



Sports Coaching North West
The Radnor Building
Radnor House
Third Avenue
Congleton
CW12 4XP

COMPLAINTS POLICY

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

1. Please note that this document does not set out to produce an exhaustive set of procedures to meet all scenarios, which is probably impossible, but to provide advice and guidance which can be adopted or adapted in most circumstances.
2. We all make mistakes. When these occur people may receive a poorer service than they expect. Some people run away from complaints, are defensive, or do the legal minimum. The present document points a way to a more positive and proactive approach, however.
3. The guidance is intended as practical advice for the The Directors or Managers.
4. Mr Ross Kesteven or Mr Chris Regan has responsibility for the operation and management of the school complaints procedure.

DEFINITION OF 'COMPLAINT'

1. It may not be possible to provide a definition of the actual meaning of 'complaint' which is to everyone's satisfaction.
2. For the purpose of the guidance, a complaint is an expression of serious dissatisfaction. This could be, for example, something which has happened or not happened, or it could be about the way a matter was dealt with. There may be a misunderstanding, or a difference of opinion, perhaps an argument. The complaint might relate to the way a decision has been taken, or how somebody has been treated.
3. Complaints should be distinguished from 'concerns; out of which they can develop if a matter gets more serious. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints.

COMPLAINTS COVERED BY THE GUIDELINES

It is not possible to list all the kinds of complaints about a school which the guidelines cover. However, the following list will give something of an indication of the sort of issues that may be dealt with under them:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> lack of student progress | <input type="checkbox"/> disciplinary matters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> policy | <input type="checkbox"/> unfair treatment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> misunderstandings | <input type="checkbox"/> lack of information or explanation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> the conduct of students | <input type="checkbox"/> unreasonable delay |
| <input type="checkbox"/> procedures not being properly followed | <input type="checkbox"/> unequal treatment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> failure to take certain factors into account | |



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DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

THE BENEFITS IN HAVING A WRITTEN COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. It is a sign of quality in an organisation that it is open to criticism and willing to respond positively where this is justified in order to improve itself.
2. An effective company complaints system should help to enhance the company relationship with its local community and develop partnership.
3. A written policy and procedure will aid parental or client understanding.
4. Consistency of response by the staff is enabled.

RECORDING COMPLAINTS

1. The company should record the progress of the complaint and the final outcome. A complaint may be made in person, by telephone, or in writing. At the end of a meeting or telephone call, it would be helpful if the member of staff ensured that the complainant and the company have the same understanding of what was discussed and agreed. A brief note of meetings and telephone calls can be kept and a copy of any written response added to the record.
2. The complaints coordinator (Directors) is responsible for the records and holds them centrally.

GOVERNING BODY REVIEW

1. The governing body can monitor the level and nature of complaints and review the outcomes on a regular basis to ensure the effectiveness of the procedure and make changes where necessary.

Preferably, complaints information shared with the whole governing body will not name individuals.

2. As well as addressing an individual's complaints, the process of listening to and resolving complaints will contribute to school improvement. When individual complaints are heard, it may be possible to identify underlying issues that need to be addressed. The monitoring and review of complaints by the school and the governing body can be a useful tool in evaluating a school's performance.

ADVICE TO COMPLAINANTS

1. It is not usually a good idea to drop into the company venue or offices without warning and you should never confront a coach in front of the students and/or parents and staff. It is strongly recommended that you make a private appointment when you both have enough time to talk things through.



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2. Please stay calm. No matter how annoyed you are, this is only likely to lead to unconstructive and heated argument. Things could be said which are later regretted and could even become the subject of legal action.
3. Listen to the other side of the story and see if it is reasonable.
4. Try and work out what you think can realistically be done.
5. Please be patient. Staff will need time to follow up your complaint with the school or other members of staff, so they may not be able to respond immediately.

Complaints may need to be dealt with in different stages depending on how serious the matter is and whether there is a satisfactory outcome. Many complaints can easily be resolved informally through discussion and so need go no further than the informal stage. If matters are not resolved, however, the complaint can go through the formal stages, if desired. A complaint should, however, always be dealt with at the lowest appropriate level. Stages should not be missed out.

RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

1. At each stage in the procedure we will keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An apology
- An explanation
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- An assurance that the event complained of will not recur
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again
- An undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint

2. An effective procedure will identify areas of agreement between the parties. It is also of equal importance to clarify any misunderstandings that might have occurred as this can create a positive atmosphere in which to discuss any outstanding issues.

COMPLAINTS FROM PUPILS

Many complaints by students may be dealt with in accordance with a school's or the companies normal procedures . However in the case of more serious complaint the Headteacher should consider the desirability of consulting parents or guardians. The age, maturity, intelligence and perception of the student may be taken into account in assessing the matter and what action to take, but no complaint should be discounted merely because it comes from a student.

THE INFORMAL STAGE

Concerns and complaints can often be dealt with by scheduling a meeting to discuss the issues with an appropriate person; for example, teachers, head teachers or other coaches.

Before attending any meeting it would be helpful if the complainant wrote down what they wishes to discuss:



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- what it is they are concerned about
- when and where the incident[s] occurred
- who else was involved
- whether anyone saw it happen
- who you have spoken to already, and
- what you want to happen as a result of raising your concerns

The school will respond to the complainant detailing any outcome of the meeting within 10 school days.

If, after this meeting, you are not satisfied with the response the school has given, you may wish to make a formal complaint.

THE FORMAL STAGES

If, having been through the informal stage of the procedure the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, there must be an opportunity to progress to the formal stage of the procedure. This should be made in writing.

STAGE ONE

The first stage of the formal process is for the complaint to be investigated and responded to by the Directors. The complainant should be asked to submit their complaint in writing to the Directors. If the complaint is about the Directors or Directors then the Stage two procedures are carried out (see below).

The Director acknowledges the complaint and, if necessary, sets up a meeting with the complainant to discuss the matter further. It may be necessary at this stage for statements to be taken from the student[s] involved and any witnesses. The student would normally be interviewed with a parent present. If this is not possible then a member of staff who is not directly involved with the complaint can accompany the student.

The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher needs to keep written records of meetings, telephone conversations and other documentation relevant to the matter.

Following the investigation by the Directors a response should be sent to the complainant within 10 school days of the complaint being received by company, or within 4 weeks if any part of the 10 day period falls within a school holiday.

Details of how to progress the complaint to stage two should be included in the response to the complainant.

SHARING OF INFORMATION AND DESTRUCTION OF FILES

Throughout the process of investigating complaints it may be necessary for information relating to a complaint to be shared within school environments with teaching, support staff, Headteacher and Governors. We will be mindful of confidentiality rules and the Data Protection Act 1998 when handling complaints and discussing issues relating to the complaint.



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The school is required to keep any personal information relating to a complaint in a secure manner for a period of six years.

Procedures for holding a Panel meeting

The Role of the Clerk

Any panel or group of governors considering complaints should be clerked. The clerk would be the contact point for the complainant and be required to:

- Set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- Collate any written materials and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing
- Meet and welcome the parties as they arrive at the hearing
- Record the proceedings
- Notify all parties of the panel's decision

The panel needs to take the following points into account:

- The hearing is as informal as possible.
- Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.
- After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses.
- The Presenting Officer may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The Presenting Officer is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses.
- The complainant may question both the Presenting Officer and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The panel may ask questions at any point.
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.



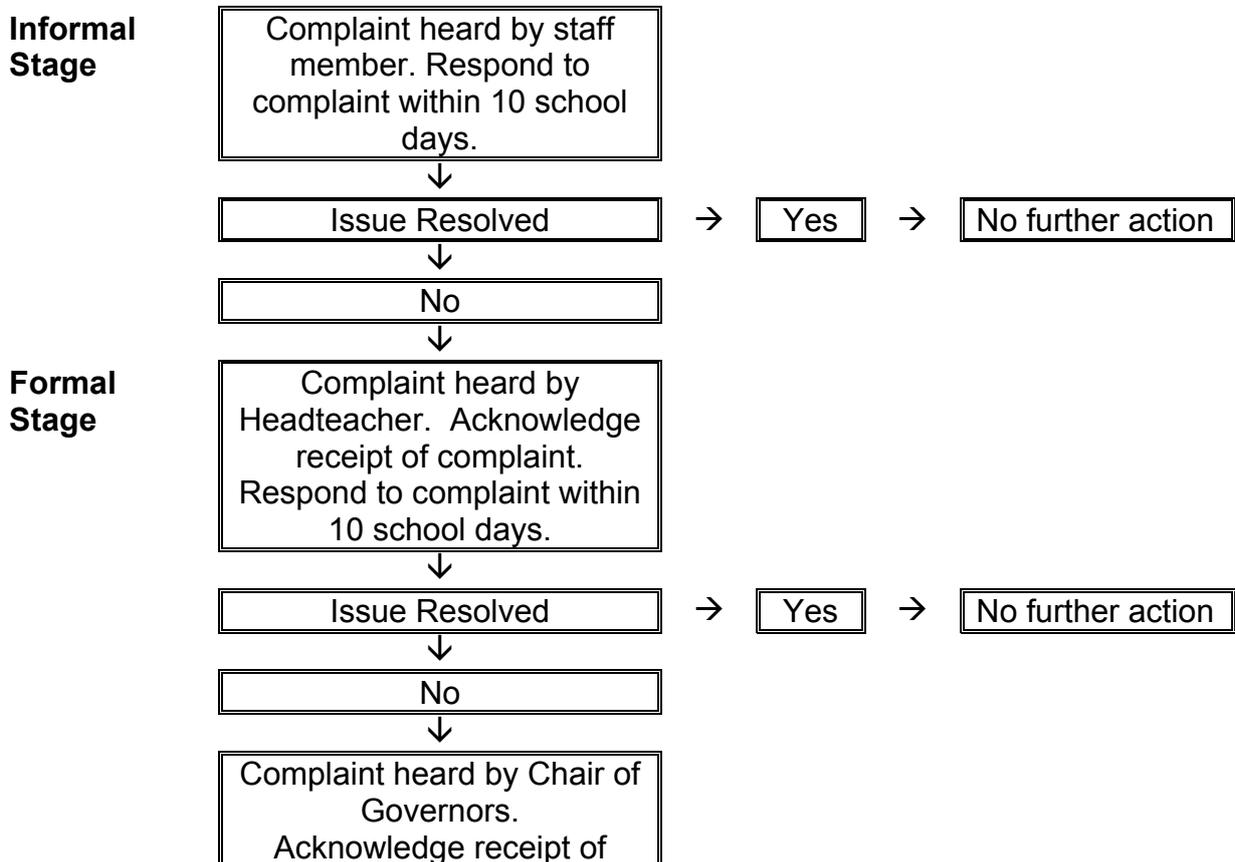
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- The Presenting Officer is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
- The chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within a set time scale.

To decide on the complaint. The panel can:

- uphold the complaint in full, or in part
- dismiss the complaint in full, or in part
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- recommend changes to the school's system or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not occur

OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE





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