



Severn Valley School

COMPLAINTS POLICY

For Pupils & Parents

Date Approved: January 2022

Date of Review: January 2023

MONITORING, REVIEW & EVALUATION
HEADTEACHER

About this policy

- This policy and its procedure is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school, or the services that it provides.
- An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- To allow for a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, the school will not consider any complaint that was raised more than 3 months after the event.

Framework of Principles

The procedure will:

- Encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible.
- Be easily accessible and publicised.
- Be simple and clear to understand.
- Be impartial.
- Be non-adversarial.
- Allow swift handling within established time limits for action and keeping people informed of progress.
- Ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary.
- Respect people's desire for confidentiality.
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary.
- Provide information to the Headteacher so that services can be improved.

1. Complaints Procedure: Raising a concern or complaint

a. Informal Stage

It is normally appropriate to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned, this may be by letter, by telephone or in person by appointment. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information and it is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved by this informal stage. The member of staff will ensure the Headteacher/Assistant Head is informed of the outcome.

In the case of serious concerns, it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Headteacher (or to the Chair of the Management Committee, if the complaint is about the Headteacher). If you are uncertain about whom to contact, please seek advice from the school office or the Clerk to the Management Committee.

b. Formal Stage

If your concern is not resolved at the informal stage you must put the complaint in writing and pass it to the Headteacher, (or to the Clerk to the Management Committee, for the attention of the Chair, if the complaint is about the Headteacher) who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately. This may mean that a member of staff who is not involved in the complaint directly, may be asked to collate information on behalf of the

management committee or Headteacher. A Complaint Form is provided to help you (See Appendix A). You should include details that might help the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents. It is very important that you include a clear statement about what you hope might reasonably contribute to a resolution of the problem at this stage. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed.

Please pass the completed form, marked Private & Confidential, in a sealed envelope to the Headteacher or to the Clerk to the Management Committee, as appropriate.

The Headteacher (or Chair) may invite you to a meeting to discuss your complaint and to seek a resolution, if you accept that invitation, a friend may accompany you to help you in explaining the nature of your complaint. It is possible that your complaint will be resolved through a meeting with the Headteacher (or Chair). If not arrangements will be made for the matter to be referred to the Chair of the Management Committee, or, in the case of the Chair having heard the initial complaint, another member of the Management Committee who has not been involved in the original meeting. You should be informed in writing, usually within 15 days of the school receiving your formal complaint, of how the school intends to proceed, this notification should include an indication of the anticipated timescale for this process.

The Chair of the Management Committee may invite you to a further meeting to discuss your complaint and to seek a resolution. Again, if you accept that invitation, a friend may accompany you to help you explain the nature of your complaint. In any case, you should learn in writing, usually within 5 working days of the Chair of the Management Committee receiving your formal complaint, of the outcome.

c. Appeal Procedure

If you are not satisfied with the way in which the process has been followed, you can request that the governing body reviews the process followed by the school in handling the complaint. You must make this request in writing to the clerk to the governing body, within 10 school days of receiving notice of the outcome, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure. The procedure described below will be followed.

d. Review Process

A panel of three members of the Management Committee will conduct any review of the process followed by the school. This will usually take place within 10 school days of receipt of your request. The member of the Management Committee on the review panel will normally consider written submissions, but will sympathetically consider any reasonable requests to make oral representations.

- The panel will first receive written evidence from the complainant of perceived failures to follow the procedure.

- The panel will then invite representatives of the school (Usually the Headteacher or the Chair of the Management Committee panel that has considered the matter), as appropriate, to make a response to the complaint.
- The panel may also have access to the records kept of the process followed.
- The panel will include a 3rd party who is independent of the management committee and not a member of the school's management team.
- Findings and recommendations made by the panel will be made available to the complainant and any persons complained about.
- A copy of the findings will be kept on site at the school and be available to the Headteacher and the panel.

You, and the school representatives, will be informed in writing of the outcome, usually within 5 school days of the panel meeting.

The matter will then be closed as far as the school is concerned.

If you believe that the Management Committee has acted illegally or arbitrarily in handling the complaint, then you may make representations to the Secretary of State for Education.

Records

Findings of the panel, all written records and correspondence will be kept including details of actions taken by the school as a result of these complaints and regardless of when they are resolved. All records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential and stored accordingly.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every three years as part of the policy review cycle and an assessment made of its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout SVS.

Appendix A

**Severn Valley School
Complaints Form**

Please complete and return toHeadteacher/
Assistant Head who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your Name:

Pupil's Name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Complainants Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

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

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

For Official use only

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date: