

De – Young Group of Schools

The school with standard, Character and Service...



DE - YOUNG
Comprehensive College



DE - YOUNG
Nursery & Primary School

Complaint Policy

1. Principles

The school tries to resolve problems informally wherever possible. An effective response and appropriate redress will be provided to all complaints as quickly as possible dependent upon the complexity of the issues raised.

NB: This policy relates to complaints about the educational administration of the school and typically applies to complaints made by parents and guardians of students.

2. Dealing with complaints

a) At each stage, the person investigating the complaint will ensure that they:

- Clarify the nature of the complaint and unresolved issues.
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.
- Interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish.
- Keep appropriate notes of any interview(s) held.

b) At each stage, the person investigating the complaint will seek ways to resolve the complaint satisfactorily. It may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An acknowledgement that the complaint is valid in whole or in part and/or acknowledgement that the situation could have been handled differently or better (this is not the same as an admission of negligence).
- An apology.
- An explanation.
- An assurance and an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again.
- An undertaking to review school procedures in light of the complaint.

3. Records

All complaints will be recorded by the school, including informal complaints. The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring that staff record all complaints and their outcome.

- Records relating to individual complaints are confidential, except otherwise.
- The Internal Governing Body will monitor the level and the subject matter of complaints and review the outcomes on a regular basis through the mechanism of performance and data reporting.

4. Complaints procedure

a) Informal complaints – verbal informal complaints may be made to any teachers or to the Principal / Head teacher. A verbal or written response may be given to an informal complainant.

b) Formal complaints - The complainant will write to the school with details of:

- The complaint
- Any attempts they made to raise/resolve the complaint (who they spoke to and when)
- Actions they feel might resolve the problem

c) A staff member (not the subject of the complaint) nominated by the principal will acknowledge and investigate the complaint within 7 working days. This time scale may be reasonably extended if the nature of the complaint is judged by the principal / Head teacher to be of a complex nature. The investigatory report will be presented to the principal for final determination. The complainant will receive a formal response verbally or in writing from the principal / Head teacher. (See paragraph 9 for complaints about the Head Teacher).

d) If the complainant is still not satisfied, they can appeal to The Internal Governing Body (see below). A complaint panel will be convened within a reasonable period of time depending on the availability of the Internal Governors and other members making up the panel. Every effort will be made to deal with complaint appeals expeditiously.

e) De-Young School reserves the right to deny an investigation of any complaints which are considered to be vexatious, malicious, and those relating to a previous complaint that has already been investigated. The officer with responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented at De-Young is the principle / head teacher. Complainants should be aware that De-Young School may refer complaints received to The Internal Governing Body because they consider the matter is one of such a nature that it should be investigated independently of the school.

5. Appeals to the Internal Governing Body

(a) Constitution of the panel

- The secretary of the Internal Governing Body will convene a complaints panel:
- The panel will consist of at least three people with no prior direct involvement with the issue.
- At least one of the members of the panel must be independent of the management and running of the school and not a member of the Internal Governing Body.
- No member of the panel can have been directly involved in the previous consideration of the complaint.
- Individual complaints must not be heard by the whole Internal governing body at any stage.

(b) Remit of the panel

The panel can:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- Recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

(c) Proceedings of the panel

The procedure for the complaint panel is outlined in the attached Appendix. The secretary of the Internal Governing Body, having consulted with the complainant and the principal / Head Teacher, will implement the decision made as to which of the procedures to follow. The appeal will be closed to the public.

(d) Role of the secretary of the Internal Governing Body

The secretary of the Internal Governing Body will be the contact point for the complaint and will be required to:

- Set the date, time and venue of the hearing
- Collate any written material and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing
- Record the proceedings
- Notify parties of the panel's decision.

The decision of the appeal panel is final subject to any subsequent referral.

6. Dealing with persistent complaints

In the case of vexatious or persistent complaints, the chair of the Internal Governors will inform the complainant in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

7. Responsible person

The person in charge of co-ordinating the complaints procedure at the school is the principal / Head teacher. Overall responsibility is retained by De-Young Group of Schools through the office of the principal / Head teacher. The role of the Internal Governors arises only in respect of appeals where the complainant remains dissatisfied with attempts to resolve the issue of the complaint and as set out above.

8. Complaints made about a Teacher of a school

Dr-Young Group of Schools recognises that in exceptional circumstances parents/guardians may wish to complain about a subject teacher of the school.

- If the complainant wishes to raise a complaint about a Teacher, they should raise this directly with the Teacher in the first instance. This is the first stage of the process.
- Where issues have been raised in this way and remain unresolved, the complainant may appeal and write to De-young Group of School c/o the secretary of the Internal Governing Body. On receipt, the complaint will be acknowledged and an investigation will be undertaken. The Teacher will convene a panel of three (including a member of the Internal Governor) and the three-panel members will not have had any direct involvement in the matters detailed in the complaint. The case and the complainant will receive a formal written response. As a matter of courtesy, the chair of the Internal Governing Body and the Teacher will be advised.
- The determination will be made within 15 working days unless the complaint is judged to be of a complex nature.

Appendix

Procedure

The secretary of the Internal Governing Body, having sought the views of the complainant and the principal / Head teacher, will implement one of the following procedures as deemed most beneficial to the nature of the complaint.

1) A formal meeting

All parties will attend the meeting in the same room. The complainant, the principal Head teacher and any other staff/witnesses will be invited to make representations concerning the complaint and

may be questioned by the panel members so that they can form a clear and unbiased view of the complaint. Whilst it will be for the chair of the internal governor of the panel to decide exactly how the meeting will proceed, the procedure at the meeting will allow:

- a)** The complainant to explain their complaint.
- b)** The principal/Head Teacher another party to explain the school's response.
- c)** The panel to have an opportunity to question both the complainant and the other party.
- d)** All involved to call witnesses (subject to the approval of the chair of the panel), and the panel to question all the witnesses.
- e)** The complainant, the principal/ Head teacher other party and staff/witnesses to be accompanied at the meeting if they so wish.

The meeting will be minuted, and these minutes circulated to the parties with the Panel's decision.

At the end of the meeting, the chair of the panel will explain to the complainant and the principal / Head teacher consider its decision based on the information and evidence presented to them, and a written response will be sent to both parties as quickly as possible and in an expeditious manner.

2) An investigatory approach

The complainant and representative(s) from the school may be invited to attend a formal meeting with the complaints panel in order to clarify the matter. As the panel meeting is intended to be investigated, the persons giving evidence or making representations to the panel would normally attend separately. Whilst it will be for the chair of the panel to decide exactly how the meeting will proceed, the procedure will allow:

- a)** The complainant, the principal/ Head teacher other party and staff/witnesses to be accompanied if they so wish.
- b)** Notes of the interview to be made checked with the interviewee and made available to other parties on request.

The chair of the panel will explain to the complainant and the principal / Head teacher the panel will consider its decision based on the information and evidence presented to them, and a written response will be sent to both parties as quickly as possible and in an expeditious manner.

Whichever procedure is followed, the panel will remember that some complainants are unused to dealing with groups of people in formal situations and may feel inhibited. Parents/guardians may also feel emotional about discussing an issue that affects their child. The chair of the panel will ensure that the proceedings are as informal as the situation allows