Gatton School Complaints Policy & Procedure

In the Name of Allah the Most Kind the Most Merciful

Praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds, the All-Merciful, the Very Merciful. And may His choicest blessings and peace be upon our beloved prophet.

Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds, the All-Merciful, the Very merciful. The Master of the Day of Judgement. You alone do we worship, and from you alone do we seek help. Take us on the straight path- the path of those on whom you have bestowed your grace, not of those who have incurred your wrath, nor of those who have gone astray. Aameen (Chapter 1; the Opening)

Allah Says: “Make reconciliation between them (both parties) justly, and be equitable. Verily Allah loves those who are equitable” (49.9)

“The believers are but a single brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation” (49:10)

Introduction

At Gatton School, we are dedicated to providing the best possible education and support forall its pupils within a safe, Islamic ethos based and caring environment. Staff are encouraged to be approachable and to deal with concerns, resolving any issues as soon as possible.

The formal complaints procedure will be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful. The school has a fair and efficient procedure for dealing with any complaints to or against the school, so that any issues that arise can be dealt with as swiftly and effectively as possible.

Staff will be made aware of the complaints procedures so that they are familiar with the process of dealing with complaints when brought to their attention. This policy explains the procedure and steps that should be referred to and followed by parents/guardians whenever an issue arises that cause them concern. It is imperative that concerns are shared in a timely manner without delay.

This policy does not apply to complaints about: admissions, exclusions and staff disciplinary proceedings. If there is an allegation or concern about physical or sexual misconduct towards a child, or there is a belief that a child may be at risk of serious harm, the school may immediately refer the case to child protection and welfare services. If it is decided that there is cause for an official investigation, the decisions by these authorities will supersede those made by the school and outlined in this policy.

For more information on our school’s provision for protecting our students, read our child protection and safeguarding policy.

1. When a concern first arises

If you have a concern that you would like to take up with the school you should initially inform a member of staff either in person, over the telephone, or in writing. You will then be invited to an informal meeting with the member of staff most appropriate for dealing with your concern.

You may wish to approach your child's teacher first as they will be best placed to help you either directly or by figuring out which other member of staff you should be speaking to. We encourage parents to approach staff with any concerns they may have, and aim to resolve all issues with open dialogue and mutual understanding.

If your complaint is about a member of staff, you should first raise this with the headteacher either in person or in writing, and a meeting can be arranged with the headteacher to discuss the issue at hand.

If your complaint is about the headteacher, you should raise your concern in writing with the chair of governors.

The chair of governors may refer complaints that are taken straight to him or the board back to the appropriate member of staff if they do not warrant the governing body's involvement at that point.

1.2 Initial informal meeting, complaint heard by staff member

Once a concern has been raised you may be invited to attend an informal meeting with a member of staff or the headteacher to discuss your concerns. You are welcome to bring a friend or partner to this meeting. It may be appropriate for a pupil to attend the meeting if their parent has raised a concern, depending on the nature of the issue.

Staff have a responsibility to ensure that you understand any future points of action that have been agreed upon in this meeting and should make a record of what has been discussed, as well as any outcomes and a plan of action, if one has been agreed.

All staff will do their best to ensure that your concerns are dealt with appropriately and efficiently but if you cannot come to an agreement, or are dissatisfied with the outcome of your meeting, you can make a formal complaint in writing to the headteacher within 10 days.

2. Formal complaints, complaint heard by headteacher

In order to ensure that complaints are processed efficiently and effectively, Gatton School deals with formal complaints in three stages:

Stage 1a: The Headteacher

If you do not feel that your concern has been dealt with as you would like, are unhappy with the outcome of your informal meeting, or feel that the issue is serious enough that it warrants it, you can make a formal complaint in writing to the headteacher.

The headteacher will acknowledge your complaint in writing within 3 working days. He/she will outline the decision if there is one to be made, and any action to be taken as a result of your complaint.

The headteacher may call you in for a meeting to discuss the issue outcome, possible solutions, or to explain what has or will happen as a result of your complaint. The headteacher will keep a record of all interactions with you and other staff, meetings and decisions made in reference to your complaint. The headteacher will also consider any actions to be taken as a result of your complaint. The headteacher will endeavour to ensure this process is completed within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.

If the complaint is against a member of staff, the headteacher will talk to that employee. If it is an allegation of abuse, a formal investigation may be instigated by the school or external child welfare authorities to whom the school reports.

Stage 1b: The Chair of Governors

Complaints about the headteacher should be reported to the chair of governors by letter or via the school office. This is when the matter could not be resolved with the Headteacher or is so serious that it warranted a direct referral to the chair of governors. Any such concerns should be reported in a timely manner. If a complaint came directly to the chair the matter maybe referred back to the HT.

Stage 2: The chair of governors

If, having spoken to the headteacher, you are dissatisfied; you may lodge your complaint with the chair of governors in writing, explaining your concern and the steps that have led up to you taking this course of action.

If the complaint is against a member of staff, that employee will be given the opportunity to write a response, which will be sent to the chair of governors within 7 working days of the complaint being lodged with them.

The chair of governors will respond to you in writing within 10 working days outlining his/her response to your concern, and any action that has or will be taken. If the decision made is not to take any further action on the issue, he/she will explain what has been decided, how the decision has been arrived at. The chair of governors will also outline your right of appeal and how you can start your appeal. Should the complainant wish to appeal then it should be done within 10 days of receipt of chair's outcome letter.

With complaints related to the Headteacher, the chair will provide an opportunity to the Headteacher to respond to the concerns raised by the complainant and reply within 15 days of receiving the complaint letter. Should the complainant wish to appeal then it should be done within 10 days of receipt of chair's outcome letter.

3. Appeals

Stage 3: Governor' appeal panel
If you would like to launch an appeal following the outcome of a formal complaint that you have lodged, this will be taken to the appeals panel of the governing body. The complainant needs to ensure that the appeal is lodged within 10 days of the outcome letter.

The appeals panel

The appeals panel will be made up of members of the governing body. No member of the governing body can sit on the appeals panel if they have had any former knowledge or involvement in the case that is being dealt with at that time.

The panel will give careful consideration to how the complainant can be made to feel most comfortable presenting to the panel, especially in the case of a young child having to present or explain information.

Appeals procedure

The procedure for an appeal is as follows:
1. The complainant and headteacher will enter the hearing together.
2. The chair will introduce the panel members and outline the process.
3. The complainant will explain the complaint.
4. The headteacher and panel will question the complainant.
5. The headteacher will explain the school's actions.
6. The complainant and panel will question the headteacher.
7. The complainant will sum up their complaint.
8. The headteacher will sum up the school's actions.
9. The chair will explain that both parties will hear from the panel within 10 working days.
10. Both parties will leave together while the panel decides.
11. The clerk will stay with the panel to clarify.

The appeals panel will:

- dismiss all or part of the complaint
- uphold all or part of the complaint
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- evaluate all the evidence available and recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures as a preventative step against similar problems arising in the future.

Gatton School will review and evaluate all complaints no matter how far they are taken or what the outcome to ensure that similar problems are avoided in the future or to see if they could have been managed more effectively.

The panel's decision is final. If you are unhappy with the outcome, you are entitled to take your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education.

The Secretary of State may hear a complaint and intervene if:

- the complaint relates to a failure by the governing body to carry out its statutory duties
- the complainant believes the governing body is acting unreasonably. The test for this is that no reasonable authority or governing body, acting with due regard to its statutory duties, would have reached that decision
- intervention is expedient (i.e., there is an instruction the Secretary of State can give to one or other party that would put matters right).

The complainant should set out fully the concerns and reasons why the complaint is being submitted, enclosing all previous correspondence relevant to the complaint. They should write to The Secretary of State, Department for Children, Schools and Families, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT or call 0870 001 2288.

Complaints to Ofsted

Ofsted also has powers to investigate certain complaints by parents about their child's school.

Complainants should write to Ofsted, Royal Exchange Buildings, St Ann's Square,

Manchester, M2 7LA or call 08456 404045 or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Staff complaints

Staff who have a concern about a colleague or a volunteer member of staff should refer to our whistleblowing policy. The procedure for dealing with any other staff complaints or employment grievances is set out in the school's staff discipline, conduct and grievance policy