



Ashmole Academy Trust

Complaints Policy

The Ashmole Academy Trust recognises its accountability to parents/carers and community users, as a trust we are committed to working in partnership and encourage parents/carers to discuss issues that arise at an early stage to avoid escalation to complaint level. We believe that most issues and concerns can be resolved in this informal way.

The policy is made available to parents/carers, staff and students and will be applied to any complaint registered against the Trust except in respect of:

1. Child protection allegations where a separate procedure applies
2. Exclusions where a separate procedure applies
3. Financial misconduct
4. Appeals relating to internal assessment decisions for external qualifications where a separate procedure applies.

For the purpose of this policy a parent/carer must have a child currently at a school within the Trust to whose experience the complaint relates to. A complaint must be made within 28 school days of the incident to which it refers to. This applies also where a child has left the school roll during the 28 day period.

As a Trust we expect that most concerns can be resolved informally by working in partnership and will use its best endeavors to resolve any complaints in this way. If the informal procedure fails to resolve the issue, a formal complain about any matter, other than the exceptions detailed above, should be submitted in writing to the Headteacher. Every complaint will receive fair and proper consideration and a timely response. Our aim is always to resolve complaints either to the complainants' satisfaction, or with an appropriate outcome which balances the rights and duties of pupils, parents/carers, staff and the governors/trustees of the trust.

All complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially, they will be recorded, monitored and a written record kept.

Procedure

Stage 1 - informal resolution

The aim is that complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally by working together to address concerns raised.

Complaints are first handled by the class teacher concerned. In most cases the matter will be resolved straight away by this means to the parent/careers' satisfaction. If the teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult with a member of the Leadership Team.

If the parent/carer considered that the concern raised has not been resolved with the classroom teacher, an informal complaint should be raised with a member of the Leadership Team or

Deputy Head. The concern/complain may be put in writing to clarify the nature of the complaint. If it is made clear that the correspondence does not yet constitute a formal complaint the Leadership team member will try to resolve the issue on an informal basis. All informal complaints will receive a written reply within 15 school days following the Leadership Team investigation. In most cases the matter will be resolved at this stage, however, if the parent/carer fails to reach a satisfactory resolution then they may proceed to stage 2, formal resolution. Please note that the parent/carer and school staff may agree that it will take longer than 15 school days to address the concern fully.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parent/carer should put their complaint in writing to the Headteacher/Associate Head who will decide, after considering the complaint the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Headteacher/Associate Head will speak with the parent/carer to discuss the matter, if this is not possible they will correspond by writing. Further investigation may be deemed appropriate, written records will be kept of all meetings, conversation and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Once the Head teacher/Associate Head is satisfied that all relevant facts have been established a decision will be made and the parents/carer will be informed of the decision, in writing, no later than 15 school days after the initial contact and which will also include reasons for the decision.

If parents/carer is still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to stage 3 of the procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

In the very rare case that the complaint has not been resolved by the Head teacher/Associate Head the parent/carer may move to use stage 3, they should refer their complaint, in writing, to the CEO of the Trust. The parent/carer should detail the nature of the complaint, the reason that they consider the matter has not been resolved and the desired outcome.

Once received the matter will be referred to the complaints panel for consideration. The panel will consist of at least three people not directly involved in the matters. The panel will consist of the CEO, a Trustee and one other not involved in the management of the Trust. The panel will meet within 30 school days of receipt of the written complaint and all parties will be given 7 days' notice of the hearing. Documentation relating to the complaint will be supplied in advance to all parties and not later than 5 school days prior to the hearing. The panel may request additional information from either or both parties. The parent/carer may be accompanied to the hearing by a friend or relation, but not a legal representative acting in that capacity.

After due consideration of all the facts it considers relevant, the panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations. The complainant will be informed of the outcome of the complaint, in writing, within 5 school days.

The decision of the panel will be final