



## COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

The Academy's Compliments, Comments and Complaints Officer is: The Headteacher  
[reception@torbridge.net](mailto:reception@torbridge.net) 01752 207907.

### Introduction

We aim to provide the best possible service in everything we do. This Policy outlines how you can tell us when we have delivered a good service as well as providing a way for you to contact us with any compliments, concerns or complaints. Your feedback will help us to continuously improve the way we do things so we can continue to build excellent relationships with all our parents/carers and wider community members.

In addition you are also invited to access the 'Parent View' option on the Ofsted website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

We are committed to encouraging feedback from everyone and will respect and cater for differences in age, gender, race, culture, religion, language, literacy, disability or sexual orientation. We will treat everyone fairly.

Compliments, comments and complaints can be made through a variety of channels:

- Via our website, go to About Us and Policy Documents to view the policy and relevant forms
- Call us on the contact number given above
- E-mail us on the contact e-mail given above
- Write to us Tor Bridge High, Miller Way, Plymouth, PL6 8UN

If making a complaint please provide us with the following information so that we can deal with it effectively for you:

- What the problem is
- How and when it occurred
- How it has affected you
- What you consider we should do to put it right

Various forms are contained within this policy to use as appropriate.

Timescales are included within the policy and you should refer to this document for clarification.

We will not provide a written response if you have given a compliment, comment or complaint in person and the issue has been resolved satisfactorily at the point of notification.

If you contact us to give us your feedback we will send you a very brief form asking you for comments about how well this procedure worked for you. We would be very grateful if you would take the time to reply. We will use your responses to ensure we make it as easy as possible for everyone to give us feedback.

We are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially. We do not expect our staff to tolerate behaviour which is unacceptable - for example, abusive, offensive or threatening and we will take action to protect our staff from such behaviour; including reporting the matter to the police or taking legal action. This also applies to any stages within this Policy.

Learners as well as parents/carers have legitimate rights to express concerns or to make complaints, but maturity and understanding will vary from child to child. Therefore, the school will consider any complaint on its merits. Please note that a person does not have to be a parent/carer or a learner at the school to make a complaint. Please also note that anonymous complaints cannot be examined under this complaints procedure.

Governors have an important role to play in considering complaints. However, it is important for parents/carers to understand that individual Governors must not investigate complaints outside this procedure. All complaints should be addressed to the school complaints officer in the first instance whose details are recorded above.

Please note that should a complaint, informal or formal; reveal an issue for which other procedures exist (for example, child protection) then it will be dealt with under those procedures rather than as a complaint.

### **Stage 1 - Informal Resolution**

Many enquiries and concerns can be dealt with satisfactorily by an individual teacher, the Headteacher or other members of staff without the need to resort to a formal procedure. The school values informal meetings and discussions.

There is no suggested time-scale for resolution at this stage given the importance of dialogue through informal discussion although it would be expected that most issues would be resolved within 10 school days. Should this informal stage require more time, the school will inform the complainant of this in writing as soon as this is known.

Please note that 'in writing' means a letter or an email although formal complaints should be started by completing the complaints form in Annex 2. The final report of any formal investigation will also be sent in paper form.

Should the face to face discussions appear unlikely to resolve matters, either party may initiate a move to the next stage (Stage 2 below) of the procedure. A copy of the Academy's complaints policy will be forwarded to the complainant at this stage; if not provided as part of Stage 1.

### **Stage 2 - Formal Written Complaints**

The complainant should set out the precise nature of the complaint on the form Annex 2 provided and return this to the complaints officer. The complainant should keep a copy of this form and all other relevant correspondence.

Should a complaint be about a general matter, the complaints officer may be able to respond immediately, e.g. if it only requires an explanation of Academy policy. For complaints that relate to specific actions or events, there is likely to be a need for further investigation in order to clarify the facts. The Complaints Officer or their nominee will normally undertake this investigation. This course of action will be relayed to the complainant either verbally or in writing.

However, if in the early stages of the investigation, the complaints officer considers that the complaint is best dealt with at Stage 3, it will be passed to the Chair of Governors (or to the Clerk to the Governing Body for the Chair's attention) and the complainant informed of this action without delay.

Should the Complaints Officer or a governor be the subject of a complaint, these will be dealt with under Stage 3 below. The complainant should send the form for the attention of the Chair of

Governors via the Clerk to the Governing Body c/o the Academy marking the envelope 'private and confidential'.

Should the Chair of Governors be the subject of a complaint, the complainant should send the form for the attention of the Vice Chair of Governors via the Clerk to the Governing Body c/o the Academy marking the envelope 'private and confidential'.

All formal complaints will be acknowledged within 5 school days of receipt by the Clerk to the Governing Body on behalf of the Chair of Governors.

Investigations at this stage should normally be completed within 20 school days of receipt of the complaint, unless there are circumstances that require a longer investigatory period. The complainant will be informed in writing by the Clerk to the Governing Body should more time be required.

The Academy will aim to send a formal written response within 5 school days of the completion of the investigation. This gives a target of 5 school weeks for the completion of this stage of the procedure.

Following the stage 2 investigation, the Complaints Officer will decide on one of two outcomes:-

- a) Recommend that appropriate remedial action necessary to resolve the complaint be undertaken, or
- b) Confirm that all internal investigative measures have been exhausted and uphold the original informal response ie. no case to answer.

The decision is confidential to the complainant, Complaints Officer (or their nominee) and to the Chair of the Governing Body.

The complainant may take the complaint further if they are unhappy with the Stage 2 outcome by giving notice of their intention within 10 school days of their receipt of the formal outcome. This notice should be made in writing for the attention of the Chair of Governors via the Clerk to the Governing Body c/o the Academy marking the envelope 'private and confidential'.

### **Stage 3 – A Panel Hearing**

Where the Complaints Officer is unable to resolve a complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant or where there is a complaint against the Complaints Officer, or a governor, the complainant should write for the attention of the Chair of Governors via the Clerk to the Governing Body c/o the school concerned marking the envelope 'private and confidential' including copies of all relevant documents. The Clerk will be instructed by the Chair or Vice Chair of Governors to make the Complaints Officer aware of the complaint.

Should the Chair of Governors be the subject of a complaint, the complainant should send the form for the attention of the Vice Chair of Governors via the Clerk to the Governing Body c/o the Academy marking the envelope 'private and confidential'. The Clerk will be instructed by the Chair or Vice Chair of Governors to make the Complaints Officer aware of the complaint.

All formal complaints will be acknowledged within 5 school days of receipt.

A panel of three including one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the Academy must be convened by the Chair or Vice-Chair of Governors to investigate the complaint. This panel may delegate aspects of the investigation to the Complaints Officer or their nominee.

Investigations at this stage should normally be completed within 20 school days of receipt of the complaint, unless there are circumstances that require a longer investigatory period. The complainant will be informed in writing should more time be required.

The Panel will hear the outcome of the investigation. The Complaints Officer (or their nominee) and the complainant (who may be accompanied) will be invited to attend such a hearing. All attendees should be given a minimum of 5 school days' notice of the meeting and be informed of the procedures to be followed in advance.

The Academy will aim to send a formal written response within 5 school days of the completion of the investigation.

Following the Stage 3 investigation, the panel will decide on one of two outcomes:-

- a) Recommend that appropriate remedial action necessary to resolve the complaint be undertaken, or
- b) Confirm that all internal investigative measures have been exhausted and uphold the original response ie. no case to answer.

This gives a target of 5 school weeks for the completion of this stage of the procedure.

The decision is confidential to the complainant, the Complaints Officer (or their nominee) and to the Panel.

Complainants who have exhausted all school-based stages and consider that the school has not investigated the complaint in a fair and reasonable matter, may request, in writing, that the Complaints Standards Agency reviews how the school handled the complaint. Please note that this review will not investigate the original complaint.

#### **Stage 4- Appeals to the Secretary of State or the Ombudsman via the Education Funding Agency (EFA)**

Finally, complainants have a right of appeal to the Secretary of State for Education. In such cases, the EFA will examine the complaint and adjudicate. It should be pointed out that members of staff have the same right of appeal.

Should a complainant feel that there has been maladministration in the manner in which a complaint has been dealt with, this can be referred to the Local Government Ombudsman

Please note that the Ombudsman can look into complaints about how something has been done, but she/he cannot question what has been done simply because the complainant does not agree with it. The relevant addresses are:

The Secretary of State for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, Westminster, London, SW1P 3BT, Tel: 0171 925 5000

Local Government Ombudsman, The Oaks, Westwood Way, Coventry, CV4 8JB, Tel: 01203 695999

Education Funding Agency, 53-55 Butts Road, Earisdon Park, Coventry, CV1 3BH, Tel: 01370 000 2288

Owner: Director of Finance  
Review Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2018  
Next Review Date: February 2020



Annex 1

COMPLIMENT/COMMENT FORM (TELL US WHAT YOU THINK)

Please feel free to use this form to give us feedback to ensure we provide an ongoing excellent service to the young people who attend our schools. The form should be returned to Compliments/Comments/Complaints designated person given at the beginning of this Policy. We will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure (if applicable).

Your name .....

Is this? (Please tick one or more boxes)

A compliment     Suggestion     General comment

Relationship with school (e.g. parent of a pupil on the school's roll):  
.....

Pupil's name (if relevant):  
.....

Your Address:

Daytime telephone number:  
Evening telephone number:  
E-Mail address:

Please use this space to explain the details (include dates, names of staff and any other relevant information). (You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional paperwork, if you wish).

Have you told us about this before?  Yes  No

If yes, please tell us who you told and when

What do you think we should do?

How would you like us to respond?

Phone call  E-mail  Letter  No response needed

Signature :

Date :

**School use:**

**Date form received:**

**Received by:**

**Date acknowledgement sent:**

**Acknowledgement sent by:**

**Matter referred to:**

**Date:**



Annex 2

COMPLAINT FORM

The form should be returned to Compliments/Comments/Complaints designated person given at the beginning of this Policy. We will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

<p>Your name .....</p> <p>Relationship with school (e.g. parent of a pupil on the school's roll): .....</p> <p>Pupil's name (if relevant to your complaint): .....</p> <p>Your Address:</p> <p>Daytime telephone number: Evening telephone number: E-mail address:</p>
<p>Please give concise details of your complaint, (including dates, names of witnesses etc.) to allow the matter to be fully investigated: (You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional paperwork, if you wish).</p>

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint?  
(i.e. who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?)

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Signature :

Date :

***School use:***

***Date form received:***

***Received by:***

***Date acknowledgement sent:***

***Acknowledgement sent by:***

***Complaint referred to:***

***Date:***



Annex 3

**STUDENTS OF TOR BRIDGE HIGH COMPLAINT FORM**

Please complete this form and return it to the Headteacher/Clerk to Governing Body, who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

<p>Name of Student: .....</p> <p>Date:.....</p> <p>Year Group .....</p> <p>Nature of Complaint:</p>
<p>Name of witnesses:</p>

What actions you would like to be taken:

What outcome/end result would you like?:

Signature :

Date :

***School use:***

***Date form received:***

***Received by:***

***Date acknowledgement sent:***

***Acknowledgement sent by:***

***Complaint referred to:***

***Date:***