



## **Complaints Procedure**

At Values Academy, we are committed to encouraging the involvement of parents/carers in the community of the school and in their children's education.

We accept that, from time to time, things may occur which cause parents / carers concern and we aim to ensure that parents/carers and the school community know what steps to take to make sure that any problem is resolved satisfactorily.

We aim to:

- provide an accessible and easily understood procedure for complaints
- resolve concerns through informal discussions at the earliest stage
- aid communications between parents and school
- provide a fair and transparent investigative process for the whole school community.

Values Academy will adopt the following staged approach to complaints.

### **Preliminary Stage – An Informal Approach**

- The vast majority of concerns and complaints can be resolved informally and a satisfactory resolution achieved for all parties at the earliest opportunity.
- Under normal circumstances, if parents / carers have a concern they should speak informally with the mentor or teacher as soon as possible. If it is felt that any discussion may take more time than is immediately available, or require a confidential setting, it would be appropriate for them to make an appointment, to meet or talk at a mutually convenient time, when the matter can be discussed in an appropriate environment. Telephone appointments or face to face meetings are both welcomed. The School Leader or School Principal need to be informed of the above.
- If the concern is about the School Leader or School Principal, parents/carers should have preliminary discussions with them individually. Parents/carers should be aware that if they do not talk to the person directly concerned with the matter, they may be advised to do so and that person will be informed of any concern or any complaint against them. However, it is recognised that some matters cannot be taken up directly with the person concerned.
- Any concern will be taken seriously and will be dealt with sensitively and as confidentially as possible. If the matter cannot be dealt with immediately, a note of the will be made of the date and nature of the discussion and will make it clear to the parent/carer what action will be taken and when they should expect to hear further. Most concerns are dealt with informally to everyone's satisfaction. If no satisfactory solution has been found in ten school days, parents / carers will then be advised by the teacher of the next step in the process.

## **Stage 1 – The School Leader or School Principal**

- When an informal stage has not been concluded satisfactorily, parents/carers are advised to write to the above, giving details of the complaint and sending any appropriate paperwork, stating with whom the matter has been discussed and the response.
- There will be a response in writing within five school days acknowledging the complaint or offering a full response. A written record of meetings will be kept, and after any meeting at which a concern or complaint about any member of staff is discussed, a follow-up letter will be sent to the parents / carers to summarise the main points discussed. This is to prevent any misunderstanding and to record progress or agreement. It is hoped to respond to the complaint in full within 10 school days. If, however, the complaint requires an in-depth investigation this will be acknowledged, and parents/carers will be informed that a full response will take longer than usual but should be available within twenty school days.
- If parents/carers remain dissatisfied following the final response, they will then be advised of the next step in the process.

## **Stage 2 – C.E.O**

- The C.E.O is in the position to be independent and impartial. Parents/ carers should send a letter, or make a telephone call outlining their complaint, explaining the reason for pursuing it beyond the School Leader or School Principal's response and sending any relevant paperwork. They should not discuss the issue with any of the Trustees, as this may make it difficult to set up a panel of people who have no prior involvement should the matter need to be taken a further stage.
- The C.E.O will speak with the School Leader or School Principal and may meet with all parties to try to resolve the complaint.
- Where possible, the C.E.O will complete the above action within five working days. Record keeping and the timescale for responding to parents/ carers will be as for Stage 1 above.
- In the rare circumstance that parents/carers are unhappy with the outcome, the C.E.O will offer a right of appeal to the Trustees.

## **Stage 3 – Trustees**

It is very rare for a complaint to reach this stage. If it does, the next step in the process will involve an independent and impartial review by a panel of three Trustees.

Parents /carers who wish to appeal to the Trustees should request this in writing to the Chair of Trustees. Contact details are available from the School Office. Parents / carers should describe the issue in detail and say why they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the previous stages.

There are two forms of appeal

- Reconsideration (considering afresh): When the issue relates to delegated responsibilities, the panel can reconsider the matter, that is, look at the matter afresh, with any new information that may not have been available at the time of the original response or action.

In light of additional information, the panel may decide to write and ask the School Leader / School Principal to give the matter further consideration.

- Review: If the matter falls within the School Leader's/School Principal's decision-making remit by virtue of the terms and conditions of employment, then the panel will only have the power to review the decision, not to consider the matter afresh. Any new evidence will be referred back to the School Leader/ School Principal, who may consider amending the decision in light of that new information.

The panel will be made up of two members of the Board of Trustees, and an independent person, appropriately trained. The meeting will be held in an informal atmosphere with all parties present but will follow a formal agenda. A parent/carer is allowed to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish.

The Chair will inform the parent/carer in writing of the panel's decision at the earliest opportunity following the meeting. The letter will include

- a summary of the issues
- an outline of the main points of discussion
- the reasons for the decision
- proposed actions or outcomes.

It may also suggest that parents meet the School Leader/School Principal again to agree a way forward. For general complaints this is the final stage of the school's complaints procedure. If a parent /carer believes that actions have been unreasonable or the correct process has not been adhered to, the only recourse is to the Secretary of State.

### **Recommendation or Findings;**

- The recommendations will be made available in writing to the parent and where relevant, the person complained about within 28 days of the formal hearing.
- The findings will be kept on file in order for the inspection by the Chair of Trustees and the School Principal
- A written record of all the school's complaints will be kept with specific detail on whether each complaint has been resolved at the preliminary stage or at the panel hearing stage.
- All complaints, statements, written correspondence and findings and reports relating to a complaint will be kept confidentially, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.
- A record of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure will be published on the school website at the end of each year

**Review Date: September 2022**