



Introduction

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This complaints procedure sets out the process for making a complaint about conduct, services or information provided by Sinclairtown Parent Council alone.

The Parent Council will have a designated person who will handle complaints; this will be the Chair in most circumstances. The designated person is responsible for keeping a record of complaints in the Complaints Register. If it is not possible for the Chair to handle a complaint, a Vice Chair will take ownership.

Complaints or concerns about the school should be handled by the school or the local authority and parents should be directed to school and/or local authority complaints procedures.

Stage 1 - Informal complaints

It is expected that most complaints will be resolved by the designated person who has the conversation/takes the call/responds to the email. It is important to strive to have open communication and clear, honest dialogue at this stage.

Appropriate action/resolution of the issue will be discussed and agreed with the person making the complaint (complainant) and the designated person and then it will be carried out.

A meeting can be offered, with the complainant invited to bring someone to support them if they wish.

The complainant will be informed of the action taken to resolve the informal complaint within 7 working days. If they are dissatisfied with the outcome, they should be invited to make a formal complaint (which must be in writing and must state that it is a formal complaint).

If the complaint is about the actions of the designated person, this should be handled by another member of the Parent Council as appropriate, bearing in mind that people should not investigate a complaint about themselves.

Stage 2 - Formal complaints

1. Provide copy of complaints procedure

If a parent/carer wishes to make a formal complaint, they will be given a copy of this complaints procedure and asked to put the complaint in writing to the designated person. The complaint should state that it is a formal complaint. Once received, the formal complaint will be added to the Complaints Register and progress reported at Parent Council meetings, maintaining confidentiality and protecting individuals' rights to fairness, privacy and data protection.

2. Acknowledge complaint

The complaint will be acknowledged in writing by the designated person within 7 working days of receipt.

3. Investigate complaint

The designated person will then fully investigate the complaint and ask for perspectives from all those concerned. This information will be held securely, notes will be agreed as accurate by all parties and confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

The designated person will then report to the Chair/Parent Council who will consider the complaint and reach a decision on the complaint.

A written response will be given to the complainant within 21 days of receipt of the written complaint. At this stage the complainant will be advised of the decision by the designated person and of the next stage of the procedure. If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision, the next stage is to proceed to mediation.

4. Mediation

If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the Parent Council, they may ask the Chair/designated person to refer the decision to an external third party. The request for this referral should be acknowledged in writing by the designated person within 7 working days of receipt.

The external third party will be chosen and appointed by the Parent Council who will select an individual with relevant experience. The external third party has no legal powers but can help to clarify the situation and suggest further ways to resolve the problem. The external third party will hold a maximum of one meeting unless all parties involved agree that further meetings would be beneficial. This external third party might be the head teacher, a delegated member of the senior management team, a local authority parental involvement officer or other suitable person. The complainant can bring a supporter to the meeting if they wish to. Notes should be taken and agreed by all parties as accurate.

5. Appeal

If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the decision, and mediation has not resolved the issue, they may ask the Parent Council to review the decision at their next meeting. This decision will be final.

Record keeping

At all stages of the formal complaints procedure, a written record will be kept. All personal information will be kept confidential and secure (locked away or scanned and held securely, original destroyed securely), and only authorised members of Parent Council will have access to the record. Parent groups will need to decide what, if any, record-keeping they might need for informal complaints, bearing in mind data protection and confidentiality. Informal complaints may involve emailing or they may be made verbally so record-keeping is less clear-cut (ie is flexible, depending on the circumstances) than for formal complaints which must be in writing.

A register of formal complaints will be kept which will detail:

- the date and form of complaint (i.e. oral or written, informal or formal)
- the name of the person making the complaint when this is a formal complaint
- a brief description of the nature of the complaint



- a note of any action taken as a result of the complaint and the date when taken.









All formal complaints will be recorded and remain on file for a period of not less than 2 years. All Parent Council members will have a working knowledge of this policy. It will be shared and made available to the Parent Forum too and others with whom the parent group works.

COMPLAINTS RECORD FORM (CONFIDENTIAL)

Date of complaint	:Click or tap here to enter text.
Person to whom complaint made	:Click or tap here to enter text.
Type of complaint	Delete as appropriate Informal/Formal Oral/Written
Name of person making formal complaint	:Click or tap here to enter text.
Contact details of person making formal complaint	:Click or tap here to enter text.
Brief description of nature of complaint	:Click or tap here to enter text.
Note of any actions taken as a result, with dates and by whom the action was taken	:Click or tap here to enter text.
Signed	:Click or tap here to enter text.
Position	:Click or tap here to enter text.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FLOWCHART

A Stage 1 informal complaint may be made in person, by phone, by email or in writing. Most complaints can be resolved at Stage 1. If this is not possible, then move to Stage 2. It is a good idea to have a **designated person** on your Committee/Parent Council to deal with complaints. Please refer to the Complaints Procedure. A Stage 2 complaint must be made in writing/by email to the designated person. Complainants can go straight to Stage 2.

Stage 1 Informal Complaint		Stage 2 Formal Complaint/ investigation
		
Always try to resolve the complaint quickly and to the complainant's satisfaction wherever possible		Investigate when the complainant is still dissatisfied after communication of decision at Stage 1
		
Consult with office bearers and other Committee/PC members as appropriate and provide a written decision on the complaint within seven working days		Send acknowledgement of complaint within seven working days
		
Is the complainant satisfied with the decision?		Provide the decision as soon as possible, but within 20 working days, unless there is a clear reason for extending this timescale which should be explained to the complainant.
	No – send copy of complaints procedure to complainant	
Yes		Communicate the decision in writing and advise the



		complainant on options of mediation or appeal
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Complaint closed and outcome recorded, notes kept securely on file for 2 years		Complaint closed and outcome recorded, notes kept securely on file for 2 years