



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Last Review:	October 2014
Committee:	Personnel
Date Ratified:	December 2014
Next Review:	October 2017

Rationale

All maintained schools are required to have a Complaints Policy to deal with general complaints relating to the school. This policy does not apply to issues concerning Admissions, Exclusions, Curriculum, Special Educational Needs, Grievances by Staff or Safeguarding / Child Protection. These matters are already provided for by existing statutory procedures, copies of which can be obtained from the School. Any complaint against a member of staff indicating a concern of a child protection **nature will be dealt with in accordance with the guidelines of the School's Safeguarding Policy and the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board.**

Introduction

The majority of issues raised by parents, the local community or students, are concerns rather than **complaints. Sir William Romney's School is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish or be asked to follow the school's formal complaints procedure. For the school to be able to investigate a complaint, it needs to be made within one year of the incident occurring. If a complaint is older than a year it may not be formally investigated. Concerns raised by students related to the implementation of the School's Behaviour Policy are dealt with in an annex to the Behaviour Policy.**

The prime aim of the Complaints Policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Malicious complaints may incur appropriate action by the school.

The following details outline the stages that will be used to resolve complaints.

The policy has five main stages.

In summary they are as follows: -

Stage 1 – A concern is raised informally with a staff member.

Stage 2 – Complaint is heard by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Stage 3 – Formal complaint is heard by Headteacher.

Stage 4 – **Complaint is heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel.**

Stage 5 – Complaint is referred to the Education Funding Agency

Stage 1 – Raising a Concern

Concerns can be raised with the School at any time and will often generate an immediate response which will resolve the concern. The School asks that parents make their first contact with the Head of Subject, Learning Manager or line manager depending on whether the concern is an academic, pastoral issue or support staff issue. For complaints from people who are not parents of children at the school the first contact should be made to the Headteacher via the School Office. The concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others and the member of staff concerned, in which case there may not be an immediate response. The majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. If this is not the case then the School should be contacted by the complainant. The School will then look at the complaint at the next stage.

Stage 2 - Complaint is heard by a member of the Senior Leadership Team

A complaint at this stage will be dealt with by the appropriate Assistant Headteacher. The School will usually try to respond to the complainant within 2 days of the complaint being raised. In many cases the response will also report on the action the School has taken to resolve the issue. Alternatively, a meeting may be arranged to discuss the matter further. The aim will be to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. If this is not the case then the complaint should be referred to the Headteacher. A complaint at Stage 2 does not have to be in writing.

Stage 3 - Formal Complaint is heard by the Headteacher

The complainant should write to the Headteacher. The letter of complaint should state the nature of the complaint, the steps taken up to this point to resolve it and the action that the complainant would like to see taken to remedy the concern. The Headteacher will review the complaint and will normally provide a written response within 15 school days. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the result at Stage 3 then the complaint should be referred to the Chair of Governors.

Stage 4 - Complaint is heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel

The complainant should write to the Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint. The Chair of Governors will convene a complaints panel of three governors, a Headteacher from a secondary school and the Clerk to the Governors who will meet to consider the complaint and make a final decision on behalf of the Governing Body. The panel will meet within 15 school days of the receipt of the referral letter from the complainant. The Clerk to the Governors will notify the complainant at least 7 days before the meeting indicating the date, time and place of the meeting, together with the details of the procedure to be used. The complainant will have the opportunity to submit written evidence on the complaint prior to the meeting and also have the right to attend accompanied by a friend/partner if desired. The Headteacher will be given the same opportunities. The Clerk to the **Governors will write with the panel's decision** within 5 school days of the hearing.

Stage 5 - Complaint is referred to the Department for Education

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcomes from the Governors' Appeal panel then the matter may be referred to the Education Funding Agency via the schools complaints form. www.education.gov.uk/form/school-complaints-form

In cases where the matter concerns the Headteacher, the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors will be informed of the complaint and the Chair of Governors will arrange for the matter to be investigated. In cases where the matter concerns a member of the Governing Body the member will be informed of the complaint and the Chair of Governors will arrange for the matter to be investigated. In a case where the Chair of Governors is involved then the Vice Chair will investigate the complaint.

The School reserves the right not to consider complaints that:

- are malicious (that is they are instituted without sufficient grounds and are made only to cause annoyance;
- are offensive in tone or the language used;
- contain personally offensive remarks about members of staff;
- are repeatedly submitted with only minor differences after the school has fully addressed the complaint.

Monitoring

The Headteacher will log all complaints from Stage 3 onwards received by the School and record how they were resolved. The Governors' Personnel Committee will examine this log on an annual basis and consider the need for any changes to the Complaints Policy.