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# South Dartmoor Academy



## Complaints Policy September 2016

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**Atrium School**  
**Ashburton Primary School**  
**Buckfastleigh Primary School**  
**Ilington C of E Primary School**  
**Moretonhampstead Primary School**  
**South Dartmoor Community College**  
**Widecombe-in-the-Moor Primary School**



# Complaints Policy

South Dartmoor Academy believes that constant feedback is an important aspect of School improvement and raising standards.

Students, parents and staff are encouraged to share their views and opinions and any concerns they may have. People who have concerns or complaints, whether or not they are pupils or adults, should feel that they can be voiced and that they will be considered seriously.

## **There are various principles behind this Policy:**

1. There is a difference between a concern and a complaint. A concern is likely to require discussion, perhaps involving a teacher, pupil and parent, and it is hoped that it can be resolved quickly by such a discussion and appropriate action, if this does not resolve the concern, then it could become a complaint.
2. A complaint is likely to arise when there are issues of physical or emotional well-being and security, or when the Academy's stated aims or values are being ignored.
3. A breach of the law will always constitute a complaint.
4. Feedback will be actively sought from pupils (through pupil councils) and parents (through informal and formal meetings), in order to minimise complaints and maximise accountability.
5. At all stages of dealing with a complaint, pupils may always be accompanied by a parent or another appropriate adult.
6. The Executive Principals will be informed of all complaints and their outcome.
7. A written record will be kept of all formal complaints, and of whether or not they are resolved at the preliminary stages or proceed to a panel hearing.
8. In accordance with the Regulatory Requirements for the Provision of Information (DCSF Standard 6, para 6.j.), the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year will be available on request.
9. All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept strictly confidential, except where the Secretary of State or body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, requests access to them.

## **Outline of procedure to be followed:**

### **Stage 1 – Informal**

1. All complaints will normally be dealt with by an appropriate member of the Senior Staff, who will keep the Principal/Headteacher/Head of School informed.
2. Please note that it is always possible for a complaint to be made and considered on an informal basis.
3. If a complaint cannot be resolved informally, then it progresses to the next stage, when it becomes a formal complaint and is reported in writing.

### **State 2 – Formal**

1. The complaint should be made formally in writing to the appropriate member of staff.
2. The Colleague who receives the correspondence written to will document the complaint, acknowledge it in writing within seven days of receipt, and either refer it to the Principal/Headteacher/Head of School to deal with or consult with those directly involved, and aim to deal with the complaint with 10 to 14 days of the receipt of the formal letter of complaint itself.
3. The colleague dealing with the complaint will also meet with the complainant and, following any necessary investigation or actions, provide a written response to the complaint, a copy of which will go to the Principal /Headteacher/Head of School.
4. If the complaint is not dealt with directly by the Principal/Headteacher/Head of School, and if it cannot be resolved, then it can be handed over to the Principal/Headteacher/Head of School who will deal with it within seven days of first being notified that it has not been resolved (either by the colleague dealing with it or by the complainant). The Principal/Headteacher/Head of School will notify the Executive Principal/Headteacher.
5. If the complaint cannot be resolved by the Principal, the complainant will be advised of the next stage which is to have the complaint heard before a panel appointed by the Chairman of the Local Governors.

### **Stage 3 – Panel Hearing**

1. If the parents are not satisfied with the response to the complaint as dealt with at Stage 2 above then they will be invited to write to the Chairman of the Local Governors requesting a panel hearing.
2. The request for a panel hearing must be as soon as possible and in any event within seven days of the decision in Stage 2 of the complaint being notified to parents.
3. The Chairman of Local Governors will appoint a panel that will consider the complaint, within 21 days of receipt of the notification.
4. The panel will have at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, including one person who is independent of the management and the running of the Academy.
5. Parents may attend and be accompanied at the panel hearing if they wish.
6. The panel will also consider the Principal/Headteacher/Head of School's response and carry out further investigations and/or interviews as appropriate.

7. The panel will aim to reach a final decision on the complaint and recommend an appropriate action as quickly as possible, normally within seven days (and no longer than 14 days), after the panel hearing.
8. The panel will record in writing its findings and recommendations and will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant, the Principal/Headteacher/Head of School and, where relevant, the person complained about. This will normally be sent out within 21 days of the panel hearing.

**N.B. Amendments to policy with regards to EYFS:**

- We will keep a record of complaints for at least three years;
- If the provision is registered, we will notify complainants of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint.