



Complaints Policy

Updated: May 2023

Approved by: Chief Executive

Review date: May 2024

Elston Hall Learning Trust **Complaints Policy**

1. Introduction

1.1 We believe that our Trust provides a good education for all our children, and that the Leadership Team and other staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, the Trust and its schools are required to have procedures in place should there be occasions where there are complaints by parents. The following policy sets out the procedure that the schools follows in such cases. This policy applies to all schools within the Trust and reference to 'school' within the policy applies to Elston Hall, Palmers Cross, Edward the Elder, Goldthorn Park, Pheasey Park Farm and any other school who may join the Trust whilst this policy is in place. This policy meets the requirements set out in part 7 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which states that we must have and make available a written procedure to deal with complaints from parents of pupils at the school.

This procedure will also be followed in the event of a complaint from anyone other than a parent/carer of a pupil.

2. Aims and objectives

2.1 Our Trust and its schools aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them 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.

3. The complaints process

How to share a concern

3.1 If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at one of our schools, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the child's progress.

What to do if the matter is not resolved through informal discussion

3.2 Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Headteacher or other senior leader at the school. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage.

How to take the matter further

3.2.1 Only if an informal complaint to the Headteacher fails to resolve the matter should a formal complaint be made to the Local Governing Board. This complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far. The parent should send this written complaint to the Clerk of the Local Governing Board via the school.

The Clerk to the LGB should write to the complainant acknowledging receipt of the written request for the complaint to be heard. This acknowledgement will be sent within 5 working days and should inform the complainant of the arrangements for hearing the complaint within 3 school weeks of receiving it. The letter should explain that the complainant has the right to submit any further documents relevant to the complaint. These must be received within 5 working days of the date of the hearing to allow adequate time for the documents to be circulated.

The Local Governing Board must consider all written complaints within three weeks of receipt. The LGB will arrange a meeting of 3 or 5 Local Governors to discuss the complaint, and invites the person making it to provide any further evidence to be considered. The Local Governing Board will ensure that there is also one member of the panel is not a Local Governor and is independent of the management and running of the school. No person involved at this stage should have any previous involvement in the complaint. The complainant has the opportunity to be accompanied if they wish.

The school will be invited to provide details of the evidence of how the matter has been previously dealt with. After hearing all the evidence, the Local Governing Board consider their decision and make findings and recommendations and inform the parent of this in writing. The Governors do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction.

Who to appeal to next

3.4 If the complaint is not resolved, a parent may make representation to the Board of Trustees of Elston Hall Learning Trust through the CE of The Trust. A further meeting is then held by the Trustees who would consider all the evidence and make a further judgement in an attempt to resolve the complaint.

3.5 The Trust hope that you will be able to resolve any complaint concerning the Trust or its schools using this complaints procedure. However, if you feel that this is not the case you can make representation to the Education and Skills Funding Agency which handles complaints about academies and free schools. Further information can be found by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure>

If any parent is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with appropriately, then they are entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education. For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school> Representations to Ofsted are covered by the guidelines on this matter. You must have already followed the Trust's complaints procedure.

4. Monitoring and review

4.1 The Board of Trustees monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. This is supported by the Chief Executive who logs all formal complaints received by each school and records how they were resolved. Governors/Trustees examine this log on an annual basis.

4.2 The Trustees take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.