



**Information for Parent/Carers
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints
about a child's education**

January 2016

DROYLSDEN ACADEMY

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS: PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION

The staff and governors at Droylsden Academy are committed to providing a high quality education for your child in a secure and supportive environment. Whilst all concerned strive to achieve their best for the welfare of the pupils at the Academy, it is appreciated that there may be occasions when you have concerns about your child's education or about particular incidents which have occurred at The Academy. If such a situation arises, we would ask you to follow the procedure outlined below.

GENERAL PROCEDURE FOR CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

The procedure is presented as a series of stages, in a question and answer format.

It is important that you follow through the various stages in the order in which they are given.

1. *I am concerned about some aspect of my child's school life. Who should I speak to first?*

In the first instance you should always address your concern to the members of staff who have direct responsibility for your child's welfare. At Droylsden Academy these are your child's Learning Tutor and Year Manager/Head of Year. You can contact them to arrange an appointment to discuss your concern by telephoning the Academy, writing a letter, an email or sending a note via your child. It is always best to make contact at an early stage so that any problems can be dealt with before they become major issues, and parents and the Academy can work together to find a satisfactory solution to the problem. If you are still unsatisfied you should contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

2. *I have spoken to the Learning Tutor and Year Manager/Head of Year but the situation has not improved. What should I do next?*

If you are not satisfied with the response you have received from the Learning Tutor or Year Manager/Head of Year or member of the Senior Leadership Team, you need to make an appointment to see the Headteacher, who has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Academy. You can contact the Headteacher for an appointment either by telephone or in writing. The Headteacher will listen to your concerns, investigate the matter, and then report back to you. Do bear in mind that the Headteacher will have many other responsibilities to attend to, and you may have to wait a few days before receiving a response. Obviously, if the matter is urgent, it will be attended to as soon as possible.

3. *I have been in to see the Headteacher, but I am not satisfied with the response I have received. Is there anyone else I can talk to about the problem?*

If you feel that your approach to the Headteacher has not resolved the issue as far as you are concerned, the next person you can discuss matters with is the Chair of Governors of the Academy. If you are not sure who this is, you can obtain the name and address of the Chair either directly from the Academy. At this stage of the procedure, you will be asked to put your concerns in writing if you have not already done so. The Chair of Governors will not interfere with the Headteacher's day to day management of the Academy, but will investigate whether your problem has been dealt with in an appropriate manner and report back to you as soon as possible.

4. *I have spoken to the Chair of Governors, but I am still not happy. Is there anything more I can do?*

You are now reaching the stage where your original concern is turning into a complaint about the way matters have been dealt with by the Academy. If you wish to pursue this complaint, you have the opportunity of a formal hearing before a Complaints Panel of the Governing Body. Neither the Headteacher nor the Chair of Governors will be on this panel, which will normally consist of three governors appointed by the Governing Body as a whole. There are guidelines available at <https://www.education.gov.uk/form/school-complaints-form>

5. *The Governing Body Complaints Panel have not upheld my complaint. Is there anyone else I can refer the matter to?*

The Local Government Ombudsman investigates complaints about “misadministration” i.e. cases where the recognised complaints procedure has not been properly used. However the Ombudsman cannot investigate complaints about internal Academy matters and is not empowered to overturn the decision of a Governing Body Complaints Panel which has correctly followed procedures. If the Ombudsman decides to investigate your complaint, you could wait up to 6 months to hear the result of the investigation. To make a complaint in this way use the Local government Ombudsman website or call the Local Government Ombudsman Advice Team on 0300 061 0614 – website www.igo.org.uk

If you feel that the Governing Body have acted unreasonably or illegally in coming to their decision, you can complain to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills. If you feel this to be necessary, you will need to write to the Secretary of State, giving details of your complaint and referring to Section 496 (“unreasonably”) or Section 487 (“illegally”) of the 1996 Education Act. When you make a formal complaint in this way, the Secretary of State must fully investigate it and let you know the result. The Secretary of State has the power to issue directions to the Governing Body, but you should be aware that this power is very rarely used, and that an investigation can take up to 6 months or more.

Reference to the Local Government Ombudsman or the Secretary of State will only occur under very extreme circumstances.

The vast majority of concerns and complaints will be dealt with by the staff and governors of the Academy. Please remember that they, like yourself, only want to achieve the best they can for the children in their care.

OTHER COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

In addition to this general complaints procedure, there are a number of other statutory procedures which relate to specific aspects of the education system. These may need to be followed if you have concerns about the following:

- (a) *The Academy curriculum and related matters.*
- (b) *Admission of your child to the Academy.*
- (c) *Exclusion of your child from the Academy.*
- (d) *The assessment of your child’s special educational needs.*

If you require more information about any of these procedures, you should contact either the Headteacher or Education Services at Tameside Council.

Most concerns that parents have on a day-to-day basis do not necessarily fit into one of these categories and the general procedure outlined above should therefore be followed. In any case, the general procedure can still be used to deal with any concerns which fall within categories (a)-(d) until it becomes clear that recourse to the statutory procedure becomes necessary.

I am still unsure what to do. Who can I turn to for help?

If you are not sure what to do, or feel you would like some advice on how best to proceed, please contact the Headteacher of your child's school in the first instance. If you feel you would like to speak to someone who is not directly involved with the Academy, you can contact Governor and Management Support at Tameside Council (Tel: 0161 342 3028).

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