

QUEENSBERRY

ALTERNATIVE

PROVISION



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Written by: NM

Reviewed by: PC

Last review: June 2019

Next review: June 2021

We welcome suggestions for improving our work in Queensberry Alternative Provision. Be assured that, no matter what you want to tell us, our support and respect for your child will not be affected in any way. Please tell us of your concern as soon as possible. It is difficult for us to investigate an incident or problem properly if it took place some time ago. We do appreciate the assistance we receive from parents in addressing any problems that arise.

Introduction

1.1 This complaints procedure is made pursuant to s.29 of the Education Act 2002 which requires governing bodies of all maintained schools (including academies) and maintained nursery schools to have in place a procedure for dealing with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides.

1.2 This policy takes into account current Department for Education guidance.

1.3 All references to working days refer to days when Queensberry Alternative Provision is open to students

1.5 This procedure will be published on our website and it is also be available as a hardcopy on request from

Scope of the Procedure

2.1 You can use this procedure if you are a parent/carer of a registered student at Queensberry Alternative Provision or if you are a member of the wider community or a person representing a student that once attended the provision. It does not apply to current staff members, or former members of staff in any matter arising out of their employment

2.2 Where your complaint makes an allegation of misconduct against members of staff this procedure may be superseded by use of the staff disciplinary procedure or other appropriate staffing procedure at any time or following recommendations at the conclusion of the complaints process.

2.3 If your complaint is about any third party provider on our site you will normally be expected to use their complaints procedure.

General Principles

3.1 All complaints will be dealt with in a transparent way and as quickly as is reasonably practical. You will be kept informed during the investigation of your complaint and of the outcome except where this is confidential e.g. in the case of a staff disciplinary process.

3.2 It is important that complaints are dealt with as expeditiously as possible. Queensberry Alternative Provision will normally expect you to raise your complaint within 12 weeks of the event/matter complained of unless the Directors or Governing Body agrees there are exceptional reasons for not doing so. All correspondence to Queensberry Alternative Provision should be by email or letter addressed to the Directors or Governing Body.

3.3 The timescales for dealing with your complaint within this procedure will be adhered to as far as is reasonably practicable. Where this is not possible you will be informed, within the specified timescale, as to why this is the case, and given a revised timescale for dealing with your complaint.

3.4 The Governing Body recognises that complaints may provide helpful insights and feedback for the Directors and staff, and as such support improvement in processes and practice.

Resolving complaints

4.1 At each stage in the procedure we want to consider the ways in which your complaint can be resolved which may include acknowledging that your 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.

4.2 At each stage you will be asked to state what action you feel might resolve the issue.

Vexatious complaints

5.1 We define vexatious complaints as follows:

- Complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious;
- Insistence upon pursuing complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason;
- Insistence upon pursuing complaints in an unreasonable manner;
- Complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance;
- Demands for redress which lack any serious purpose or value.

5.2 We may judge your complaint to be pursued in an ‘unreasonable manner’ where your frequency of contact with Queensberry Alternative Provision hinders the consideration of the complaint and/or impedes the ability of the Directors to meet the needs of all students equitably.

5.3 Where the Directors, and/or the Governing Body, or other nominated Trustee judges a complaint to be frivolous or vexatious, having considered all the relevant circumstances, s/he will take such actions as they consider appropriate which may include rejecting the complaint and/or restricting contact between you and us.

5.4 Any such decision will be communicated to you in writing with the reasons for it.

5.5 Where you seek to reopen a matter the same as, or similar to, a matter previously considered under the procedure the Governing Body may inform you that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter is closed.

Stages of the Procedure

6.1 Many concerns and minor complaints can be resolved quickly and informally through the coaching staff or Directors, depending upon the nature of the complaint. Unless there are exceptional circumstances every effort will be made by Queensberry Alternative Provision to have a full discussion with you and resolve the issues informally before moving into the formal stages of this procedure.

Stage 1 (Informal) Initial concern

6.2. You should raise your concern/issue by appointment with one of the Directors as soon as possible. The purpose of the meeting should be to establish the nature of the concern and to seek a realistic solution to the problem. Where a particular member of staff is the subject of the complaint you may choose to have your concerns addressed by a different member of staff.

6.3 If your concern is not resolved through such discussion you should seek an appointment with the other Director. The purpose of this meeting is to establish the nature of your ongoing concern and hopefully resolve it to your satisfaction.

6.4 You should note that individual Trustees are unable to act on a complaint outside of the procedure set out in this document.

6.5 If initial attempts to resolve your issues informally are unsuccessful and you remain dissatisfied you may wish to invoke the formal complaints procedure set out below.

7. Stage 2 (formal)

7.1 If you remain dissatisfied either with the way in which your concerns have been handled or your issue remains unresolved you may wish to ask an appropriate third party as decided by the Directors to hear your complaint.

7.2 The Directors may ask another member of staff to assist with collating information as part of the investigation but the decision on the action to be taken will be made by the Directors

7.3 Your complaint should be made in writing on Queensberry Alternative Provision's complaint form which you may download and print from our website or obtain from and return to the office addressed to the Directors

7.4 The Directors, or other member of staff nominated by him/her, will contact you within 10 working days of receiving your complaint, or as soon as is reasonably practical to arrange a meeting with you at a mutually convenient time. You may bring a friend or representative to you at this stage. Where necessary the Directors, or other nominated member of staff, will carry out a full investigation into the issues raised. At our sole discretion Queensberry Alternative Provision may appoint an external person to impartially investigate the complaint. The Directors will give a written response to you within 10 working days of this meeting or as soon as is reasonably practical thereafter. Where you decline the offer of a meeting this response will be made as soon as possible after you notify us that you do not wish to meet. Normally this will be within 10 working days. Where you remain dissatisfied with this response, the complaint should move to the third stage of the procedure.

7.5 Where your complaint is against the Director(s), the Governing Body, the complaint will move straight to the third stage of the procedure.

Stage 3 (formal) Complaint heard by the Governing Body/other governor

8.1 If you are not satisfied with the response of the Directors or where paragraph 7.5 applies, you should write to the Governing Body. Complaints against the Chair of the

Governing Body or any individual Trustee it should be made in writing to the Cheshire West Council. You must not contact individual Trustees at their home address.

8.2 The Trustee should contact you within 10 working days to offer to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss your concerns.

8.3 The Trustee will review the investigation and the Director may confirm this decision or reach a different decision. The Trustee may choose to reinvestigate the complaint in whole or in part or commission an independent investigation.

8.4 Where paragraph 7.5 applies the Trustee will conduct an investigation into the complaint. S/he should take appropriate advice in doing so.

8.5 The Trustee will communicate his/her response in writing to you as soon as possible but, in any case, within 10 working days of the meeting referred to in paragraph 4.2. If this is not reasonably practicable, you will be informed in writing, with reason(s) for the delay.

8.6 Where you decline the offer of such a meeting the Trustee will inform you of the outcome of the investigation within 10 working days of your notification that you do not wish to meet or as soon as is reasonably practicable afterwards.

8.7 Where you are dissatisfied with this response the complaint should move to the appeal stage of the procedure.

Opportunities to Request a Review

Complaining to the Secretary of State

10.1 If you believe that the Management Committee has acted unreasonably you can complain in writing to the Secretary of State for Education.

Email: ministers@education.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 7925 5065

The Role of the Cheshire East Information Advice and Support Service

11.1 If the Complainant remains unsatisfied with the outcome of the Complaint at the conclusion of Stage Three, he/she may raise the Complaint with the Education and Skills Funding Agency ("ESFA"). Preferably, the Complainant should put the Complaint to the ESFA in writing. 7 of 10

The Complaint can be submitted electronically using the Schools Complaint Form on the Department of Education's website, or alternatively by sending it to the address below:

Ministerial and Public Communications Division Department for Education Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD Further information about submitting a complaint to the ESFA can be found on its website.



Name of Complainant	
Complainant's Address	
Complainant's contact number	
Relationship to Queensberry Alternative Provision	
Reason for complaint	

Details of complaint

