

<b>Category</b>	Communication		
<b>Document Name</b>	Complaints Policy		
<b>Accountable Body</b>	RADIUS Trust		
<b>Reference</b>	CO.P1	<b>Date Approved/Reviewed</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> January 2017
<b>Version</b>	3.1	<b>Next Review Due</b>	Spring 18

### Related Documents

Document	Reference
Complaints Procedure	CO.P1.T1

### Reference Material

Guidance
Education Reform Act (1988) Section 23
NMS Residential Special Schools, Standard 18 & 20

### Related Policies

Name	Reference
Communications Policy	CO.P2

### Policy Statement

This policy addresses a requirement to have clear requirements set of for dealing with complaints but the underlying principle is that concerns ought to be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures. This policy assumes that taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints.

The requirement to have a complaints process need not in any way undermine efforts to resolve any concern informally.

Formal procedures will need to be invoked when initial informal attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

RADIUS Trust requires each school to have a clear, concise complaints procedure which gives effect to this policy. School procedures are expected to be well communicated to all staff, parents/carers and registered pupils/students and published on each school website.

The Headteacher/Principal in each school is required to:

- ensure that the Trust's Complaints Policy and Procedure are adhered to and communicated to all staff;
- encourage parents/carers to contact a relevant members of staff as soon as they have any worries or concerns;
- responses to complaints are made within the timeframe specified in the Trust's Complaints Procedure and with the intention of maintaining positive relationships throughout the process and achieve a resolution. All parties are to be kept informed throughout the process;
- present the expected response times upon receipt of a complaint;
- in the unlikely event that the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the option to make a formal complaint is provided to the complainant. The School Business Manager (or alternative member of staff) in each school is required to convene a Governing Body Complaints Review Panel to investigate formal complaints;



- give the complainant the option to appeal to the Trust CEO if still dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint investigation and conclusion;
- upon request by the complainant and exhausting informal procedures, provide the Trust appointed Independent Visitor's or placing LA's contact details should they wish to make a complaint directly to them. The complainant and Headteacher/Principal, and where relevant, the person complained about, will be provided with a copy of any findings and recommendations;
- provide a variety of methods to make a complaint, taking into consideration the location of the person making the complaint (i.e. parents/carers may not be in close proximity to the school site);
- respect people's desire for confidentiality;
- record and implement a detailed approach (if necessary) based on the nature of the complaint with the intention of avoiding reoccurrence of the issue (s) giving rise to the complaint.

### **Publicising the Procedure**

The Trust fulfils the legal requirement for the complaints procedures to be publicised by requiring its schools to publish both the Trust Complaints Policy and Trust Complaints Procedure on the school website to ensure it is easily accessible to:

- Parents/carers
- Registered day and boarding pupils on roll
- Others (e.g. Local Authority, public, site neighbours, local retailers, service suppliers, etc)

The minimum arrangements to be in place in each school include:

- information is provided to new parents when their children join the school;
- information is given to the pupils/students on roll;
- information to be included in any home-school agreement;
- documents supplied to community users including course information or letting agreements;
- a specific complaints leaflet which includes a form on which a complaint may be made;
- posters are displayed in areas of the school that will be used by the public, such as reception or the main entrance;
- published on the school website.

### **Resolving Complaints**

At each stage in the procedure a Headteacher/Principal will want to 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.
- an opportunity to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage.

## **Records and Confidentiality**

All complaints dealt with by each school will be entered on a numbered complaints record which will be filed in a secure way.

All complaints are to be treated as confidential and information regarding complaints will only be passed to those professionally involved on the basis of their need to know for professional or investigatory reasons and school governors or Trustees of the Accountable Body.

## **Monitoring and Review**

To satisfy the NMS for Residential Special Schools (Standard 20), the Independent Visitor from their examination of the complaint register and complaint file will select a sample of complaints (if any) for review on each visit.

An appropriate senior manager will report on complaints to the school Governors at each termly meeting. The monitoring and review of complaints by each school and the Governing Body will be used as a tool in evaluating each school's performance. The Governing Body is required to 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 respect confidentiality.

The Chief Executive will report to Trustees on complaints requiring reference to the Trust Board or involvement of the role of the CEO.

## **External Agencies**

RADIUS Trust accepts the rights of all parties to make complaints to external agencies which have responsibility for pupils or for monitoring the work of the school. Each Trust school will make the contact details of a pupil's LA available to pupils, parents/carers and Independent Visitors should they wish to use the complaints procedure of their placing authority.

## **Safeguarding and Child Protection**

Where a complaint is found to be a Safeguarding & Child Protection concern the Safeguarding & Child Protection Child Protection Policy of the Trust and school procedures take precedence over the Complaints Procedure.