



St Matthew Academy

Complaints Procedure

'Taking your Complaint Seriously'

Complaints

St Matthew Academy is a large and complex organisation. We have a considerable number of teachers and other adults on our staff and a large number of children and young people being educated here. We strive constantly to fulfil our Mission and Beliefs statement and to do our best within a Christian ethos for all the young people in our care and for the adults on our staff.

In the course of every day there are thousands of interactions between staff and children and between children. We try always to communicate effectively and implement all processes and procedures fairly – but, as with any human organisation, sometimes things go wrong, communication fails or we make a mistake. In these circumstances we are very willing to listen to criticism and challenge and hope to respond in a positive spirit in order to bring about improvement or redress.

The aims of our complaints procedure are:

- To enable complainants to express their dissatisfaction
- To ensure that anyone making a complaint about the Academy is dealt with sympathetically and courteously
- To take complaints seriously and investigate them fairly and thoroughly
- To ensure that where errors or faults on our part are demonstrated, they are remedied as far as is possible, to the satisfaction of the complainant
- To learn from complaints in order to make improvements to our practice and procedures

What Can You Do?

Think clearly about the complaint you wish to make and what you want to achieve. If your complaint concerns an incident, please be ready to tell the Academy staff where, when and how you think it happened and who was involved.

Your complaint might be about a difference of opinion, a matter of Academy policy or practice or a matter that needs clarifying. The outcome you wish may be an apology, an explanation or a review of practice or policy in the Academy.

How Do I Complain?

The Academy staff with designated responsibilities, the Principal and the Governing Body are variously responsible for handling complaints about the Academy.

As the Academy is completely independent of the local authority you must bring your complaint straight to us. Complaints can pass through several stages, described as follows. If you are unsure who is the most appropriate person to take your complaint to, contact the Academy Administration Manager via Reception and ask – giving an indication of the nature of your complaint.

Informal Stage.

- In the first instance, contact the Academy Administration Manager, and find out who would be the most appropriate person to talk to.
- Arrange to speak to that person, either on the phone or by making an appointment to speak to them in person or fax, e-mail or write to them at the school.
- Their response will be by phone, e-mail or in writing within 10 working days

Most complaints are resolved satisfactorily at this stage and are brought to a close. If you are not satisfied, however, or if your complaint concerns a member of staff, your complaint moves on to

Formal Stage 1

- Write, fax or e-mail to the Principal at the Academy describing your complaint and the reason you remain dissatisfied with the Academy's response. It would be most helpful if you could state what you wish to achieve – an apology, an explanation, a change to Academy practice etc. Please do not forget to give your full name and address, your child's name, year and form group.
- The Principal will investigate the matter and will either write to you personally with the outcome and any action to be taken or will arrange for a representative to do so. Please note that it can take some time for an investigation to be completed. Teachers spend most of their time teaching and the Principal has many planned commitments. It can take time therefore to discuss matters with all those who may be involved. The Academy will respond to you therefore within 10 working days.

If you still remain dissatisfied with the way in which your complaint has been dealt with, you can ask for it to be referred, or refer it yourself to the Chair of Governors of the Governing Body. This moves the complaint to...

Formal Stage 2

- The Chair of Governors will listen to your complaint and will ask the Principal for her comments. He will also review all of the associated letters and paperwork.
- The Chair of Governors will decide if he thinks the Academy's response should be other than that provided in the Principal's response. If so, he will arrange a meeting between himself, the Principal and the complainant.
- The Chair of Governors will respond to the complainant within 10 working days of receiving the complaint or of holding the meeting.

If you still remain dissatisfied with the way in which your complaint has been treated, you can ask for it to be considered by the Complaints Panel of the Academy's governing body. This moves the complaint to.....

Formal Stage 3

At this stage, the Complaints Panel will meet to consider the process to date and the outstanding concerns and dissatisfactions.

- The governors will ask to review all of the paperwork and may request that you and the Principal submit a written statement. They will also review the decision of the Chair of Governors and the stated reasons for his decision
- A date and time will be set for the panel to meet. You will be invited to attend so that you may present your views in person. If you wish, you may be a friend or representative who can speak for you.
- The Panel will consider the views of all sides. They will decide whether the complaint was considered fully by all parties and whether the decision reached was in accordance with stated Academy policies and procedures. They will then come to a conclusion regarding whether the complaint was given appropriate consideration. This will be communicated in writing to all parties. The decision of the Panel will be final.

The Complaints File

This is kept by the Academy Administration Manager. The file records formal complaints made by parents and complaints made by members of staff about parents.

Each entry will record:-

- (a) The name of the person making the complaint
- (b) The date of the complaint
- (c) The nature of the complaint and the name of all those involved
- (d) If the complaint was resolved and how.
- (e) If it was not resolved, to whom it was referred and why.
- (f) The report of the incident will have attached any supporting witness statements or other evidence

The Principal will review the complaints file on a regular basis. The record of complaints made against staff and against parents will be regularly reported to the Chair of the Community and Business Committee, who will decide if any action should be taken by the Governing body.

Complaints Against Parents

St Matthew Academy will operate the procedure for dealing with complaints against the Academy and its staff alongside a procedure that allows staff to register complaints against parental behaviour.

As with the parents' complaints procedure it is assumed that procedures to protect staff against inappropriate parental behaviour should be systematic and transparent. The Academy will, as with parental complaints, aim to deal with most complaints before they reach the formal stages of the procedure.

Staff Complaints Procedure

When a member of staff feels that they have been subjected to inappropriate behaviour or language from a parent they should report this in writing to the Principal, with a copy to their immediate line manager or Head of House/Head of Faculty. Such incident reports will be recorded in the complaints file kept by the Academy Administration Manager.

Stage One

Following discussion between the member of staff, their line manager and the Principal, an appropriate course of action will be decided on and contact with the parent will be made at the level of either: the individual concerned, the line manager or the Principal or Deputy Principal. In most cases the matter will be satisfactorily resolved at this stage and no further action need to be taken.

Stage Two

If the matter is considered to be too serious to be dealt with under Stage One then the Principal (or in her absence the Vice Principal), will decide on a further appropriate response. If more formal action is required, the Principal will consult with the Chair of the Community and Committee of Governors and the Chair of Governors.