

## **REDBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL GENERAL COMPLAINTS POLICY**

Redbridge High School is committed to working in partnership with parent and carers, other agencies and professionals that support our pupils and their families and the community at large in support of achieving the aims of the school.

We recognise that there will be occasions when someone is not happy with school and wishes to raise a complaint.

This policy will outline the process whereby the school will deal with complaints it receives.

The policy is based on the following principles;

- To try and deal with issues informally wherever possible.
- Direct issues to staff who can deal with them without having to initially involve the Headteacher
- Be prepared to admit where the school has not performed as agreed
- Adapt a view of welcoming parents/carers who raise issues seeing them as advocates for their children.
- Be prepared to learn and implement change if warranted and acknowledge this to parents.
- Make parents aware of the school complaints procedures, (prospectus, website, displayed in school ) Section 29 Education Act 2002
- Always keep in mind the wish to maintain good relationships with the wider community of the school.
- Maintain a process that is impartial, non-adversarial and confidential.
- Always try to resolve complaints as quickly as possible.
- Keep any staff involved informed and review the outcomes with them.
- Where complaints fall outside the scope of the general complaints policy and procedures they will be dealt with via the appropriate procedures for that case. (see diagram below)

**COMPLAINTS**



**GENERAL COMPLAINTS**

**INFORMAL ————— DEALT WITH BY MEMBER OF STAFF**

**FORMAL ————— DEALT WITH THROUGH COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

(may have to be dealt with here  
If it relates to an individual)

**COMPLAINTS ABOUT  
STAFF / GOVERNORS**

**PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

**SAFEGUARDING**

**COMPLAINTS FROM  
STAFF ABOUT SCHOOL/  
OTHER STAFF/GOVERNORS**

**GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

(May need to be dealt with via safeguarding or disciplinary procedures)

**COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE  
CURRICULUM/COLLECTIVE  
WORSHIP**

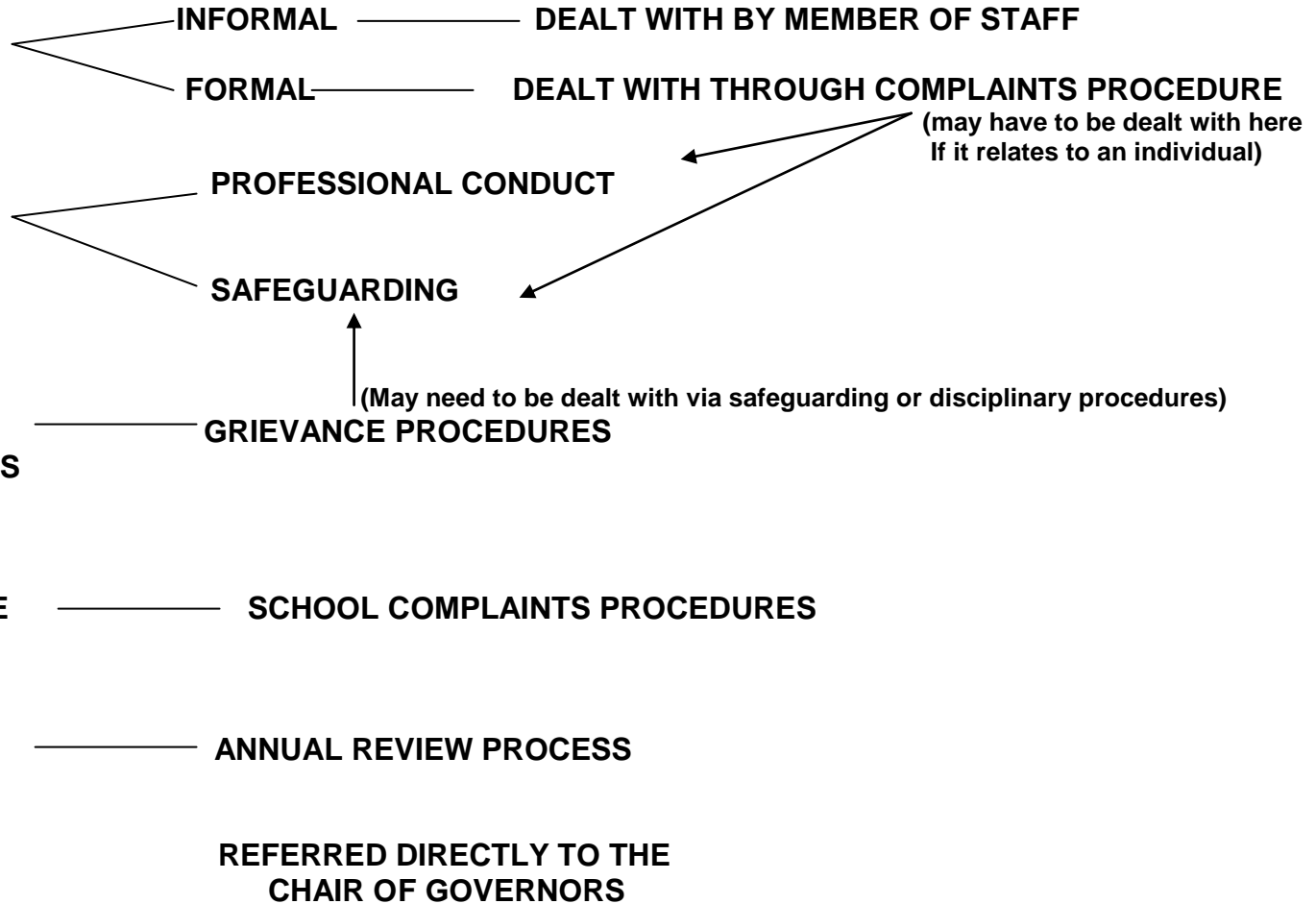
**SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES**

**SEN PROVISION  
(IF STATEMENTED)**

**ANNUAL REVIEW PROCESS**

**COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE  
HEADTEACHER**

**REFERRED DIRECTLY TO THE  
CHAIR OF GOVERNORS**



The school's formal complaints procedure falls into three parts where the school has been unable to deal with the issue informally.

**STAGE 1:** The complainant makes a formal complaint in writing to the schools designated complaints officer (the Headteacher), or in the case of a complaint relating to the Headteacher, the chair of governors will follow these procedures.

- The school will first decide if the complaint relates to safeguarding or professional conduct or if the complainant is a member of staff constitutes a grievance and follow the appropriate procedures accordingly.
- The Headteacher will respond in writing within 5 working days. Initially the response may be to outline the proposed actions to investigate or seek further information. The response or outcome to the complaint will then be notified to the complainant again within a specified time table, a maximum of 10 days, addressing particularly all factual issues raised. If the complainant responds again in writing with other issues or not accepting the initial response the school will respond again in writing. A meeting with a senior member of staff or the Headteacher may also be offered if appropriate. If it is felt a definitive response has been reached information on the additional steps complainants can take within the procedure if they are not satisfied will also be provided.

**STAGE 2:** If the complainant feels their issue has not been dealt with to their satisfaction at **Stage 1** there can be recourse to making a complaint to a committee of the governing body.

**STAGE 3:** If the complainant is still not happy with the outcome following representation to the governing body the final stage is to complain directly to the Secretary of State. Complainants will be provided with the necessary details to do so if they wish. The Secretary of State can only respond to complaints if;

*"a person believes that a governing body or LA is acting 'unreasonably' or is failing to carry out its statutory duties properly (see sections 496 and 497 of the Education Act 1996). However, intervention can only occur if the governing body or the LA has failed to carry out a legal duty or has acted unreasonably in the performance of a duty. Intervention would have to be expedient in the sense that there would have to be something that the Secretary of State could instruct either party to do to put matters right. The Secretary of State must be satisfied that a decision is unreasonable in the sense that no reasonable authority or governing body, acting with due regard to its statutory responsibilities, would have reached that decision."* (Guide to the Law for School Governors. Jan 2010)

Where a school receives a complaint about the conduct of a member of staff the school will initially make a judgement whether this could be considered a disciplinary issue or more importantly a safeguarding issue.

The School may receive complaints about the conduct of staff in relation to a number of issues. Examples can include, the manner in which staff relate to parents or others outside of school, failure to provide information or breaches of confidentiality, reports of staff behaving in a way that contravenes the school code of conduct or school procedures, financial irregularity.

Where the complaint comes under the area of professional conduct then the school will follow their agreed disciplinary procedures. This may include formal investigation that would then lead to further appropriate steps under the procedures if required.

When the school receives a complaint that can be construed as a safeguarding concern, i.e. conduct of a member of staff towards a pupil, action by a member of staff that could have put pupils at risk, or conduct of a staff member that could be construed as inappropriate e.g. misuse of information technology; then the school will refer immediately to the, '**Managing Allegations Against Staff Procedures**' issued by Liverpool Safeguarding Board.

- The school will ensure they inform the complainant about what steps have been taken to resolve their complaint. However, in the event of a sanction being issued to a member of staff following a complaint the school is not required to provide details about the process or the sanction delivered.
- It is recognised that schools can be the subject of vexatious complaints and where, following completion of the process, this is the case; the school will seek an apology from the complainant.

The governing body complaints committee will have a membership of three governors. There will be no involvement by any governor who has had previous involvement in the complaint. The Governing body will try to ensure that the procedures will help potential complainants feel comfortable and not inhibited in what can feel to be a very formal setting.

**Terms of reference for the committee are;**

- to hear appeals
- to make recommendations to resolve complaints
- to make recommendations to prevent further similar complaints.

**The remit of the committee will be;**

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or part
- Uphold the complaint in whole or part
- Recommend action to resolve the complaint

The aim will be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the complainant and the school.

The committee will be clerked. The clerk will set dates times and venue for the meeting collate information and send it to all parties, record decisions and notify the outcome to participants.

Complainants will have the option to have someone to support them during the process. If a complainant requests to have a legal representative the hearing will be postponed to allow the school to take advice or to request legal support also. The school may decide that legal representation is not appropriate in such a hearing and would take advice as to an alternative way forward if a complainant is insistent that they wish to be so represented. In any event the nominated support for the complainant is there for that purpose and not to take part in the process.

**TIMETABLE**

10 working days to lodge an appeal in writing to governors from the date of the definitive initial response to the complaint via the clerk.

The clerk will acknowledge the receipt of the written appeal within 5 working days and forward the details of the complaint and appeal to the chair of governors

The meeting will be convened within 15 working days or on a date agreed with the complainant.

The complainant will receive the decision of the complaints committee in writing within 5 working days.

The complainant and the school will be required to forward to the clerk all relevant information and notification of any witnesses they may wish to call 5 days in advance of the hearing date.

## **PROCESS.**

- Chair introduces the committee and all participants and sets out the process and principles guiding the hearing.
- Complainant presents their complaint (information previously provided or relevant witnesses)
- Opportunity for the school to respond to information presented and ask questions of the witnesses.
- Opportunity for the committee to do so also.
- School presents their response to the complaint and any actions taken including relevant witnesses if necessary.
- Complainant has the opportunity to respond and ask questions of witnesses or to query information provided.
- Opportunity for the committee to do so also.
- Complainant to make summary statement if they wish.
- School to make summary statement if they wish
- Opportunity for the committee to put any further questions or re-visit any element of the information provided.
- Committee withdraws with an undertaking to provide a written decision within the specified timescale.