



COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

In this document the expression 'Academy' will represent both Appleton Academy Secondary and Primary sites.

1.0 Availability of the Complaints Policy and Procedure

- 1.1 This policy and procedure is available on request to children and young people, the parents/guardians of children and young people and prospective children and young people of the Academy. While children and young people may, themselves, raise concerns and complaints under this policy and procedure, the Academy will involve parents/guardians should this occur. Copies are available from;

Dwayne Saxton
Principal and Chief Executive
Appleton Academy
Wilson Road
Wyke
Bradford
BD12 9PX

- 1.2 A copy of our complaints procedure is also available from the Academy's main office located at Reception and on the website www.appletonacademy.co.uk .

2.0 Complaints Policy and Procedure

- 2.1 This policy and procedure is for the benefit of children and young people, and parents/guardians of children and young people, at Appleton Academy. This policy and procedure will be relied upon in respect of **all complaints** by parents/guardians and children and young people made against the Academy except in respect of;

- (a) **child protection allegations** where a separate policy and procedure applies; and
- (b) **exclusions** where a separate policy and procedure applies;
- (c) **appeals relating to internal assessment decisions for external qualifications** where a separate appeals procedure applies

- 2.2 The Academy expects that most concerns can be resolved informally and will use their best endeavours to resolve any complaints that are made informally, or any concerns that are raised, on that basis.

- 2.3 If informal procedures fail to resolve the issue, a formal complaint about any matter not involving child protection allegations, internal assessment decisions or a decision to exclude a student, must be given verbally or in

writing to the Principal and will be dealt with under this Complaints Policy and Procedure.

- 2.4 Every complaint shall receive fair and proper consideration and a timely response.
- 2.5 We will do all we can to resolve your concern and to ensure you are happy with the education that your child receives at the Appleton Academy.
- 2.6 Parents/guardians can be assured that all complaints and expressions of concern, whether raised informally or formally, will be treated seriously and confidentially.
- 2.7 Correspondence, statements and records will remain confidential except in so far as is required by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

3.0 Complaints Procedure

- 3.1 Our Complaints Procedure will:
 - encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
 - be easily accessible and publicised;
 - be simple to understand and use;
 - be impartial;
 - be non-adversarial;
 - allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the 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 Academy's senior management team so that services can be improved.
- 3.2 The Academy will be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint. We will take concerns seriously at the earliest stage to reduce the numbers that develop into complaints.

4.0 Stage One – Informal Resolution

- 4.1 Most concerns will be dealt with informally and parents/guardians are

encouraged to make contact with the person concerned. The formal procedures set out below will need to be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

- i) The underlying principle is that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- ii) If parents/guardians have a complaint they should normally contact the member of staff concerned or the class teacher or form Tutor. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents'/guardians' satisfaction. If the class teacher or Form Teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Head of House or a Director .
- iii) Parents/guardians may also choose to speak to a Head of House, or a Director.
- iv) Complaints made directly to a Vice Principal or the Academy Principal will usually be referred to the relevant member of staff, the class teacher or Form Teacher unless the Deputy Principal or the Academy Principal deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- v) Most complaints are resolved satisfactorily at this stage and are brought to a close. In the case of serious complaints or where a complaint has not been brought to a satisfactory conclusion or if a complaint concerns a member of staff, the complaint moves on to stage 2.

5.0 Stage Two - Formal Resolution

- vi) If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis (as set out in paragraphs i) to v) above), then parents/guardians should put their complaint in writing to the Academy Principal. Parents/guardians should also identify how they wish their complaint to be resolved.
- vii) The Principal will delegate responsibility for undertaking investigation of the complaint to a Head of House or Vice Principal unless he/she deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.
- viii) The Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- ix) In most cases, the Principal will meet or speak with the

parents/guardians concerned to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

- x) The Principal will use reasonable endeavours to speak to or meet parents/guardians within ten (10) working days of the formal complaint being received, except where the complaint is received in Academy holidays or within two (2) working days of their commencement where the Principal will use his/her reasonable endeavours to speak or meet with parents/guardians as soon as possible after the commencement of the new term (usually within ten (10) working days).
- xi) It may be necessary for a Head of House or Vice Principal to carry out further investigations.
- xii) The Principal will keep a written record of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- xiii) Once the Principal is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made. Parents/guardians will be informed of this decision in writing, giving reasons for the decision. The written decision should be provided no later than ten (10) working days after speaking or meeting with parents/guardians to discuss the matter (pursuant to paragraph 10 above). The Principal may also arrange to meet with parents/guardians to explain the decision.
- xiv) The Academy will keep a written record of all formal complaints, including records of meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint, and the Academy's decision, which record will be kept for one (1) year after the pupil leaves the Academy. This record will state if complaints were resolved at the preliminary hearing or if they were taken to appeal.
- xv) Where parents/guardians are dissatisfied with the outcome of the Academy's response to their formal complaint, the parents/guardians have the opportunity to have their complaint considered by an independent Complaints Panel.

6.0 Stage Three – Panel Hearing

- xvi) If parents/guardians seek to invoke Stage Three following failure to reach an earlier resolution and where dissatisfied with the Principal's decision in respect of their formal complaint, the parents/guardians may, in writing addressed to the Academy, request that their complaint be further considered by an independent Complaints Panel set up for

this purpose.

- xvii) This request for further assessment of the complaint will, for the purposes of this procedure, be known as an 'appeal'.
- xviii) Parents/guardians must lodge their appeal in writing within ten (10) working days of the date of the Academy's decision made in accordance with the Stage Two Procedure. The parents/guardians should provide a list of their complaint(s) made against the Academy and which they believe to have been resolved unsatisfactorily by the Stage Two Procedure, along with the remedies sought in respect of each.
- xix) The Complaints Panel is only obliged to consider the complaint(s) lodged in this 'initial submission' although they may use their discretion to consider other relevant and related matters that may subsequently arise.
- xx) Where an appeal is received by the Academy, the Academy will, within five (5) working days, refer the matter to the Clerk to the Board of Governors who will act as Clerk to the Complaints Panel. Where the appeal is received by the Academy during Academy holidays, or within two (2) working days of their commencement, the Academy has five (5) working days upon commencement of the school term to refer the matter to the Clerk.
- xxi) The Clerk provides an independent source of advice on procedure for all parties.
- xxii) On receipt of an appeal the Clerk will acknowledge the appeal in writing within five (5) working days, and inform the parents/guardians of the steps involved in this Complaints Procedure.
- xxiii) The Clerk will then endeavour to convene an independent Complaints Panel hearing as soon as possible to consider the matter, normally no later than twenty (20) school days after receipt by the Academy of parents'/guardians' written notice that they wish to invoke the Stage Three Procedure, dependent upon the availability of the Panel members.
- xxiv) The independent Complaints Panel will consist of two Governors on the Board who have not previously been involved in the complaint, and one person independent of the management and running of the school. The process used for selecting an independent person will conform to relevant guidance issued by the Department for Children Schools and Families. (DCSF).

xxv) The following are entitled to attend a hearing, submit written representations and address the Panel:

- (a) The parent(s)/guardian(s) (or, if aged over 18, the young person) and/or one representative;
- (b) The Principal of the Academy and/or one representative; and
- (c) Any other interested person whom the Complaints Panel considers to have a reasonable and just interest in the appeal and whose contribution would assist the Panel in their decision-making.

Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

xxvi) Where the Complaints Panel deems it necessary, it may request that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. In such cases all parties will be given the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Panel in support of their position, including:

- (a) documents in support of the complaint(s),
- (b) chronology and key dates relating to the complaint(s), and
- (c) written submission setting out the complaint(s) in more detail.

This evidence will be considered by the Panel, along with the initial submission that was lodged by the parents/guardians.

xxvii) Evidence will be initially sent to the Clerk, who will then circulate the documentation to all parties, including the Panel members, along with an order of proceedings. All written evidence must be received by the Clerk no later than ten (10) working days in advance of the hearing. The Clerk will distribute the written evidence to the relevant parties no later than five (5) working days in advance of the Panel hearing.

xxviii) It is for the Panel to decide how to conduct the proceedings of the appeal, which should be reasonably informal so that all parties can present their case effectively. If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents'/guardians' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.

xxix) After due consideration of all the facts considered relevant, the Panel will reach a decision, and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within ten (10) working days of the hearing. The decision reached by the Complaints Panel is final. Any decision reached that may have financial implications for the Academy will need the

appropriate approval from the relevant authorities e.g. the Board of Governors and Academy Trust, although any such approval must be compatible with the decision of the Complaints Panel.

xxx) The Panel's findings will be sent by the Clerk in writing to the parents/guardians, the Principal, the Governors, the Trust and, where relevant, the person complained of. The letter will state any reasons for the decision reached and recommendations made by the Complaints Panel.

xxxi) The Academy will keep a record of all appeals, decisions and recommendations of the Complaints Panel, which record will be kept for one (1) year after the pupil leaves the Academy.

7.0 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

7.1 The Trust Board will review this policy at least every two (2) years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the Academy.

Adopted by Appleton Academy on

Chair of the Academy Trust Board

Principal

Review date

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Appleton Academy Complaint Form (Annex A)

Please complete and return to (name of staff member) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Child/ Young Person's name:

Your relationship to the Child/Young Person:

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:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

Academy Complaints Flowchart

Summary of Dealing with Complaints

