on retention. By signing this form, I agree to these conditions.**

## Appendix 2: Trust Complaint Appeal Form

Once completed please return to: [info@flyinghightrust.co.uk](mailto:info@flyinghightrust.co.uk)

<p>Your name:</p> <p>Relationship with school/Trust (e.g. parent of a pupil on the school roll):</p> <p>Pupil's name (if relevant to your complaint):</p> <p>Telephone number:</p> <p>E-mail address:</p>
<p>Dear Chair</p> <p>I submitted a formal complaint to the school on ..... and am dissatisfied by the procedure that has been followed.</p> <p>Complaint submitted to:</p> <p>Date of submission:</p> <p>I have attached copies of my formal complaint and of the response(s) from the school.</p> <p>I am dissatisfied with the way in which the procedure was carried out, because:</p> <p>You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.</p>
<p>Number of additional pages attached =</p>
<p>What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?</p>
<p><b>Trust use</b></p> <p><b>Date form received:</b></p> <p><b>Received by:</b></p> <p><b>Date acknowledgement sent:</b></p>

**Acknowledgment sent by:**

**Complaint referred to:**

**This document will be provided at each stage of the complaints process and will be stored and disposed of in line with the school guidance on retention. By signing this form, I agree to these conditions**

### **The Role of the Local Authority**

The Local Authority does not have a statutory duty to consider Academy complaints and you do not have a right of appeal to the Local Authority should you disagree with the decision. You may, however, raise the matter with the Local Authority if you consider the complaint was not investigated properly or fairly. So long as the method of investigation followed a proper procedure and considered the complaint in a reasonable manner, then the Local Authority will simply inform you of that fact. It cannot reverse a decision of the governing body or Trust.

### **The Role of the Secretary of State for Education (the Department for Education)**

If you still remain dissatisfied and feel the Academy has acted unreasonably, or that it has failed to discharge a statutory duty, you may wish to refer your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education. Please refer to the web link below for guidance – please note that the Department of Education expectation is that a complaint escalated to this level will have completed all prior stages of the school and/or Trust complaints procedures.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/complaints-procedure>