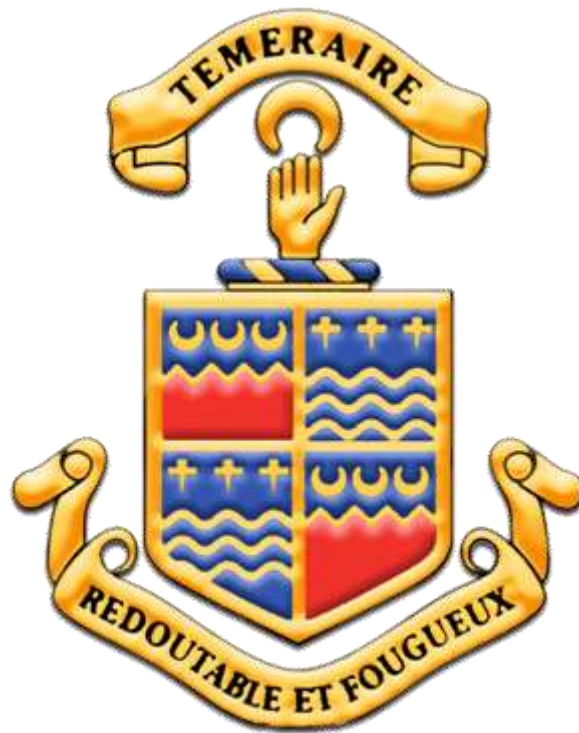


THE HARVEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL



Founded 1674

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Adopted March 2016

COMMITMENT

All the staff at the school are committed to the core purpose of the school, which is to help every pupil to achieve his full academic potential and develop all the personal skills, attitudes and attributes he will need throughout his life, in a safe and supportive environment. The school aims to work closely with parents and carers to achieve this ambition.

Occasionally, a parent may feel that this partnership is not working effectively for some reason; in this case, the school will do its very best to investigate any complaint as quickly and thoroughly as possible and act to put right any deficiency which such an investigation reveals.

Ideally, most if not all complaints will be able to be dealt with informally but this document outlines the formal procedure which will apply to address any which cannot be easily resolved. The same procedures will apply for dealing with complaints from people who are not parents of attending pupils.

PROCEDURE

Stage One – Informal

It is reasonable to assume that a parent who is dissatisfied about any area of school life will give the school the opportunity to respond to a complaint informally since there is every possibility that the matter will be resolved effectively and informally at that stage.

A parent who believes that the school or a particular member of staff is at fault in any respect should, initially, contact the appropriate member of staff which will usually be the Head of House.

However, if the issue is a Child Protection matter, it should be discussed with the school's Designated Child Protection Coordinator. If the complaint is about the Designated Child Protection Coordinator, then the issue should be referred to the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

If the complaint refers to the Headteacher, the parent should contact the Clerk to Governors who will organise for the concern to be discussed with the Chair of Governors.

Whatever the nature of the complaint, a parent should not arrive at school without an appointment and "demand" to see the Headteacher or any other member of staff. It is likely that the member of staff concerned will have existing commitments which make an immediate consultation impossible and is likely to need time to consider the detail of the complaint before being able to make an informed response.

Stage 2 - Formal

If a parent is not happy with the way the complaint has been addressed, then s/he should write to the Headteacher (or the Chair of Governors if the complaint relates to the Headteacher), indicating that it is a formal complaint and giving full details of the matter.

The Headteacher/Chair of Governors will either investigate the matter personally or refer it to another member of the Leadership Team - this senior colleague would not be the one who initially responded to the complaint. The complaint will be acknowledged (in writing) within two working days, indicating the action to be taken in investigating the matter further and the likely time scale involved. The investigation will be completed within the shortest period compatible with thorough investigation.

When the investigation is complete, the parent will be informed in writing of the school's conclusions and the action, if any, which is subsequently to be taken.

Stage 3 – Appeal

Should the parent not be satisfied with the outcome of the investigation s/he should write to the Clerk to the Governing Body (clerktogovernors@harveygs.kent.sch.uk) requesting that the complaint be referred to the Governing Body. In this case, the formal Appeals Process as outlined below will apply.

APPEALS PROCESS

- The Clerk to the Governing Body will convene a meeting of the Complaints, Appeals and Grievance Committee of the Governing Body within 20 working days.
- The Clerk will give the complainant a minimum of 7 days' notice of the date, time and venue of the meeting. A reasonable request by the complainant for an alternative date will be complied with to set a mutually convenient time for the meeting.
- The Headteacher or another senior member of staff will represent the school. The parent may be accompanied by a relative or friend if they wish.
- As it is important that the hearing is independent and impartial, the committee will be carefully selected so as to be a representative cross-section of the Governing Body, sensitive to the equality issues of gender, race and creed. Any governor who may have had a prior involvement with the complaint in question or in the circumstances surrounding it will not be selected. One of the three members of the panel will be independent of the management and running of the school.
- Where the complainant chooses to attend in person, the order of proceedings will be as follows:-
 - i. The Committee Chair will welcome the complainant and introduce those present.
 - ii. The complainant may restate the nature of the complaint if s/he chooses.
 - iii. The complainant may be asked questions by the Committee and by the Headteacher.
 - iv. The Headteacher may be asked to make a statement to the Committee regarding the complaint and may be asked questions by the Committee and/or the complainant.
 - v. The Headteacher, complainant and any friends or representatives will be asked to leave.
 - vi. After the withdrawal of the Headteacher, complainant and any friends or representatives, the Committee will consider the complaint and any relevant information in order to reach its decision as to whether the complaint should be upheld, rejected or investigated further.
- The Clerk will inform the complainant and the Headteacher in writing within 5 working days of the meeting:
 - i. of the decision reached by the Committee and the reason(s) for the decision;
 - ii. if the complaint was upheld, of any action taken or proposed, including details of any request to those complained against to take particular actions to resolve the complaint;
 - iii. where the Committee has decided to investigate the complaint further, of the steps to be taken and the progress made.
- The decision reached by this Committee at the end of its deliberations will be final.
- Where the parent is not satisfied with the response of the Complaints, Appeals and Grievance Committee, s/he has the right of appeal to the EFA – via the Department for Education's schools complaints form or by post to Ministerial and Public Communications Division, Department for Education, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD