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# School Complaints Policy

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## **1. Policy Statement**

This policy aims to inform parents and carers of how they can complain about the education provided at Manchester Settlement School

Manchester Settlement aims to provide high quality services that meet your needs. We believe we achieve this most of the time: if we are getting it right, please let us know. In order to ensure our services remain at a high and improving standard, we have a procedure through which you can let us know of for any reason you are not satisfied with your dealings with the organisation.

If you are not happy with the service you receive at this school

- If you are unhappy about any Manchester Settlement service, please speak to the relevant staff member, or the Chief Executive
- If you are unhappy with an individual in Manchester Settlement sometimes, it's best to tell him or her directly. If you feel this is difficult or inappropriate then speak to the staff member's manager.

Often we will be able to give you a response straight away. When the matter is more complicated, we will give you at least an initial response within five working days.

## **2. Procedure for Dealing with Complaints**

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest opportunity. To this end all staff and trustees will be made aware of the procedure. Complainants should note that they have a duty to raise matters as soon as conveniently possible. It can then be investigated more effectively whilst information is fresh in the minds of all parties.

## **3. Stage One: Initial Concern or Complaint**

In the first instance it is hoped that the complainant will discuss the complaint with the member of staff concerned.

The School will respect the views of a complainant who indicates that he/she would have difficulty discussing a complaint with a particular member of staff. In these cases, the Complaints Coordinator (Clare McGlone) will refer the complainant to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Where the complaint concerns the Headteacher, the Complaints Co-ordinator will refer the complainant to the Chair of Trustees.

Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels too compromised to deal with a complaint, the Complaints Co-ordinator may consider referring the complainant to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the complaint objectively and impartially is crucial.

Where the first approach is made to a governor, the next step would be to refer the complainant to the appropriate person and advise them about the procedure. Trustees must not act unilaterally on an individual complaint outside the formal procedure or be involved at the early stages in case they are needed to sit on a panel at a later stage of the procedure.

## **4. Stage Two: Complaint Heard by Head Teacher**

The complainant may be dissatisfied with the way the complaint was handled at stage one as well as wishing to pursue their initial complaint. If so the complainant should submit the complaint in writing to the Headteacher within 10 school days of Stage 1 being concluded. A copy of the complaint form is attached to this policy.

If the complaint was dealt with by the Headteacher in stage 1 then the complainant should submit the formal complaint to the Chair of Trustees

The Headteacher may delegate the task of collating information to another staff member. The Headteacher will meet with the complainant, hear the complaint, investigate and make every effort to resolve the issue. Subsequent to this meeting and within 10 school days the complaint will be informed in writing of the outcome and the process for appeal

## **5. Stage Three: Complaint Heard by Governing Bodies Complaints Appeal Panel**

If the complaint cannot be resolved at stage 2 the complainant can take their complaint to the Governing Body Complaints Appeal Panel.

The complainant needs to write to the Chair of Trustees c/o Manchester Settlement School within 10 school days giving details of the complaint (the complainant may use the complaint form if appropriate) The Clerk to the Trustees will convene the Governing Body Complaints Panel.

The Trustees' appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process, and is not convened to merely rubber-stamp previous decisions.

Individual complaints will not be heard by the whole Governing Body, as this could compromise the impartiality of any panel set up for a disciplinary hearing against a member of staff following a serious complaint.

The Governing Body Complaints Appeal Panel will consist of two Trustees and the third will be a person who is independent from the governance and management of the school.

All panel members will have no previous knowledge of the complaint.

The remit of the Complaints Panel is to:

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

The panel will meet within 20 days of receipt of the complaint. If no dates are convenient for the complainant, the panel may meet outside of this timescale.

The complainant will be notified in writing of the panel's decision usually within 5 working Days. The letter will confirm the end of the schools Governing Body involvement and explain any further rights of appeal. The complainant will be advised that the Local Authority has no role unless the complaint relates to a LA provided service.

## **6. General**

All complaints and correspondence/hearings are treated as confidential and will only be disclosed when required to do so by law

The Governing Body will review on an annual basis the operation of the complaints policy, the number of complaints received (both informal and formal) and the stage at which the complaints were resolved

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Role of the Clerk

The Trustees Complaint Panel considering complaints must be clerked. The clerk will be the contact point for the complainant and be required to:

- set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible;
- collate any written material and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing;
- meet and welcome the parties as they arrive at the hearing;
- record the proceedings;
- notify all parties of the panel's decision.

## **8. The Role of the Chair of the Panel**

The Chair of the Panel role:

- the remit of the panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption;
- the issues are addressed;
- key findings of fact are made;
- parents and others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease;
- the hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy;
- the panel is open minded and acting independently; No member of the panel will have a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure; each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions; written material is seen by all parties. If a new issue arises, the information must be given to both parties to consider and comment on it.

## **9. Notification of the Panel's Decision**

The Chair of the panel must ensure that the complainant is notified of the panel's decision, in writing within 5 school days.

## **10. Notifying OFSTED**

If after we have responded to your complaint you are not satisfied and your complaint is about any aspect of the school you can write to;

OFSTED

Picadilly Gate

Store St

Manchester

M1 2WD

Our registration number is 352/6067

Tel : 0300 123 1231

# Complaint Form for Manchester Settlement School

Complainant's Name:	
Pupil's Name ( <i>if appropriate</i> ):	
Complainant's relationship to pupil ( <i>if appropriate</i> ):	
Address of Complainant:	
Post Code: Daytime Tel:	
Mobile: E-mail:	
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, when 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:	
Signed: Date:	
Official Use:	
Date acknowledgement sent: By who:	
Complaint referred to: Date	
<b>Complaints process</b> – If at any stage of the complaints process you are not happy with the response or outcome you may move to the next stage.	
<b>Stage 1</b> – Discuss complaint with a relevant staff member as soon as possible	
<b>Stage 2</b> – Submit complaint in writing to the Head teacher within 10 days	
<b>Stage 3</b> – Refer complaint to the Governing Body complaints appeal panel; within 10 days if your complaint was dealt with by the Head teacher at stage 1 or 20 days if your complaint was heard by the Head teacher at stage 2.	
If your complaint concerns the Head teacher you may speak to a member of the senior management team who will refer the complaint to the Chair of Trustees.	

