

Sharing your concerns and raising a complaint

A Guide for Parents/ Carers

This complaints process is based on the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014 Part 7, as required by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

The Faringdon Academy of Schools (FAoS) recognises that at times things can go wrong. This guidance will help you understand how to resolve concerns you may have about your child's education.

The school has procedures for dealing with concerns or complaints and we value any feedback about our services, including compliments and suggestions. If you are concerned about any aspect of your child's education, you should contact your child's teacher in the first instance.

The school's governing body has overall responsibility for the school and for ensuring the well-being of pupils and that all pupils receive an appropriate and high standard of education.

The head teacher is responsible for making decisions on a daily basis about the school's internal management and organisation. So you should contact the school if you are concerned about an issue such as:

- Your child's academic progress
- Special education needs provision
- Your child's welfare
- Bullying
- Something that has happened in school.

All timescales are 'school working days' and does not include weekends/ holidays and inset days.

Not all complaints can be investigated using the complaints policy. Please find below those exceptions.

| Exception | What you should do |
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| Allegations of child abuse/ other child protection issues | Immediately report your concern to the class teacher, designated safeguarding lead or head teacher. |
| Statutory assessment of SEN | Report your concern to the SENCo or Head teacher |

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| School admissions including appeals | The Admissions policy and appeal documentation can be found on the school website |
| Where a registered pupil wishes to personally raise a complaint | They should talk to the appropriate teacher or member of staff and follow in-school procedures for dealing with pupil concerns and complaints |
| Pupil exclusions | Check the schools Behaviour policy |
| Whistleblowing | Check the Trusts Whistleblowing policy |
| Complaints about a staff members conduct or capability | You may submit a complaint using this form, however it will be investigated under the schools internal procedures and the outcome is confidential. The outcome cannot be shared do to contract restrictions. |
| Complaint about a Head teachers conduct or capability | You may submit a complaint using this form to the CEO. They will, if an informal resolution cannot be reached, designate a member of the local governing body or independent person to investigate as per stage 2. |
| Complaint against a central staff member | If the complaint is against an employee of the Trust, who is not assigned to an individual school, and has not been resolved informally the CEO (or an individual designated by the CEO) will investigate the complaint at Stage 2 of the formal process. In exceptional circumstances, the CEO may inform the Chair of Trustees of the complaint. The chair may, at their absolute discretion, determine that a complaint against an employee of the academy trust be dealt with at Board level, and if so determined the chair will oversee stage three. |
| Complaint against a governor | You may wish to complain about a governor's conduct. Please email the Chair of Governors via the school clerk. This will then be investigated using the 'Constitution of a LGB', removal and suspension of a governor. This is an internal process which is confidential. |
| Complaint against a Chair of governors | There may be exceptional circumstances in which the complaint is against the chair of governors – e.g. for wilfully refusing to deal with a complaint. Please email the Chair of the Trust via the Boards clerk. This will then be investigated using the 'Constitution of a LGB', removal and suspension of a governor. This is an internal process which is confidential. |
| Complaints from Third Parties | For the avoidance of doubt this policy does not apply to those who are not parents of pupils at an academy within the Academy Trust. Complaints that fall in to this category will be dealt with as follows: Complainants should first attempt to address their complaint to the school informally. Only if this fails to resolve the situation |

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| | should the complaint be submitted in writing to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who will acknowledge receipt of the complaint before considering it and issuing a final written response. |
| Complaint against the CEO or a member of the Board | If the complaint relates to the CEO or to a member of the Board, then the written complaint should be submitted to the Chair of Trust (or the Vice Chair if the complaint relates to the Chair). The Chair (or Vice Chair as the case may be) will acknowledge receipt of the complaint before considering it and issuing a final written response. |

Persistent and Serial complaints

If a complaint has been raised and been dealt with through the complaints procedure the school may not respond if they deem it to be persistent and vexatious. A response to the complainant will be provided under the Persistent and Vexatious policy.

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How do I complain to the school?

Stage 1; Step 1

First, please speak to the relevant member of staff as soon as you have a concern. This will be the class teacher (primary). This will be the form tutor or subject teacher (secondary). This informal approach is nearly always the quickest and most effective way of resolving your concerns.

Stage 1; Step 2

If you feel that your concern has not been resolved, then it is important to raise your concern with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) such as a Deputy or Assistant Head. In a small school, this may be directly with the head teacher. They will look into your concern and feedback any findings. We are still, at this stage, hoping for an informal resolution.

Stage 2

If you are unhappy with the informal response from the SLT/ head teacher you should formally put **in writing** your complaint to the Head. S/he will acknowledge your complaint **within 5 days** and will take the opportunity to complete a full investigation and respond to you in writing **within 15 days**.

Stage 3

If you are still unhappy about the Heads response and feel your complaint has not been addressed or investigated thoroughly or appropriately please email the Chair of Governors using the clerks email address which can be found below. If you wish to take the complaint to stage 3 it is important to do so as soon as possible. **Complaints taken to stage 3 need to be submitted within 6 months of stage 2 being completed.**

This is how your complaint will be handled once it has reached Stage 3.

Stage 3 is to consider whether the original complaint was addressed and that the investigation was thorough and appropriate. Although it does not have the remit to reinvestigate the original complaint the panel will fully interrogate the process to ensure the head teacher has fully investigated and addressed your complaint.

Within 5 working days the Chair of Governors will clarify the nature of your complaint by asking you to complete a complaint form and will offer help in completing the form, if appropriate.

Within 5 working days of receiving the form the Chair will decide whether mediation should be offered to help you and the head teacher explore possible resolution. Mediation can only occur if both the head teacher and the complainant agree.

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If mediation is agreed, the chair of governors will endeavour to set up the meeting **within 15 working days**. If that timescale is not possible you will be told the reason.

If mediation is not deemed appropriate or if it is not successful, the Chair of Governors or Clerk will set up a panel of governors to meet **within 20 working days** to consider your complaint. The clerk will provide details of the hearing and will request any further information you may wish to provide.

You will be able to bring a friend with you to that hearing, however legal representation is not allowed.

The complaints panel will consist of two governors who (as far as possible) will have no prior knowledge of the events being complained of. The third member of the panel will be independent from the management and running of any school within the Trust. The panel will be supported by a clerk who will take notes during the hearing, and it is likely they will record the meeting for the purposes of the minutes. This recording is deleted once the minutes are agreed by the panel. They will stay with the panel while they make their decision in case governors need to be reminded about responses to a particular question. The panel will hear the complaint impartially and make their decision without fear or favour.

Five working days before the hearing the clerk will send to you, the complainant, the head teacher and the three panel members, copies of all papers submitted by both sides so that there is sufficient time to read the evidence before the hearing.

At the hearing

1. You and the head teacher will be invited into the room where the panel is being held at the same time.
2. After introductions, you, the complainant will be invited to explain your complaint,
3. The head teacher may question you
4. The panel will question you
5. The head teacher will be invited to explain the school's actions
6. You, the complainant may question the head teacher
7. The panel will question the head teacher
8. The panel may ask questions at any point.
9. You, the complainant will then be invited to sum up your complaint.
10. The head teacher will then be invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
11. The chair will explain that you and the head teacher will hear from the panel **within five working days**.
12. Both you and the head teacher will leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
13. The clerk will remain with the panel.

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You will receive a written response from the panel within 5 working days. It will include findings and recommendations.

Can I take my complaint further?

If you are not satisfied with the outcome at the end of the school's formal procedure then you can take the matter further.

If a complaint is received by the ESFA, they will check whether the complaint has been dealt with properly by the school. They will consider complaints about schools/trusts that fall into any of the following three areas:

1. Where there is undue delay or the school/trust did not comply with its own complaints procedure when considering a complaint
2. Where the school/trust is in breach of its funding agreement with the Secretary of State
3. Where a school/trust has failed to comply with any other legal obligation

The ESFA will not overturn a school/trust's decision about a complaint. However, if they find a school/trust did not deal with a complaint properly they will request the complaint is looked at again and procedures meet the requirements set out in the Regulations.

If the school/trust's complaints procedure does not meet the Regulations, they will ask the school/trust to put this right. They may seek to enforce the decision under the terms of the funding agreement on behalf of the Secretary of State, if appropriate.

The form can be found here:

https://form.education.gov.uk/en/AchieveForms/?form_uri=sandbox-publish://AF-Process-f1453496-7d8a-463f-9f33-1da2ac47ed76/AF-Stage-1e64d4cc-25fb-499a-a8d7-74e98203ac00/definition.json&redirectlink=%2Fen&cancelRedirectLink=%2Fen

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Key Contact Details for your School and FAoS

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| Your school: | Click here to enter text. |
| Head teacher Name: | Click here to enter text. |
| Office email: | Click here to enter text. |
| Chair of the Local Governing Body: | Click here to enter text. |
| Clerk to the Local Governing Body: | Click here to enter text. |
| Clerk Email address: | Click here to enter text. |
| Chair of the Academy Board: | Liz Holmes |
| Clerk to the Academy Board: | |
| Email address: | academysecretary@faringdon.academy |

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Complaint Form

Notes

The form can be used by any person making a complaint about the operation of the school which is not covered by an alternative specific procedure.

If you would like support in completing the form please contact the school or clerk.

This form can be used to raise a complaint with the Head teacher in stage 2.

This form **MUST** be used to raise a complaint with the LGB at stage 3.

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School Name

Complaint form

Please complete and return to **insert school name** who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

If you need support to complete this form please contact either the Clerk <<insert details>> or the Chair <<insert details>>.

| | |
|---|---|
| Your name | Click here to enter text. |
| Address | Click here to enter text. |
| Postcode | Click here to enter text. |
| Daytime telephone number | Click here to enter text. |
| Evening telephone number | Click here to enter text. |
| Email address | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| If applicable, name of child(ren) at school | Click here to enter text. |
| Please give details of your complaint: | School Name: Click here to enter text. Details of complaint: Click here to enter text. |

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

Click here to enter text.

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Your relationship to the school, e.g. parent, carer, neighbour, member of public:
Click here to enter text.

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?
Click here to enter text.

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.
Click here to enter text.

Signature: Click here to enter text.

Date: Click here to enter a date.

Official Use:

Date of acknowledgement sent: Click here to enter a date.

By Whom: Click here to enter text.

Complaint referred to: Click here to enter text.

Date: Click here to enter a date.

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