



Complaints Procedure

Date Policy Originated/Amended	Date Policy Approved by GGS Governing Body / Board of Directors	Signature
August 2011	08/12/2011	G Ralph
February 2012	21/05/2012	G Ralph
March 2013	27/03/2013	G Ralph
March 2015	31/03/2015	K Winstone
March 2016	23/03/2016	G Ralph
June 2018	25/06/2018	G Ralph
March 2021	25/03/2021	

[For review by the TDET Board of Directors]

[Next review due – 2023]

THE DECUS EDUCATIONAL TRUST

Complaints Procedure

Academy Trusts are required to have procedures by which concerns and complaints relating to their schools will be dealt with. These procedures cover complaints against an individual; the general operation of the schools; and matters regarding the schools' curriculum and educational provision. Matters relating to exclusions and admissions have their own separate processes.

Aims of the Procedure

- To set out simple steps to be used for making a complaint about a school within the Trust
- To establish impartial procedures to be followed by a school when dealing with a complaint
- To establish the procedures for escalating a complaint
- To inform and support the effective management of each school within the Trust

Complaint Procedure

Stage 1 – Informal

It is expected that the majority of complaints can be dealt with informally with the person who is most closely involved with the cause for concern. This may be with a teacher, member of the support staff or any member of staff with jurisdiction over the area of provision that has given rise to the concern. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response to their complaint then they should move to stage two.

Stage 2 – Formal

The complainant should write formally to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will acknowledge receipt of the complaint.

An investigation will be carried out by a member of the Senior Leadership Team who will offer the complainant a meeting and who will speak to others involved. Whenever reasonably possible, the meeting with the complainant will take place within 15 school days of the written complaint being received

The investigator will put her/his findings in writing and will indicate what, if any, steps should be taken to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done within 15 school days of the meeting with the complainant.

Any complaint relating to a Headteacher, Chief Executive Officer or the actions of a Local Governing Body must be raised in the first instance with the Chair of the Board of Directors (or Vice-chair in the absence of the Chair) who will, if an informal resolution cannot be reached, designate a Director to investigate in the same way as in the first stage of the formal process outlined above.

Stage 3 – Local Governing Body

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the investigator, they should write to the Clerk of the school's Local Governing Body requesting that the complaint be considered by the complaints sub-committee of the Local Governing Body which will comprise at least three people and which will include one person who is independent of the management and running of the school. That request must be made within 10 school days of the response being sent to the complainant and must set out briefly the reasons why the complainant is dissatisfied with the response.

The Clerk will invite the school to put in writing its response to the complainant's reasons. The school will do this within 15 school days and at the end of that period (whether or not the school has responded) the Clerk will convene a meeting of the LGB complaints sub-committee. That meeting will be held as quickly as practicable given the need to find a date that is reasonably convenient for the complainant, the school and the members of the sub-committee. Whenever possible, the meeting will be held within 15 school days of the end of the school's response time. At any meeting, the complainant will be entitled to be accompanied by a friend but legal representation will not be allowed.

The meeting is not a court case and will be as informal as circumstances allow. The complainant will have the opportunity to put her/his reasons for dissatisfaction and to enlarge on them but may not introduce reasons that were not previously put in writing. The school will have the opportunity to put its side of things and each side, as well as the sub-committee members, will be able to ask questions. The complainant will have the opportunity to make final comments to the sub-committee members.

The sub-committee may make findings and recommendations and a copy of those findings and recommendations will be

- sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about
- available for inspection on the school premises by the Academy Trust and the Headteacher

The sub-committee will formulate its response as quickly as reasonably possible, aiming to do so within 10 school days, and the Clerk to the Local Governing Body will notify all concerned.

If a complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the Chair of the Local Governing Body may write to the complainant to inform him/her that the procedure has been completed and the matter closed.

For complaints relating to a Headteacher, Chief Executive Officer, the actions of a Local Governing Body or where a matter relates to the wider Trust rather than an individual school the process for stage 3 will be conducted as above, but at Board of Directors sub-committee level, with communication through the Company Secretary.

Anonymous Complaints

The expectation is that the name and contact details of the complainant must be included with a complaint. However it is acknowledged that anonymous complaints may be received from time to time.

Complaints received from anonymous sources will be recorded but not investigated unless the complaint relates to safeguarding. In cases related to safeguarding the matter will be investigated however it will not be possible to provide feedback to the complainant or to establish if they are satisfied with the way the complaint has been handled.

Serial or persistent complainants

If a complainant attempts to reopen an issue or a closely related issue that has already been dealt with under this complaints procedure, the Chair of the Local Governing Body may write to the complainant to inform him/her that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter closed. Further, that continued correspondence is vexatious and the school will not respond to any further correspondence on this issue or a closely related issue.

In exceptional circumstances, where in the opinion of the Chair of the Local Governing Body, acting reasonably at all times, he/she considers that the volume of complaints by an individual are excessive so as to impose a disproportionate burden on the staff and Governors at the school, the Chair of the Local Governing Body will inform the complainant that the actions of the complainant are vexatious and the school will not engage in further correspondence with the complainant on matters raised.

Record Keeping

A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a sub-committee hearing.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 requests access to them.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA, a division of the Department for Education (DfE)) carries out certain functions in relation to Academy Trusts on behalf of the Secretary of State. The ESFA has a duty to consider complaints from parents of pupils at academies where the complaint policy has been exhausted without resolution. In these circumstances the complainant can complain to the ESFA and the complaint will be considered in accordance with the procedure outlined on the DfE website.

If you wish to contact the ESFA , you should write or e-mail to:

Academies Central Unit (Academy Complaints)
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Earlsdon Park
53-55 Butts Road
Coventry CV1 3BH

E-mail: academyquestions@esfa.education.gov.uk