

RED ROSE SCHOOL COMPLAINTS & COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Section 5

7

Updated: Feb 2025

Next update: February 2027

No of complaints registered under formal procedures:

Academic year: 2023-2024: 0

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

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Statement of Intent:

At Red Rose we place the highest priority on the provision and pastoral care provided for our pupils.

Should there be a complaint or concern we aim to resolve this at the earliest possible stage and ensure it is managed sympathetically and efficiently whether formally or informally, and the appropriate procedures implemented. This policy has been created to deal with any complaint relating to any aspects of the school or the provision of facilities or services.

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. Definitions

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. Informal concerns will be taken seriously and every effort made 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. Eligibility

Who can make a complaint?

Parents of pupils currently being educated at the school are able to make a complaint in line with this policy. All complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

Parents will be assured that their children will not be penalised if they raise a complaint.

This policy does not cover complaints made by the following:

- Parents of pupils who have left voluntarily or as a result of being excluded (except where the complaints process was started when the pupil was still being educated at the school)
- Pupils
- Prospective pupils and their parents, and the failure to admit such pupils

3. Timescales

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 event 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 or, in the case of financial /administrative matters, the Office Administrator.

In most cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means. If the class teacher or Office Administrator cannot resolve the matter, it may be necessary for the staff members 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 acknowledge the complaint by telephone or in writing within two days of receipt during term time and as soon as practicable during school holidays, indicating that action is being taken and the likely timescales.

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 possible, all relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the complainant informed of this decision in writing. The Head Teacher will also give reasons for the 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 is the appointed person to call a Panel hearing. The matter will then be referred for consideration to the 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 considers 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 no 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 considering all the relevant facts, the Panel will make findings and recommendations. The decision, findings and recommendations will be provided to the complainant in writing within 7 working days of the Hearing.

A copy of the decision, findings and recommendations will be sent to, where relevant, the person complained about, the headteacher and the chair of the proprietorial body.

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

If it is found that the school has not met its requirements in relation to managing complaints because of the way a particular complaint has been handled, the Secretary of State has no power to compel the school to alter its decision on that complaint, only to take action designed to address that future complaints are dealt with properly.

4. Recording complaints

A written record will be kept of any complaint made, detailing:

- 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 name of the staff member responsible for handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of correspondence on the issue

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests to access them.

5. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

All changes made to this policy will be communicated with all relevant stakeholders.

Annex : 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