



FRAYS

Academy Trust

Frays Academy Trust Complaints Policy & Procedure

**Date Ratified: March 2018
Review Date: March 2021**

Approval

Signed by Chair of Directors	
Date of Approval/Adoption	March 2018
Date of Review	March 2021

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Complaints policy

Frays Academy Trust works hard to build positive relationships between all members of its school communities and for its values to be reflected in every aspect of its work.

Frays Academy Trust welcomes complaints as these help our schools improve and learn. This policy sets out the procedure which should be followed in such circumstances. The complaints procedure is informed by the Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures (Jan 2016) published by the Department for Education (DfE). Complaints which are identified by the DfE as outside the scope of this policy are admissions, SEN, Exclusions and child protection issues. Where this applies the Head of School will advise how to progress complaints relating to these issues.

The DfE has defined the difference between a concern and complaint as;-

“A ‘concern’ may be defined as ‘an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought’. A complaint may be generally defined as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or lack of action’.

General Principles:

- This procedure is designed to resolve a concern or complaint relating to the school, or the services that it provides, as quickly as possible.
- We will ensure a full and fair investigation.
- We will be respectful and professional.
- We will respect confidentiality.
- We will work in a non-adversarial way - we seek to resolve complaints as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- We expect those making a complaint to be respectful and courteous.
- An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- To enable a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible, and in general no later than 3 months after the event that gave rise to the complaint.
- This policy and procedure does not apply to staff as there are internal policies and procedures for staff to use such as grievance policy.
- A complaint can be made in person, by telephone or in writing.

Publicising the complaints policy and procedure

A copy of our complaints procedure is also available from each school's Reception, on each school website and on the Trust's website.

Keeping a record of complaints

A copy of all complaints will be kept within schools in a confidential file. This will include outcome of complaints and any actions as a result of complaints.

Raising a concern or complaint

1. Informal Stage

- If a parent or carer has a concern about any aspect of the provision for their child, they should, in the first instance, discuss it with the class teacher. We anticipate that most issues can be dealt with in this way; quickly and informally. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy and making good progress. They always want to know if there is a problem.
- It is normally appropriate to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned. This may be by letter, by telephone or in person by appointment, requested via the school office (Appendix 1)
- Where a parent/carers feels that a situation has not been resolved with the class teacher or has a generic

complaint about the school, they can make an appointment to discuss it with the Head of School. The Head of School takes all concerns very seriously and will investigate each case thoroughly. If a complaint cannot be dealt with immediately, the Head of School will endeavour to respond to the parent/carer within one week.

- If the complaint is about a non-teaching matter then the complaint should be addressed to the Head of School who will assign the best person to seek to resolve this situation.
- If the complaint is about Frays central services or staff the complaint should be addressed to the Executive Head who will assign the best person to seek to resolve this situation.
- If the complaint is about the Executive Head then the complaint should be addressed to the Trust Chair.
- Complaints about a Chair of governors or Trust Chair should be made in writing to the Trust Clerk
- The Trust will use its reasonable endeavours to resolve any informal complaints within ten (10) working days of them being raised, except where they are raised in Trust holidays where the Trust will use its reasonable endeavours to resolve them as soon as possible after commencement of the new term (usually within ten (10) working days).
- There will be a written record of the complaint by the school on the informal complaints record form appendix 1 detailing the outcome and any actions taken. This will held by the Head of School or Executive Head.

Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information and it is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved at this informal stage.

2. Formal Stage

If the concern or complaint is not resolved at the informal stage the complaint should be put in writing and passed to the Head of School, who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately.

If the complaint is about the Head of School, a Governor or Frays central services or staff, it should be passed to the Executive Head, if the complaint is about the Executive Head it should be passed to the Trust Chair, who will determine who is best to deal with the complaint. If you need help completing the complaints form please let us know and we will support you to do so.

