

Oakfield School

16. Complaints Policy



To be Reviewed:	July 2021
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This is a Local Authority Policy adopted by Oakfield School Governing Body

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Oakfield School is concerned to ensure pupils, families/carers and other persons are aware that we have an effective and responsive policy and procedure for responding to complaints, and that the use of the complaints procedure does not result in any prejudicial or discriminatory action for the complainant or any of their associates. Complaints are seen as a legitimate way of examining effectiveness of the service in meeting its objectives.

2. PROCEDURE

Most complaints can be quickly resolved by talking to the teacher or member of staff concerned. To do this you can contact the school to arrange a time to meet with the person concerned and discuss the problem. However, it may be that the telephone conversation alone may resolve the problem or misunderstanding.

If you cannot resolve the matter directly with the person concerned, you should take it up with either the Headteacher (School) or the Head of Residential Care (Residential). Again, you can do this by contacting the school and arranging an appointment. It would be helpful if you could put your concerns in writing and let the Headteacher/Head of Residential Care see them before you meet so that he/she is able to look into the matter and inform you of the situation at the meeting. However as mentioned earlier, it may be possible to resolve the issue over the telephone.

In a very small number of cases, the matter may not be resolved even with the involvement of the Headteacher or the Head of Residential Care. When this happens, the complaint should be directed to the Governing Body. In most cases, this means putting your complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors and sending it to them through the School. The Chair of Governors will then contact you to discuss your complaint. The Chair will also talk to the person who was dealing with the complaint and will either arrange a meeting or write to you.

If the complaint is about the Head of Residential Care you should contact the Headteacher in the first instance.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, The Chair of Governors should investigate the complaint and respond to the complainant. You can put your complaint in writing to The Chair of Governors or use the form (Appendix 5 in the complaint pack).

If you do not discuss the matter with the Headteacher or the Head of Residential Care, it is not normally possible to proceed further with the official complaints procedure. In this circumstance, you should also put your complaint in writing, stating the reasons why you have not discussed it with the Headteacher/Head of Residential Care, and send it to the Chair of Governors.

External complaints about children, eg those from local shopkeepers, neighbours, police and general public will be managed by the Headteacher in exactly the same way as other complaints.

If the complaint cannot be resolved by the involvement of the Chair of Governors, you can ask for the complaint to be considered by the Governing Body's Complaints Committee. In this case the Chair of Governors will ask the Local Authority (LA) to investigate the complaint. An officer of the LA will discuss your complaint with you and also with the Headteacher. He/she will then provide a report for the Complaints Committee. It will be for this Committee to decide what action, if any, they propose to take regarding your complaint. You will then be informed in writing of the outcome.

The LA does not normally investigate complaints directly. If a complaint is made either in writing or verbally to the Director of Education, Leisure and Libraries or to any Officer of the LA, the Governing Body of the school is made aware of the complaint and is requested to deal with it through the adopted procedure.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, you can make this known to the LA. However, further action can only be taken if it can be demonstrated that the agreed procedure has not been followed, although the LA will try to continue to mediate and find a possible solution to the problem. The last recourse is to the Secretary of State of Education and Employment.

Complaints by Pupils

Ofsted indicate that complaints, including those from pupils at the school, should be addressed without delay and complainants are kept informed of what progress has been made in their consideration. It further states that "Children should know how, and feel able to complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of living in the school". See Appendix 4 – what to do.

Oakfield School is fully committed to this principle and staff should make every effort to conform with the expectations and requirements of the school's policy. Staff should therefore ensure that they have read and fully understood the school policy and have familiarised themselves to the relevant section of the Residential Special School National Minimum Standards (Standard 18).

Procedure for children wishing to make a complaint

1. If a verbal complaint is made to a member of staff by a child a note should be made of the date, time and nature of the complaint in the pupil's online diary. The complaint may relate to any aspect of school life or any person employed and/or working in the school or on behalf of school e.g. nurse, support worker, therapist etc.
2. The child should be asked to complete the appropriate complaint form (Appendix 1) at the time or as soon as reasonably possible afterwards. It should be explained that the complaint will be considered by the Headteacher or, in his/her absence, by the Deputy Headteacher and that they will be able to present their complaint in person at the appropriate time. There should be no undue delay in this process.

3. If the complaint is about the conduct or actions of the Headteacher, or Deputy Headteacher, in consultation where appropriate, with the Chair of Governors should carry out the procedures in accordance with the measures described in the policy statement. If the complaint is of a serious nature and could involve disciplinary proceedings the Chair of Governors will take responsibility for the investigation.

Attempts will be made to resolve all complaints by mediation and negotiation once the basis of the complaint has been established.

Complaints made by other people on behalf of pupils, with their consent, will be dealt with in accordance with the process described in the general complaints procedure.

It is important that staff fully understand the nature and implications of the complaints procedures and training, including induction arrangements, will reflect this requirement.

The complainant will be kept informed of the progress of his/her complaint and the outcome. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the process (not the outcome) the complaint can be referred to the appropriate Governing Body Sub Committee.

Monitoring and Recording

Completed complaint forms will be filed centrally in a file provided for that purpose. Each complaint will be numbered sequentially. Specific information will be entered on a recording sheet located at the front of the folder (See Appendix 2). Complaints involving allegations of bullying will be entered on a secondary sheet located in the pre designated section of the folder. This secondary recording sheet will allow for the monitoring and identification of specific trends and patterns of behaviour in accordance with the requirements of the 'anti bullying' policy. See Appendix 3.

The Head of Residential Care will as part of his/her monitoring responsibilities check and assess, on a monthly basis, both recording sheets to identify any behaviour trends, specific targets, victims or patterns of bullying. This will also be checked as part of the Standard 20 monitoring visit. Results of these assessments will be provided for other members of the Management Team and should inform future procedural developments and training initiatives.

Further Documents

Appendix 1 - Complaint Form

Appendix 2 - Complaint Record Sheet

Appendix 3 - Complaints involving bullying — record sheet

Appendix 4 - Complaints – Pupils

Appendix 5 – Complaint to the Governing Body

This Policy was reviewed July 2019.

Signed:

Mr Lee Morfitt (Chair of Governors)

Appendix 1

Your Name:	
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Address:	
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Postcode:	
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Contact Number:	
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Pupils Name:	
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Relationship to Pupil:	
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Please tell us what it is you are unhappy about:	
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Please tell us what action you have already taken to try and resolve this problem e.g. who have you spoken too and what did they say and do:	
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What action do you feel might resolve or improve the situation at this stage?

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Are you sending us any paperwork about your complaint? If so please give details:

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Signature:

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Date:

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For School Use

Date Acknowledgement Sent:

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By Whom:

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Complaint Referred to:

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Date:

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Complaints - What Can I Do?



The staff at Oakfield School wishes to make your time here as happy and as safe as possible. I have spoken with your parents/carers and they know what to do if they are unhappy with anything at school and how to help you.

You need to know to know what you can do if you are unhappy or have any concerns about anything that happens at school and you wish to complain.

I have explained below exactly what you can do to make sure that people listen to what you have to say and take your concerns seriously.

What can I complain about?

Every child, including yourself, can complain about anything that you are unhappy about however small the issue is. This could be to do with how you are treated by staff, other pupils or people visiting the school; food, boarding arrangements, in fact anything at all to do with your life at school.

Who can I complain to?

Any member of staff in school including the Head Teacher. It may be that you will feel more comfortable talking to someone who you know well. This could be your named person. This is a member of the care staff in your residential house or your teacher.

What if I do not want to talk to a member of staff?

If you are unhappy at school or there is something that you wish to complain about you should talk to your parents or carers — even if you have mentioned the matter to a member of staff.

You can also talk to the Independent Visitor.

Will I get into trouble for complaining?

No. Staff will not take any action/sanction against you because you have made a complaint.

What can I expect?

Staff (or the people you have contacted) will listen to what you have to say and will then attempt to find out the facts. You will be kept informed of what action has been taken and the result. School staff will talk to you and try to find a solution which improves the situation to your satisfaction.

What can I do if I am not satisfied with the actions taken by the school?

If you are still not happy about your situation you can ask for details of other people to talk to (Social Services, Education Department, Care Standards Commission). The school will provide yourself and your parents all the information you need if you wish to take the complaint further.

Remember if you are unsure about anything, speak to your named person or any member of staff. Parents/carers are there to help. Don't keep concerns or worries to yourself.

Staff will explain about 'complaints' at your house meetings and at your Annual Review.

Appendix 5

Please complete this form and return to the Chair of Governors who will acknowledge receipt and arrange a meeting of the Complaints Committee

Your Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Contact Number:

Pupils Name:

**Relationship to
Pupil:**

Please tell us what it is you are unhappy about:

Please tell us what action you have already taken to try and resolve this problem e.g. who have you spoken too and what did they say and do:

What action do you feel might resolve or improve the situation at this stage?

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Are you sending us any paperwork about your complaint? If so please give details:

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Signature:

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Date:

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For School Use

Date Acknowledgement Sent:

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By Whom:

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Complaint Referred to:

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Date:

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