

# Complaints Policy

(Last reviewed 06.04.17)

Policies at this academy are designed to support the ethos, aims and vision of Hafs Academy. They are written in accordance with the five outcomes contained within Every Child Matters:

- Being healthy.
- Staying safe.
- Enjoying and achieving.
- Making a positive contribution.
- Achieving economic wellbeing

## 1. Rationale

The Trustees of Hafs Academy welcome feedback, both positive and negative. Where someone has a concern or complaint we will endeavour at all times to deal with the issues responsively and reasonably and if necessary put things right as quickly as possible. This policy implements a structured process for the resolution of complaints and is in line with relevant guidance from DFE. This policy and number of formal complaints received each year will be available to parents on the school's website and on request from the school office.

### Stage 1: Dealing with concerns and complaints informally

1. The vast majority of concerns and complaints can be resolved informally. There are many occasions where concerns are resolved straight away through the class teacher, form tutor, year tutors, and other member of staff or any of the Trustees, depending on whom the parent first approached, without the need to resort to a formal complaints procedure, and this is preferable for all concerned.
2. Although this stage involves dealing with the issue informally it may prove helpful later, although not essential at this stage, for the person responding to make a basic record of the issue or complaint raised, which may include brief notes of conversations (in person or over the telephone), and the responses made.
3. The person who raised the issue should be informed of the action to be taken in order to resolve the issue. It may be helpful to confirm undertakings given about future action or monitoring in writing.
4. If the person is dissatisfied with the response they have been given, they should be provided with a copy of the School's complaints procedure and informed about how to take their complaint to Stage 2, by referring it to the Director of Education (Headteacher) or his representative, usually in writing.

## **Stage 2: Referral to the Principal or his representative**

1. The issue is referred to the Principal or his representative for investigation, usually in writing by the complainant.
2. At this stage it has become clear that the concern is a definite complaint. Any complaint received under this process, whether orally or in writing, should be acknowledged in writing by the Principal within 5 working days and a meeting will be held with the complainant within the following 5 academy days with a full written response within 15 academy days. Complainants should also be given the opportunity to meet with the Principal or his representative, or representative accompanied by a relative or friend if they so wish, to discuss their complaint. Written records of interviews with complainants and with staff or witnesses, carried out in the course of the investigation should be kept by the Principal or his representative
3. In the letter conveying the outcome, the complainant should be informed of the process for referral to the Chair of Trustees if they wish to take their complaint further. Any such referral should be made within 10 academic days after receipt of the Principal or his representative's letter.

## **Stage 3: Review by the Chair of Trustees**

1. The complainant requests a review of their complaint by writing to the Chair of Trustees, in care of the academy, making it clear why they are complaining, who they have already spoken to and what they want to happen as a result of their complaint. Complaints received by the Chair should be acknowledged within 7 academic days and with a substantive response within 20 academic days. The Chair may need to hold interviews with the Principal or his representative and possibly other members of staff and notes should be kept of those meetings.
2. Again, the letter conveying the Chair's findings should include details of the next stage of the procedure.
3. This stage should also serve as the first point at which complaints specifically about the Principal or his representative, the actions of the governing body or an individual governor should be considered (should the complaint be about the Chair, the Vice-Chair should undertake the investigation).

## **Stage 4: Review by Trustees' Complaints Committee**

1. Complaints rarely reach this formal level, but it is important that Trustees' body are prepared to deal with them when necessary. Where a formal complaint is received the chair would arrange for a complaints panel to meet within 10 school days from receipt of the letter. The Trustee body should have nominated three members to serve on the committee at least one member must be an independent person of academy's management. The chair of Trustees or any other person should not be a member of the committee if they have been involved at the previous stage or have a direct conflict of their interest in the whole process which might affect their impartiality.

2. The Principal or his representative should also be informed immediately that a complaint has been received and consultation date has been sought about the proposed date of the hearing.
3. The panel is authorised by the Trustees to make findings and recommendations.
4. On issuing notification of the date and time of the hearing, the secretary will advise all parties involved and the Principal or his representative that any written documentation they wish the panel to consider will need to be submitted in time to be circulated to panel members five days prior to the hearing. The complainant should be advised that they may be accompanied by a person of their own choice.
5. Notification of the hearing should also include details of the way in which the hearing will be conducted. Minutes of the hearing should be kept and the secretary should keep copies of all relevant correspondence and notes on file which copies should be made available to all parties involved, keep a confidential copy in the academy for inspection which will be made available to the Head Teacher or Trustees on demand. All involved parties will be informed of all findings, personal data of individuals, details and discussion will be kept and treated confidentially.
6. The findings of the panel should be notified to all parties in writing by post or electronically within five academic days of the hearing.

The panel will consist of the follows;

Chair of the Trustees

Principal

Director of Education

## **7. Written records**

7.1 In order to comply with school's obligations under standard 7- 33(j) (i) and 33 (j) (ii) of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2005 (as amended), a written record will be kept of all complaints, including whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing, and recorded any action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they were up held)

7.2 Written records will be treated as confidential and processed in accordance with School's data protection policy. This does not apply to the requirement of the school to provide parents and other interested parties with information about the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding year, nor to inspectors conducting inspections under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, or to the Secretary of State, should they ask for access to such records.