



Fierté Multi Academy Trust
Placing children's rights at the heart of all we undertake

Compliments, Complaints and Comments Policy

2018-2019

Approved by: Trust Board

Date: 05.12.2018

Reviewed by: ELT

Date: November 2018

Next review due:

Date: December 2021

1.0 Availability of the Compliments, Complaints and Comments Policy

1.1 This policy will be used across each Academy within Fierté Multi Academy Trust for all compliments, complaints and comments from parents/guardians or other service users of the school.

1.2 A copy of this procedure is available from each of the school offices and on the school websites.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Compliments

It is always good to receive positive feedback. This will always be shared with staff and students in a timely way for example via briefings and briefing notes; email; in person; in assemblies.

Compliments can be given in any format the parent /carer chooses.

2.2 Complaints

We believe that our Trust provides an excellent education for all our children, and that the staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, the Trust is necessary to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents or other parties.

If any parent/guardian is unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or has any concern relating to any of the schools within the Trust, we encourage that person to talk to the child's class teacher immediately.

We deal with all complaints in compliance with guidance/regulation set out by the Department for Education, The Education Funding Agency (EFA) and The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

We have adopted a three-stage process for dealing with complaints:

- Stage 1 – Complaint heard by member of staff
- Stage 2 – Complaint heard by Headteacher
- Stage 3 – Complaint heard by Complaint Panel

3.0 Aims and Objectives

3.1 Our Trust aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. When considering a complaint, we endeavour to deal with it as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

4.0 Complaints Procedure

4.1 Our Complaints Procedure will:

- Encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- Be easily accessible and publicised;
- Be simple to understand and use;
- Be impartial;
- Be non-adversarial;
- Allow swift handling with established time limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress;
- Ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary;
- Respect people's desire for confidentiality;
- Address all the points at issue and provide effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary;
- Provide information to the Academy's senior management team to enable services to be improved.

4.2 The Trust will be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint. We will take concerns seriously at the earliest stage to reduce the numbers that develop into complaints.

4.3 Details of any complaint will be kept confidential except in so far as they need to be shared with people who might contribute to their resolution.

5.0 Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

5.1 We expect most concerns to be dealt with informally and parents/guardians are encouraged to speak to a member of staff to discuss their concerns. The formal procedures

set out below should 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.

5.2 If a parent/guardian is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing within our Trust, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school and are making good progress; a teacher will always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the child's progress.

5.3 Our Academies operate an open-door policy and as such, parents/guardians may wish to book in some time to talk to the Headteacher if this would be beneficial in resolving your concern informally.

5.4 Should the complaint be about the Headteacher, the Chair of the Local Governing Body will do all they can to resolve the issue informally through a dialogue with the persons concerned.

6.0 Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

6.1 If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis (as set out above), then parents/guardians should put their complaint in writing (using Appendix 1 attached) and hand this in to the Academy for the attention of the Headteacher.

6.2 The Headteacher will consider any such complaint seriously. The complaint will be investigated thoroughly by the Headteacher (or a person delegated to undertake the investigation).

6.3 The Headteacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

6.4 In most cases, the Headteacher will meet or speak with the parents/guardians concerned to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

6.5 The Headteacher will use reasonable endeavours to speak to or meet parents/guardians within 10 working days of the formal complaint being received.

6.6 Once the Headteacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made which will be communicated to parents/guardians in writing giving the reasons for the decision. The written decision should be provided no later than 10 working days after speaking with or meeting with parents/guardians to discuss the matter.

6.7 The Academy will hold a written record of all formal complaints, including records of meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint, and the Academy's decision. The record will be retained for 1 year after the pupil leaves the Academy.

6.8 Should the complaint be about the Headteacher, it will then be considered by the Chair of the Local Governing Board who will follow the above steps.

6.9 Only if Stage 2 proceedings fail to resolve the matter should a complaint progress to Stage 3.

7.0 Stage 3 – Complaint Panel

7.1 If parents/guardians seek to invoke Stage 3, following failure to reach an earlier resolution with the Headteacher or Chair of Governing Board's decision, in respect of their formal complaint, they may request their complaint is considered by the Complaints Panel. Such a request must be made in writing addressed to the Chair of the Governing Board, c/o the Academy. The Chair of the Governing Board will not be involved in the panel if he/she heard the original complain at stage 2.

7.2 The request for further assessment of the complaint will, for the purposes of this procedure, be known as an 'appeal'.

7.3 Parents/guardians must lodge their appeal in writing within 10 working days of the date of the Academy's decision made in accordance with the Stage 2 procedure. The parents/guardians should provide in writing the complaint(s) made against the Academy and how they believe the complaint has been unsatisfactorily resolved, along with the remedies sought in respect of each.

7.4 The Complaints Panel is only obliged to consider the complaint lodged in this 'initial submission' although they may use their discretion to consider other relevant and related matters that may subsequently arise.

7.5 Where an appeal is received by the Academy, the Academy will, within 5 working days, refer the matter to the Clerk to the Governing Board who will act as Clerk for the Complaints Panel. Where the appeal is received by the Academy during Academy holidays, or within 2 working days of their commencement, the Academy has 5 working days upon commencement of the school term to refer the matter to the Clerk.

7.6 The Clerk provides an independent source of advice on procedure for all parties.

7.7 On receipt of an appeal, the Clerk will then endeavour to convene an independent Complaints Panel hearing as soon as possible, usually no later than 20 school days after receipt of the notification from the parents/guardian that they wish to invoke Stage 3. The Panel date will be dependent upon the availability of the Panel members.

7.8 The Independent Complaints Panel will consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the complaint and one member of the panel must be independent of the management and running of the school. It is a matter for the Local Governing Body to identify suitably independent individuals who can fulfil the role and responsibility of being the independent member.

7.9 The following are entitled to attend a hearing and/or, submit written representations and address the Panel:

- The parent(s)/guardian(s) who may be accompanied should they wish this to be the case;

- The Headteacher of the Academy;
- Any other interested person whom the Complaints Panel considers to have a reasonable and just interest in the appeal and whose contribution would assist the Panel in their decision-making.

7.10 Where required, the Complaints Panel may request any reports, documents, chronology or other useful information in advance of the hearing. Evidence will be sent to and collated by the Clerk who will distribute the information to the relevant parties in advance of the hearing.

7.11 After due consideration of the facts considered relevant, the Panel will reach a decision, and make recommendations, which it shall complete within 10 working days of the hearing. The decision reached by the Complaints Panel is final.

7.12 There is no further right of appeal to the Academy Trust. All complainants have the right, as a last resort, to contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency (EFSA) if they are not satisfied with the way in which their complaint has been considered. You can contact the EFSA via their complaints form on their website.

8.0 Monitoring, Evaluation and review

8.1 The Fierté Multi Academy Trust will review this policy at least every three years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout each Academy in the Trust.

8.2 The Trust will monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly.

8.3 The Trust will take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process and make any modifications necessary to this policy.

