

Information Sheet: Complaints Policy

Sheiling School Ringwood – Updated September 2011

This information sheet details how parents, staff, pupils or others can make a complaint.

The following are the principles the school adheres to in relation to complaints...

- The School will endeavor to deal swiftly, efficiently and confidentially with all types of complaint.
- The school **will** recognise the integrity of each pupil, parent, representative, co-worker, employee or member of the public.
- The School **will** ensure that any person involved in the complaint itself will not be part of the group responsible for its investigation consideration and response.
- The correct procedures as laid down in the Complaints Procedure will be followed.
- If the Principal is implicated, the Chair of Council will be involved in the investigation.
- The School expressly forbids any reprisals against individuals who have lodged a complaint.
- Complaints will be documented and logged according to standard 4 and 5 of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools and will include a process which tracks the action taken and the outcomes. (See appendix 3 and 4)
- The Principal will annually review the records of complaints to check for the satisfactory operation of the Complaints Procedure and the outcome of all individual cases. The existence of patterns will be noted and acted upon.
- Serious complaints against the School or its staff will be reported to Ofsted Business Unit in Manchester.
- The School Complaints Procedure *will* be available as a stand-alone document which is distributed to all placing authorities and the policies and procedures will be incorporated in the relevant handbooks given to all staff. Each pupil will be given a communication book using individually appropriate language, symbols or pictures. The Parents Handbook holds a section on Concerns and Complaints specifying the procedure.
- All informal concerns and complaints are logged in the school's Complaints Log Book held in a confidential locked cabinet in the Principal Office.
- The Complaints Log Book will be made accessible for inspectors and to the Registration Authority on request.
- Matters which concern possible or suspected abuse, neglect or other Child Protection issues will be referred to the Designated Senior Person (Child Protection Officer).

Staff Training and induction..

Staff training in complaints procedures will cover the following areas;

- What constitutes a complaint
- When to raise a concern or formal complaint.
- What the procedure is for dealing with a formal complain in the school and how this is recorded
- To whom a complaint should be made to outside of the school
- The procedure to be followed should a complaint not be resolved
- How the child can be assisted in making a complaint.

Complaints Procedure

A complaint can be a concern about or dissatisfaction with a service within the school or issues generated by the activities of pupils, staff, contractors or visitors related to the school. Complaints can be raised by any pupil, member of staff, parent, placing authority or member of the public.

It is expected that most situations can be resolved on an informal basis. However, if this is not the case then the formal complaints procedure is as follows:

Stage one: All complaints should be directed, in writing if possible, to the Principal. Where the complaint involves the Principal, the complaint should be directed to the Chair of the School Council.

A response will be made, also in writing, within five working days of receipt of the complaint. The response will indicate any intended actions and the timescales thereof.

The written response will be sent to:

- The person who made the complaint
- Where appropriate, the person on whose behalf the complaint was made
- Any other person who is otherwise involved or affected.

Any consideration of a complaint is separate from any action that may be necessary under the school disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Only those staff directly involved will be informed of the complaint and of any of the actions taken, either during or on completion of the procedure.

Stage two: If the complainant is dissatisfied with either the response or the actions taken, they should request, in writing, that the original complaint be reviewed by the School Council. This request should be made within 20 school term working days of receiving the response from the Principal, and be addressed to the Chair of the School Council.

The Chair of the school council will set up a review panel consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the previous consideration of the complaint and one of these three people will be independent of the management of the school. The complainant will be invited to a hearing with the panel, within 20 school term working days of receiving the written request, at which time the complaint and the response will be considered in confidence. Any parent is allowed to attend the review panel and be accompanied if they wish. The panel may decide to uphold the Principal's response in whole or in part, uphold the original complaint in whole or in part, decide appropriate action to resolve the conflict, and/or recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems do not recur. The panel's decisions are final. The panel's decision will be notified to all parties concerned within 10 school term working days after the hearing.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the review panel's decision, they can take their complaint to Ofsted National Business Unit, Royal Exchange Buildings, St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7LA tel: 08456 40 40 40

Every pupil, member of staff, parent or any other person involved, is reminded that they can at any point access the complaints procedures of their placing authority.

Complaints from Pupils

- The School recognizes both the necessity and the challenge of enabling all its pupils to access a Complaints Process. We will continually endeavor to improve our attempts. (see Appendix 1)

- Pictures and photographs and other forms of augmented communication (sign language, PECS) will be used to bring awareness of the possibility of making a complaint at appropriate times for those with severe communication difficulties.
- Pupils can and should complain to any co-worker or member of staff they feel close to or supported by. This person is duty bound to inform the teacher, houseparent or Line Manager. The person may also pass the complaint on to the Independent Visitor or a member of the Management Group.
- Any complaint from a pupil will be handled in the manner of the above complaints procedure and be recorded in the school's Complaints Log Book.
- In cases of suspected abuse the incident should be reported to the Designated Senior Person (Child Protection Officer) - see Child Protection Procedures. The following sheet will be made available to all children and students in the Sheiling School together with a symbol one for those children who can't read.

To all Children and Students

If you have a concern or are worried about something which is happening to you, you may need help or need to know where to seek help, you may just want to talk over something which is troubling you. If so.....

Who is available in School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your personal co-worker • your house parent • your teacher • your LSA • the Principal • A Management Group member • the School Nurse <p>These people are always available but remember you can speak to any member of staff</p>
	<p>Corine van Barneveld is the Designated Senior Person (Child Protection Officer) She is specially available to help all pupils:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Corine van Barneveld 01425 482483 or 07848 028532</p> <p>Co-workers and staff are here to listen and help and will try to do what they can.</p>
Outside school	your parents
	Chairperson of the School Council who is Catharine Symington Telephone: through school reception on 01425 477488
Your Independent Visitor	Their addresses can be obtained at our Office Reception.
Child Help Line	Displayed on Office notice board.
The Local Authority complaints Officer	The Complaints Officer Social care and Health Directorate County Hall Colleton Park Dorchester Dorset, DT1 1XJ
Natural Voice	PO BOX 253 LEEDS LS1 3RA Tel. 0113 242 9767

Dissatisfaction with outcomes.

Where the pupils, his/her parent, representative, or friend is dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaints process, the school will support the right of those persons to use the Social Care and Health Directorates complaints procedure, which may then be instigated if the Service User or representative so wishes. It is the right of the Service User to complain directly to the S.C.H.D. without going through the School's own procedure.

Many Local Authorities have Complaints Officers in post and the School will provide names and addresses as required.

For Dorset, the address to contact is listed above.

Cause for Concern

The School's Complaints procedure deals effectively with complaints from pupils, parents, staff and visitors. On a day to day basis issues may arise that need further discussion or explanation. These issues can be with regard to difficulties with a child, attitude of staff member or simply a misunderstanding between people.

The School expects of its staff members that they will endeavour to rectify any of these issues informally. If this proves difficult staff should feel free to use the 'Cause for Concern' form (see appendix 2) and pass this onto the Head of Care.

The Head of Care holds a central file for the forms and details of actions taken are recorded. In some cases the Head of Care may need to pass on details of the concerns to the supervisors of individual staff members to take issues further if this is deemed necessary.

SHEILING SCHOOL RINGWOOD

CAUSE FOR CONCERN

REPORTED BY:

DATE:

CONCERN:

REPORTED TO:

OUTCOME:

COMPLAINTS FORM FOR PUPILS

<u>Name of pupil</u>	<u>Date.</u>	<u>Form filled in by:</u>
<p>Nature of complaint.</p> <p>Transport Bullying Practice Communication Accomodation Food Other</p>		
<p>How urgent is action needed?</p> <p>Action to be taken/already taken.</p>		
<p>Who else has been or needs to be informed?</p>		
<p>Have parents been informed? And who by?</p>		
<p>Any further information. (Does Ofsted need to be informed?)</p>		
<p>Has the situation improved?</p> <p>If not, has the pupil been given the opportunity to complain further?</p>		
<p>Signed:</p>		
<p>Signed by pupil:</p>		

Sheiling School Complaint monitoring form standard 4

Complaint from parent, member of staff or other:	
Letter of acknowledgement send:	date:
Date:	
Member of staff completing:	
Role of staff:	
What is the exact nature of the complaint?	
Who is going to do something about this?	
What action has been taken?	
Where is evidence that action has been taken?	
Is the person making the complaint happy with the outcome?	
Was the complaint held? Yes	No
If yes, describe action taken:	
Letter sent to end process?	Date: