



**Rise Park**  
Academy Trust

## **Rise Park Academy Trust**

# **Complaint Policy and Procedure**

### **Policy Statement**

Rise Park Academy Trust are committed to ensuring the rights of all stakeholders are listened to and observed where they feel they are dissatisfied or have reason to complain.

The Board of Directors want stakeholders to know that they have recourse to complain and that there is a robust procedure in place where they feel they can voice concerns and issues relating to school life and that there are channels and processes in place to ensure they are listened to and acted upon without prejudice and that all complaints are responded to.

### **Procedure**

*For the purposes of this procedure a school working day is when children are present at the school.*

Schools need to be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints.

These key messages deal with complaints but the underlying principle is that concerns ought to be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures. The requirement to have a complaints procedure need not in any way undermine efforts to resolve the concern informally. In most cases the class teacher or the individual delivering the service in the case of extended school provision, will receive the first approach. It would be helpful if staff were able to address and resolve issues on the spot by dealing with them professionally and appropriately.

Should the concern not be suitably resolved then the Deputy Headteacher should be approached and the concern outlined to them so that they can seek to resolve the concern informally. If this does not prove to be successful or the complaint relates to the Deputy Headteacher then the Executive Headteacher should be approached.

If this does not lead to a satisfactory resolution then the concern should be addressed formally as a complaint see Page 2.

## **Complaints about the actions of the Executive Headteacher**

### **Informal Stage**

The complainant is usually expected to arrange to speak directly with the Executive Headteacher, except in the case of serious concerns when it may be appropriate to raise them directly with the chair of the Local Governing Body. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information. However, in certain circumstances it may be appropriate to encourage parents to put their concerns in writing and invoke the formal procedure, for example where there is continuing/constant verbalising of concerns even when the Executive Headteacher considers they have been appropriately dealt with.

### **Dealing with Complaints – Formal procedures**

The formal procedures will need to be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

Should the complainant wish to invoke formal procedures then the complaint should be put in writing to the Chair of the Local Governing Body.

The Chair will respond to the complainant confirming receipt of the complaint within 7 school working days. There may be occasions where this is impractical due to personal responsibilities, in which case this responsibility will become the responsibility of the Vice Chair.

All complaints will be investigated. The Chair is responsible for ensuring investigation of the complaint by at least two non-staff members of the Local Governing Body (Investigation Officers). The Chair may be one of these members however nobody should investigate the complaint where the complainant is personally known to the Investigation Officer thereby prejudicing any outcome.

The investigation will take account of feedback from the complainant and interviews will be held with all concerned in order to identify as many facts as possible. Any documentation to support the complaint and the informal attempts at resolution will also be requested.

These Governors will reach a conclusion relating to the complaint and will write to the complainant within 15 school working days following their final interview regarding their decision.

Where a complaint is upheld, the Investigation Officers will write to the Chair of the Board of Directors outlining the reasons that the complaint has been upheld with recommendations for action. It is then the responsibility for the chair of the trust to ensure these actions are completed in a timely manner.

If the complaint cannot be upheld the reasons will be included in the correspondence to the complainant.

Should the complainant remain dissatisfied then the complainant can write to the Chair of the Board of Directors of Rise Park Academy Trust expressing they remain dissatisfied within 20 school working days.

The Chair of the Board of Directors will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 7 school working days. In the case where the Chair may not be available this will become the responsibility of the Vice Chair.

A formal hearing will be arranged within 15 school working days where the complainant and one of the Investigation Officers from the Local Governing Body put their case to at least two members of the Board of Directors from The Academy Trust, this will not include the Executive Headteacher. Where the complainant is personally known to any of the directors then they cannot form part of the hearing panel. Where there may not be enough directors to form a panel then non staff members of the Local Governing Body in either the Infant or Junior School will be asked to hear the complaint where they have had no involvement in the complaint up to that point. The Directors will require submission of all paperwork and investigation material at least one week in advance of the hearing and copies must also be sent to the complainant. The complainant will have the opportunity to hear why the Investigation Officers reached their conclusion.

The Chair of the hearing will write to the complainant within 15 school working days following the hearing regarding their decision.

Where a complaint is upheld, the Chair will write to the Chair of the Board of Directors, unless the Chair of the Board of Directors is hearing the complaint, outlining the reasons that the complaint has been upheld with recommendations for action. It is then the responsibility for the Chair of the Board of Directors to ensure these actions are completed in a timely manner.

If the complaint cannot be upheld the reasons will be included in the correspondence to the complainant and this will be the final recourse for the complainant. Following exhaustion of this procedure the complainant can complain to the Local Authority or Ofsted should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome.

Date of Issue: September 2019

Date of Review: September 2021