Child Friendly Complaints

UNCRC Article 12: *Children can share their views about decisions, care, or mistreatment, and adults must listen and take them seriously.*

Our Aim

Kilmarnock Academy believes that every young person has the right to be listened to, have their views taken seriously and to be supported when something does not feel right. We are committed to making it safe and straightforward for children to raise a concern or make a complaint.

Our approach is based on listening, respect, support and clear communication. Children should know who they can speak to, understand what will happen next and be given appropriate opportunities to participate in the process. We recognise that young people may communicate in different ways and may need different forms of support. Wherever possible, we will work with the young person to make communication accessible and appropriate to their needs.

Why This Matters

A child-friendly complaints process helps young people understand that their voice matters and that raising a concern is a positive and appropriate way to seek help or bring about change.

Our approach aims to ensure that young people are not disadvantaged because they find it difficult to speak up, do not know who to approach or need support to explain what has happened.

The school will respond sensitively and will consider the young person's views and best interests throughout the process.

Our Commitments

- We will listen to children and young people's views.
- We will take concerns seriously and respond appropriately.
- We will help young people identify a trusted adult they can speak to.
- We will allow young people to have someone they trust support them.
- We will offer appropriate choices about how they communicate, where possible.
- We will explain what will happen and keep young people informed.
- We will treat information sensitively and maintain privacy as far as possible.
- We will consider young people's views and best interests when responding to concerns.
- We will use young people's feedback to help us improve our guidance and practice.

What This Means for Our Young People

Young people do not have to manage a concern on their own. If something does not feel right, they can tell a trusted adult. This could be a member of school staff or another adult they feel comfortable speaking to.

The first step is to tell someone what is worrying them. We will listen and, where possible, try to resolve the concern quickly. If a young person remains unhappy, the concern can be considered through the formal complaints process. The school's child-friendly guide explains the stages in language designed to be clear and accessible.

Our Complaints Approach

Stage 1 – Responding

Stage 1 is intended to provide a prompt response and, where possible, resolve the concern quickly.

Stage 2 – Investigation

If the complaint is not resolved, it can move to Stage 2. This involves a more detailed investigation and the young person, or person supporting them, will be told what has been decided.

Independent Final Stage

Following the school's formal complaints stages, information can be provided about the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) which is the independent final stage of the complaints process.

Support, Privacy and Safeguarding

We will treat what a young person tells us sensitively and keep their information private as far as possible. However, there may be circumstances where information needs to be shared to keep the young person or another person safe, or because the law requires this. Where appropriate, the school will explain what needs to be shared and why.

Complaints are not a substitute for child protection procedures. If a young person believes that they or another young person is in danger or may be being harmed, they should tell an adult straight away. Such concerns will be dealt with through the school's child protection procedures.

Young People as Partners in Improvement

Kilmarnock Academy believes that young people should have opportunities to contribute to the development of processes that affect them. We will therefore seek young people's views on whether our complaints guidance is clear, safe and easy to use. Their feedback will help us review and improve our approach.

Relationship to Our Child-Friendly Guide

This position provides the school's formal statement of its approach. It is supported by the child-friendly complaints guide, *'Your Voice Matters – Raising a Concern or Making a Complaint at Kilmarnock Academy'*. The guide provides young people with an accessible explanation of how to raise a concern, what support they can expect and what happens if a concern progresses through the formal complaints process.

Review

Kilmarnock Academy will review this position and the accompanying child-friendly guidance to ensure that they remain clear, accessible and consistent with the relevant complaints handling guidance and the needs of our young people.