

RED ROSE SCHOOL COMPLAINTS & COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Section 5

7

Reviewed: November 2023

Next review: November 2024

No of complaints registered under formal procedures:

Academic year: 2022-2023: 0

A copy of the procedure may be obtained on request to the school.

Statement of Intent:

Red Rose has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided for its pupils. However, if Parents/ Carers/ Local Education Authorities, "the complainant" do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated seriously by the School in accordance with this procedure.

The school complaints procedure aims to be:

- Published on the school's website, easily accessible and put into practice.
- Impartial, fair to all parties involved.
- Respectful of confidentiality duties.
- Reviewed as necessary using information gathered during the procedure.
- Fairly investigated, by an independent person when necessary.
- Used to address and provide appropriate and effective responses to issues where necessary.

1. The difference between a concern and a complaint

For the purpose of this policy:

- A "**complaint**" can be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction' towards the actions taken or a perceived lack of action taken.
- A "**concern**" can be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt' over an issue where reassurance is required.
- "**Complainants**" are those who have raised a concern or a complaint.

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to invoke formal procedures.

Schools should take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

There are occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. In those cases, the school's formal procedure is outlined through the stages described in this policy.

2. Who can make a complaint?

An adult, including members of the general public may make a complaint about a provision of facilities or services that a school provides, unless separate statutory procedures apply (such as exclusions or admissions e.g. parents of pupils who have left voluntarily or as a result of being excluded; prospective parents, where the school has not admitted a pupil or considers the school is not suited to the pupil's SEND.

3. Timeliness

Complaints need to be considered and resolved soon as possible after an issue arises to ensure the issue is addressed in an appropriate timescale.

The school upholds a **three-month** time limit in which a complaint can be lodged following an incident. Complaints made outside this time limit will not be automatically refused and exceptions will be considered.

Timescales for managing complaints at specific stages are outlined in the relevant sections of this policy. In the case of any timescales changing, all parties involved will be informed of the changes in a timely manner.

Complaints need to be considered as efficiently as possible: realistic and reasonable time limits will be set for each action within each stage (where further investigations are necessary, new time limits will be set and the new deadline and explanation will be sent to the complainant.

STAGE 1 - INFORMAL RESOLUTION

The school will endeavour to resolve most concerns quickly and informally. Concerns will be raised initially as follows:

- contact the school for the attention of the appropriate Class Teacher.

In most cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means. If the class teacher cannot resolve the matter, it may be necessary for the teacher to consult with

the Head Teacher. The aim is to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the person raising the concern.

- Concerns relating to child protection must be referred directly to the Head Teacher.

The Teacher/ Head Teacher will make a written record of the concerns and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 7 working days (or as soon as is practicable during a school holiday), or in the event that both parties fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then the complainant will be advised that they can proceed with their complaint to the next stage of this procedure.

N.B. For the purposes of this document, a 'working day' falls between Monday and Friday

STAGE 2 - FORMAL RESOLUTION

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the complainant should put their complaint, in writing, to the Head Teacher, who will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Head Teacher will meet with or speak to the complainant concerned, normally within 7 school days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, an agreement will be reached at this stage. Contact to discuss the matter will be as soon as is practicable if the complaint is received during school holidays.

It may be necessary for the Head Teacher to carry out further investigations. The Head Teacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Head Teacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the complainant will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head Teacher will also give reasons for her decision.

If the complainant is still not satisfied with the decision, they are advised that they can proceed to the final stage of this Procedure.

STAGE 3 - PANEL HEARING

Where a complaint cannot be resolved, they will be referred to the school's proprietor, who has been appointed to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. The matter will then be referred for consideration to the Complaints Panel that will consist of three persons, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. This means they are not a member of the school's workforce or

proprietor body and are not otherwise involved in the management of the school. The Panel members will be appointed by the Head Teacher and the Panel will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 working days

If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require further particulars of the complaint or any related matters in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 5 working days prior to the hearing.

Parents/Carers may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. The right for a parent to be accompanied at a panel hearing does not confer a right on a parent to have a legal representative make representations on their behalf at a hearing, but the school will decide whether to allow this on a case-by-case basis. Reasonable arrangements will be made to ensure the complainant can attend the panel hearing. If the complainant does not exercise the right to attend the panel hearing, the hearing will still be held.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the complainant's complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.

Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 7 working days of the Hearing.

The decision of the Panel will be final and represents the conclusion of the school's complaints procedure.

A copy of the Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be given electronically and in writing to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. A copy of the Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be available in school for inspection by the proprietor and the head teacher.

The complainant can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(1) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Annex A: Recording complaints

Annex B: Checklist for Panel Hearing

Annex C: Complaints Form

Annex A: Recording complaints

A written record of a complaint made, will detail:

- Whether the complaint was resolved following an informal route, formal route or panel hearing.
- Actions taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint was upheld).

Additional records may be kept containing the following information:

- The date the issue was raised
- The name of the complainant and, where relevant, their child
- A description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations
- Witness statements
- The staff member responsible for handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of correspondence on the issue

Annex B: Checklist for a panel hearing

The panel needs to take the following points into account:

- The hearing is as informal as possible.
- Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.
- After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses.
- The headteacher may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The headteacher is then invited to explain the school's actions and followed by the school's witnesses.
- The complainant may question both the headteacher and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The panel may ask questions at any point.
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
- The headteacher is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.

Annex C: Complaints Form

Please complete and return to Head Teacher, Mrs Gill Makinson (complaints coordinator) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address:
Postcode:
Mobile:
Day time telephone number:
Evening telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint.

**What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.
(Who did you speak to and what was the response)?**

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: