



## Complaints Policy

### Information for Parents

Status: Draft

Date: July 2019

Review Date: July 2021

Governor Leadership: Full governors

Executive Leadership: Executive Headteacher

Key Manager: Head of School

Core Consultation group: Parents

Wider Consultation group: Staff

What the students need to know:

- If your parents have a complaint about school, we will
  - put your needs first; as our top priority
  - listen with respect
  - take it seriously and openly
  - treat it as an opportunity to improve
  - respond honestly
  - keep working in partnership with parents to get the best for you
  - school will work for adults to agree ways to work together to support you

What every adult needs to know:

- School welcomes feedback both positive and that regarding errors or gaps in our provision- this is a way for us to keep improving

What every supporting member of staff needs to know:

- We must be honest if we- either ourselves or a colleague- make a mistake and live up to our 'duty of candour' to be truthful about provision for our pupils so that:
  - Parents can have full trust in school
  - We can identify areas for improvement and learn from mistakes, errors or gaps in provision.





**This policy will be implemented in line with the school's aims:**

That pupils will learn:

- **about the world;**
- **to be effective in the world;**
- **to be confident, caring, safe, citizens;**

*"Tis goodness not greatness that maketh the true human"- Samuel Laycock*

**This policy will also be implemented in line with the school's RESPECT values: especially those of politeness and RESPECT.**

## **POLICY GUIDANCE & PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION**

The staff and governors at Samuel Laycock School 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 school, 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 school. 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.


- **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 school this is your child's form tutor. You can contact them to arrange an appointment to discuss your concern by telephoning the school, writing a letter 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 school can work together to find a satisfactory solution to the problem.

- **I've spoken to the form tutor but the situation hasn't improved. What should I do next?**

If you are not satisfied with the response you have received from the form tutor, you need to make an appointment to see a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The SLT consists of Assistant Headteachers; Mrs Daley (for Key Stage 3), Mrs Walker (for Key





Stage 4) and Miss West (for ASC Base. You can contact a member of the SLT for an appointment either by telephone or in writing. They will listen to your concerns, investigate the matter, and then report back to you. Do bear in mind that the SLT member 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. If you have met with the Assistant Head and you require additional action then please make an appointment to see the Head of School, Miss Tinsdeall.

- **I've been in to see the Head of School, but I'm not satisfied with the response I've received. Is there anyone else I can talk to about the problem?**

If you feel that your approach to the Head of School has not resolved the issue as far as you are concerned, the next person you can discuss matters with is the Executive Headteacher of the school, Mr Foord.

- **I've been in to see the Executive Headteacher, but I'm not satisfied with the response I've received. Is there anyone else I can talk to about the problem?**

If you feel that your approach to the Head of School 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 school.

If you are not sure who this is, you can obtain the name and telephone number of the Chair either directly from the school or by contacting Governor Services at Tameside Council (Tel: 0161 342 3206). 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 school, but will investigate whether your problem has been dealt with in an appropriate manner and report back to you as soon as possible.

NB: In the case of medium to long term absence of a member of staff your complaint will be passed on to the next level to avoid delays.

- **I've spoken to the Chair of Governors, but I'm 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 school. 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 about how such a hearing will be conducted, and what you can expect to happen as a result. These guidelines are described in a separate information leaflet, "Guidance for Parents on the Conduct of Governing Body Complaints Panel Hearings", which will be sent to you by the Chair of Governors if your complaint reaches this stage.

- **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 school 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. A complaint form can be obtained from your local library or Citizen’s Advice Bureau. 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. If you feel this to be necessary, you will need to write to the Secretary of State, who will then investigate your complaint and let you know the result. However, you should be aware that such 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 school. 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 school curriculum and related matters.
- b) Admission of your child to school.
- c) Exclusion of your child from school.
- 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 of your child’s school or Governor Services at Tameside Council who will signpost your enquiry to the correct service within the 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’m 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 Head of School school in the first instance. If you feel you would like to speak to someone who is not directly involved with the school, you can contact Governor Services at Tameside Council (Tel: 0161 342 3206).

You may also find it useful to contact the Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) — an independent national advice centre for parents of children in state schools. They offer information and support on state education in England and Wales, including on exclusion from school. They can be contacted on 0300 0115 142 or at [www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk). SENDIASS (formerly Tameside Parents’ Partnership) will also be able to offer advice and support. They can be contacted on 0161 342 3383. For further information, conduct an internet search for “Tameside Local Offer”> “Families”> “Support Groups and Advice”.

