



Complaints Procedure Policy



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY

Policy Statement

This Policy provides guidance concerning the handling of complaints in our school in which pupils, members of staff and any other bodies are involved.

Schools need to have an open approach to problem resolution. Openness means that minor issues can usually be resolved before they escalate and require consideration under formal procedures; and major issues are readily identified and addressed accordingly.

A complaint may be defined as:

“an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more individuals about the standard of service, action or lack of action by or on behalf of the Institution.”

A complaint may relate to:

- the quality and standard of service
- failure to provide a service
- the quality of facilities or learning resources
- treatment by or attitude of a staff member, young person, or contractor
- inappropriate behaviour by a staff member, young person, or contractor
- the failure of the Institution to follow an appropriate administrative process
- dissatisfaction with the Institution’s policy, although it is recognised that policy is set at the discretion of the Institution

The definition of a complaint is very broad and the list above is not exhaustive. However, not every concern raised with the Institution is a complaint. For example, the following are not complaints:

- a routine, first-time request for a service
- a request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act or Data Protection Act
- a request for information or an explanation of policy or practice

- a response to an invitation to provide feedback through a formal mechanism such as a questionnaire or committee membership will not be treated as a complaint
- an insurance claim
- an issue which is being, or has been, considered by a court or tribunal
- an attempt to have a complaint reconsidered where the Institution's procedure has been completed and a decision has been issued
- a grievance by a member of staff which is eligible for handling through the grievance procedure
- an appeal about an academic judgement on assessment or admission.

These issues will be dealt with under the alternative appropriate processes. It should be noted, however, that some situations can involve a combination of issues, some are complaints and others are not, and each case should be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Who can make a complaint?

This includes, although is not limited to:-

- a young person's experience during their time at the Institution
- members of the public, where they have a complaint about matters which are (or which were at the time the issue arose) the responsibility of the Institution; and
- members of the public who are applying for admission to the Institution and whose complaint does not relate to academic judgement.

The basic processes for investigating complaints are the same for young persons, members of the public and applicants to the Institution. Sometimes individuals may be unable or reluctant to make a complaint on their own. The Institution will accept complaints brought by third parties, as long as the individual affected has given their personal consent under the requirements of the Data Protection Act (2018). This usually means that the individual affected must give clear written authority for the third party to act on their behalf. Complaints made by a third party with the explicit permission of the complainant will be dealt with according to the same timescales.

Who will deal with the complaint?

Mirren Park School will allocate the complaint to a specific person of the Senior Management's choice. It is important to be clear from the start of the investigation stage exactly what is being investigated, and to ensure that both the complainant and the complaints investigator understand the scope of the investigation. In discussion with the complainant, three key questions should be considered:

1. What specifically is the complaint (or complaints)?
2. What does the complainant want to achieve by complaining?
3. Do the complainant's expectations appear to be reasonable and achievable?

If the complainant's expectations exceed what the school can reasonably provide or are not within the school's power to provide, the complainant will be advised of this as soon as

possible in order to manage expectations about possible outcomes. Details of the complaint must be recorded on the system for recording complaints. At the conclusion of the investigation the log must be updated to reflect the final outcome and any action taken in response to the complaint.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a crucial factor in conducting complaints investigations. The school will always have regard to any legislative requirements; for example, data protection legislation and internal policies on confidentiality and the use of complainant information. Complaints will be handled with an appropriate level of confidentiality, and information released only to those who need it for the purposes of investigating or responding to the complaint. No third party will be told any more about the investigation than is strictly necessary to obtain the information required from them. Where a complaint has been raised against a young person or member of staff and has been upheld, the complainant will be advised of this. However, it would not be appropriate to share specific details affecting specific young people or staff members, particularly where disciplinary action is taken.

Closing the Complaint

Closing the complaint at the investigation stage: -

The outcome of the investigation will be communicated to the complainant in writing. The decision, and details of how and when it was communicated to the complainant, must be recorded on the system for recording complaints.

Responsibilities & Obligations

At Mirren Park School our responsibilities are to try and resolve all issues regarding complaints. We aim to do this to the best of our ability but if you feel dissatisfied after receiving our final decision or the way in which our school has handled your complaint, you can contact the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO).

General Complaints Procedure

If you have a complaint or wish to speak formally with a senior staff member regarding any issues or uncertainties, then please contact the following staff in the first instance:

Tony Dowling

Head of Education

Mirren Park School

6 Falcon Crescent

Paisley

Renfrewshire

PA3 1NS

Phone: 0141 404 2784

Email: anthony.dowling@youngfoundations.com

If you are not happy with the outcome of the initial grievance or complaint you should then contact the Director:

Lynette Edwards

Director of Education

Email: lynette.edwards@youngfoundations.com

If after going through our internal complaints procedure you are still not satisfied with the outcome, you may raise this directly with the appropriate local authority or regulatory body. Mirren Park School will provide you with the relevant contact details in order to do this.