A complaint form should be used and can be obtained from the school office (Appendix 2):

- Any such request must be made in writing (Appendix 2) within 10 school days of receiving notice of the outcome
- In completing it, include all details which might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents.
- It is very important to specify a clear statement of the actions that you would like the school to take to resolve your concern. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed.
- The completed form should be passed in a sealed envelope to the school office, addressed to the Head of School or to the Executive Head, as appropriate.
- The Head of School (or Executive Head/Chair of Governors) will respond formally in writing to acknowledge your complaint and explain how it will be dealt with within 5 school days, and will invite you to a meeting to clarify your concerns and to seek a resolution to them.
- The Executive Head can delegate the investigation of a complaint about a Head of School or Trust staff to the Chief Operating Officer
- The investigation will begin as soon as possible and you will be informed in writing within ten days of its conclusions.
- The investigation will address each of the complaint points raised, who was interviewed as a result, what information was reviewed and this brought together into a report.
- The Head of School or Executive Head or Chief Operating Officer (as appropriate) will write to you detailing how the complaint was reviewed, their findings for each point raised and identifying actions and learning as a result.
- Complaints will normally be resolved at this stage, and the decision of the Head of School (or Executive Head as appropriate) will be usually resolve the complaint and be final.
- There will be a written outcome of the complaint noted on appendix 2 with any actions taken. This will be

held by the Head of School or Executive Head, as appropriate.

Following a complaint the Senior Leadership Team will consider the lessons learned so that services can be improved.

3. Review Panel

If for any reason you are not satisfied with the manner in which this process has been followed, or are not satisfied with the response to your complaint, you may request a review by the Governing Body of the school concerned.

- Any such request must be made in writing (Appendix 3) to the Chair of Governors, within 10 school days of receiving notice of the outcome, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure.
- A panel of 3 members will be convened, drawn from 2 members of the Governing Body or Board of Directors, and 1 independent Governor from another Frays Federated Governing Body (who is independent of the management and running of the school)
- Complaints will only be shared with the 3 Panel members, and not the whole Governing Body.
- If the whole Governing Body is aware of the substance of a complaint before the final stage has been completed, we will arrange for an independent panel to hear the complaint.
- A panel meeting will usually take place within 10 working days.
- Complainants have the right to request an independent panel, if they believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings. Schools should consider the request but ultimately, the decision is made by the Governors.
- You can attend the panel meeting and bring a companion with you.

How the panel will conduct a review

- Before the panel meeting, the panel chair will review the original complaint and response and seek a detailed report from the Head of School or Executive Head as appropriate of the investigation carried out.
- This report alongside the details provided by the person complaining (appendix 3) will be provided to the panel before the hearing
- The panel will meet prior to the hearing to agree any points of clarity they would seek to explore at the hearing
- The panel chair will lead the hearing and ask you if there is anything you want to add to the information previously provided.
- The panel chair will ask the Head of School or Executive Head or Chief Operating Officer to explain how they had investigated the complaint and drawn their conclusions.
- Following, this the chair and panel members may seek to ask further questions to deepen their understanding.
- The panel will meet alone and consider all of the information present in order to form their opinion.
- The panel chair will write to you (within 10 working days) outlining their findings and recommendations made as a result. This letter will include advising you should you remain unsatisfied with the handling of the complaint you can take this to the Education and Skills Funding Agency.
- A copy of all complaints are kept in a confidential file within the school and details of whether the complaint was upheld/not upheld and any actions taken as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint was upheld or not).

* *10 working days is based on normal term time

4. Unreasonable Complaints

Frays Academy Trust is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

Frays Academy Trust defines unreasonable complainants as *'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints'*.

- A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:
- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:-

- maliciously;
- aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowing it to be false;
- using falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Head of School or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues the Head of School will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact the school causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from the school.

Barring from the School Premises

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Schools will therefore act to ensure they remain a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of their community.

If a parent's behaviour is a cause for concern, a school can ask him/her to leave school premises. In serious cases, the Head of School or the local authority can notify them in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any representations that the parent may wish to make. Schools should always give the parent the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing.

The decision to bar should then be reviewed, taking into account any representations made by the parent, and either confirmed or lifted. If the decision is confirmed the parent should be notified in writing, explaining how long the bar will be in place.

Anyone wishing to complain about being barred can do so, by letter or email, to the Head of School or Chair of Governors. However, complaints about barring cannot be escalated to the Department for Education. Once the school's own complaints procedure has been completed, the only remaining avenue of appeal is through the Courts; independent legal advice must therefore be sought.

5. Right to contact the Department for Education

The Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) states that academies should clearly signpost parents who are not satisfied with the handling of their complaint to the EFA, via the Department for Education (DfE) schools complaint form. We will ensure this is included in the letter following the review panel.

6. Contact details

Head of School
Cowley St Laurence CE Primary School
Worcester Road
Cowley
UB8 3TH
Telephone: 01895 462361

Head of School
Laurel Lane Primary School
Laurel Lane
West Drayton
UB7 7TX
Telephone: 01895 462360

Head of School
St Martin's CE Primary School
Rowan Road
West Drayton
UB7 7UF
Telephone: 01895 462350

Head of School
St Matthew's CE Primary School
High Street

West Drayton
UB7 7QJ
Telephone: 01895 442724

Executive Head
Frays Academy Trust
Worcester Road
Cowley
UB8 3TH
Telephone: 01895 462361

Chair of the Trust
Frays Academy Trust
Worcester Road
Cowley
UB8 3TH
Telephone: 01895 462361

Chair of Governors
Cowley St Laurence CE Primary School & St Matthew's CE Primary School Federated Governing Body
Worcester Road
Cowley
UB8 3TH
Telephone: 01895 462361

Chair of Governors
Laurel Lane Primary School & St Martin's CE Primary School Federated Governing Body
Laurel Lane
West Drayton
UB7 7TX
Telephone: 01895 462360

Clerk to Governors
Frays Academy Trust
Worcester Road
Cowley
UB8 3TH
Telephone: 01895 462361

Appendix 1

INFORMAL COMPLAINT FORM

Does this informal complaint relate to: (please tick as appropriate)

A concern about any aspect of the provision for your child	
A non-teaching matter	
Frays Academy Trust central services of staff	
The Chair of Governors	

Name	
Pupils name and class (if applicable)	
School/Trust	

Address	
Post code	
Email address	
Telephone No	
Day	
Evening	
Mobile	

How informal complaint was received	Verbally/Telephone/In-Writing
Date informal complaint was received	

Summary of complaint (including dates, witnesses etc).

Action already taken to try to resolve your complaint:-

What would you like us to do to resolve your complaint?

--

Signed	
Date	

Please return this form to the Head of School/Executive Headteacher/Frays Academy Trust Offices, who will inform you of the outcome of this informal complaint.

For office use:

Date received:	
Received by (Name):	
Copy of Complaints Policy Given to Individual	YES/NO
Referred to (Name):	
Job Title:	

Appendix 1 (continued)

Outcome of Complaint (Informal)

Found

Not Found

List any actions taken as a result of the complaint

Name:

Job title:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 2

FORMAL COMPLAINT FORM:

Does this formal complaint relate to: (please tick as appropriate)

A concern about any aspect of the provision for your child	<input type="checkbox"/>
A non-teaching matter	<input type="checkbox"/>
Frays Academy Trust central services of staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Chair of Governors	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name	
Pupil's name and class	
School/Trust	

Address	
Post Code	
Email address	
Telephone No.	
Day	
Evening	
Mobile	

Please give concise details of your complaint (including dates, witnesses etc) to allow us to fully investigate the matter

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--

What action have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint?
Who have you spoken to and what was the outcome?

--

What would you like us to do to resolve your complaint?

--

Signed	
Date	

Please return this form to the Head of School/Executive Head/Frays Academy Trust Offices who will inform you of the outcome of the complaint.

For office use:

Date received:	
Received by (Name):	
Referred to (Name):	
Job Title:	

Outcome of Complaint (Formal)

Found

Not Found

List any actions taken as a result of the complaint

Name: Job title:

Signature: Date:

Appendix 3

FORMAL COMPLAINT REVIEW FORM:

Does this formal complaint relate to: (please tick as appropriate)

A concern about any aspect of the provision for your child	
A non-teaching matter	
Frays Academy Trust central services of staff	
The Chair of Governors	

Name	
Pupil's name and class	
School/Trust	

Address	
Post Code	
Email address	
Telephone No.	
Day	
Evening	
Mobile	

Following my submission of a formal complaint on I am dissatisfied with the outcome/
procedure followed and request a formal review by the Federated Governing Body.

My complaint was submitted on

I received a response from on

I attach copies of my formal complaint and the response received from the school. I am dissatisfied with
the way the outcome/process was carried out because:

What would you like us to do to resolve your complaint?

Signed	
Date	

Please return this form to the Chair of Governors, who will inform you of the next stage of the complaint.

For office use:

Date received:	Received by (Name):
Referred to (Name):	
Job Title:	

Appendix 3

Outcome of Complaint (Review panel)

Found

Not Found

List any actions taken as a result of the complaint

--

Name:

Chair of Review Panel:

Signature:

Date: