



Greywood

Multi-Schools Trust

The House, Eastern Avenue, Lichfield,
Staffordshire, WS13 7EW

Registered Charity No 11885406
(registered in England and Wales)

Complaints Policy

Date Published	Review date
1 st December 2020	December 2021

Policy links to
Whistle Blowing Policy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure Data Protection

Introduction

Greywood Multi-Schools Trust recognises the importance of responding to comments, both positive and negative, which are received from parents and other members of the community. In particular, we accept the need to attempt to resolve problems before they become formal complaints.

The Trust would like to hear from parents and other members of the community if they:

- are happy with the service it provides and would like to compliment the staff and its pupils;
- have any suggestions about how the Trust can improve the quality of its provision;
- have a complaint or concern.

All complaints and suggestions will be taken seriously and given full and proper consideration.

Expressing Approval

To express approval parents and others are welcome to write, telephone, e-mail or speak personally to staff concerned or the Headteacher at any of our schools.

Expressing Concerns

Any concerns should in the first instance be raised with the member of staff involved or the Headteacher. This can be by telephone, email or letter. If the concern is about a specific incident then the date, time, location and persons involved should be identified wherever possible.

If the Headteacher considers it appropriate another member of staff may be asked to respond because they have a particular responsibility or are familiar with the circumstances that have caused the concern. We hope that this should be sufficient to resolve the difficulty.

Making a Formal Complaint

If it has not been possible to resolve a difficulty informally then it may be appropriate to use the formal complaints procedure.

We would not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Trust, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine if the complaint warrants an investigation.

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.



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Making a Complaint about the work of the Trust

A complaint against the Trust will start at Stage 3 of this process. Stage 1 and 2 refers directly to complaints against a member of staff in one of our schools. A complaint against the Trust would also include complaints against the CEO. A complaint made more than three months after the event will not be considered, except in exceptional circumstances.

The complaint against the Trust or CEO can be made in writing by letter to the Chair of the Trust Board and sent to,

Chair of the Trust Board
Greywood Multi-Schools Trust
The House
The Friary School
Eastern Avenue
Lichfield
WS13 7EW

Or by email to dwerry@greywoodmst.co.uk

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure the schools and the Trust want to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following-

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained about will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school/Trust policies in light of the complaint
- an apology

Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

Step 1 - The Headteacher

Having discussed the school concern, it may be necessary to inform the Headteacher that a formal complaint will be made. This can be done by letter or email, or arranging an appointment to meet the Headteacher.

If the complaint is against the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors should be contacted. The email or letter should be addressed to the Chair of Governors and sent to the school.

During the investigation (not against the headteacher), the Headteacher will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and /or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish.
- Keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigations.
- At the conclusion of their investigation, the Headteacher will provide a written response, unless the matter can be resolved verbally within 10 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

Step 2 - The Governing Body

If the response to the school complaint is felt to be unsatisfactory a formal complaint can be made to the governing body.



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A letter will need to be sent to the Chair of Governors (care of the school) including full details; for example, the date or period of time to which the complaint relates and confirmation as to whether the concerns have already been expressed - if so, to whom and when. This letter must be received within 5 school days of receiving the response of the complaint at stage 1. Requests made outside of the timescale will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Chair of Governors may address the matter themselves or elect to refer the matter to the Governors' Complaints Committee, particularly if the situation is a complex one - in which case complainants will be notified to this effect.

In all cases, where a formal complaint against the school has been investigated the complainant will be given a written response covering:

- the complaint
- the scope of the investigation
- the conclusion of the investigation
- any action which has resulted

The Governors may wish to offer the complainant the opportunity to discuss the response. When considering the complaint, the Chair of Governors may seek advice from the Greywood MST. However, the complainant should not contact the Trust or the Secretary of State direct until Step 2 is complete.

Step 3 - The Greywood Multi-Schools Trust

Complaints against the Trust will be considered at stage 3 of the complaints process. The complaint will be considered and a panel formed to consider the complaint. The panel will consist of 3 impartial members.

If the complainant thinks that the governors have failed to consider the school complaint properly and reasonably, the matter can be raised with the Trust.

However, it is important to understand that this is not a general right of appeal for any complainant who disagrees with the governors' decisions. If the governors have followed a proper procedure and considered the complaint reasonably, the Trust cannot reverse their decision.

If the complainant wishes to raise the matter against the school with the Trust a letter detailing clearly the reasons why they remain unsatisfied after stage 2 should be sent to:

The CEO
Greywood Multi-Schools Trust
The House
The Friary School
Eastern Avenue
Lichfield
WS13 7EW

Or email

phunt@greywoodmst.co.uk

1. The letter should be sent within 5 school days of receiving the outcome at stage 2 and explain-
 - what the complaint to the governors was,
 - what response they have made to it,
 - why it is believed that the governors have not followed a proper procedure in considering the complaint, and/or,
 - why it is felt that their consideration of it was unreasonable.



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- The CEO will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.
 - Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.
 - The Trust will first seek to assure themselves that all possible avenues of resolution at stages 1 and 2 have been explored and that the stages 1 and 2 procedures have been properly followed. This may involve meetings or telephone conversations with the complainant or with the school's staff, and records of these conversations will be kept.
2. If the Trust is satisfied that the procedures have been properly followed, they should convene a complaints panel.
- The CEO will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 15 school days of receipt of the Stage 3 request. If this is not possible, the CEO will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.
 - If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the CEO will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.
 - The complaints committee will consist of at least three governors with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint.
 - The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs.
 - If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support.
 - Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.
 - At least 10 school days before the meeting, the appointed Clerk will:
 - confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
 - request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least 5 school days before the meeting.
 - On receipt, any written material will be circulated to all parties. The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.
 - The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.
 - The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.
3. The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee can:
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part



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- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and Greywood MST with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 5 school days.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by the Trust.

Stage 4 -Secretary of State.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with how the complaint has been dealt with following the formal response, the complaint may be referred to the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at:
www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD.

Next Steps

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 2.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Greywood MST. They will consider whether the trust has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

Accepted by the Trust Board- November 2020