



# School Complaints Policy

## **Introduction:**

The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or pupils, are concerns rather than complaints. Stour Valley Community School is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, there may be a need to follow the school's formal complaints procedure. For the school to be able to investigate a complaint, it needs to be made within one year of the incident occurring. If a complaint is older than a year it will not be investigated, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The prime aim of Stour Valley Community School's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Malicious complaints may incur appropriate action by the school. The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints.

## **The Stour Valley Community School Complaints Policy has five main stages.**

In summary they are as follows: -

- Stage 1 – A concern is raised informally with a staff member.
- Stage 2 – Formal complaint is heard by the complaints co-ordinator or an appropriate member of staff.
- Stage 3 – Complaint is heard by Headteacher.
- Stage 4 – Complaint is heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel.
- Stage 5 – Complaint is heard by a panel of the Stour Valley Educational Trust Board

### **Stage 1 – Raising a concern**

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will resolve the concern. We request that parents make their first contact with the student's Form Tutor or Year Leader.

Please do not arrive at the school expecting to be seen by a member of staff. In most cases this will not be possible as our first duty is to provide an uninterrupted education to our students and staff will only be available by appointment to ensure that there is no disruption to lessons. Planned meetings will also make sure that we allocate sufficient time to listen carefully to your concerns.

On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an informal but informed response within a day or two. The majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 1, please write to or call the school within 10 school working days and state why you do not think that the concern has been dealt with to your satisfaction. The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

## **Stage 2 – Complaint heard by an appropriate staff member.**

Formal complaints shall be put in writing and addressed to the Deputy Headteacher. The complaint will be logged, including the date it was received. The school will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 2 school working days of receiving it. In many cases this response will also report on the action the school has taken to resolve the issue. Alternatively, a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. This meeting will normally take place within 10 school working days. The aim will be to resolve the matter as speedily as possible. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 2 please write to or call the school within 10 school working days of getting our response. You will need to tell the school why you state why you do not think that the concern has been dealt with to your satisfaction

## **Stage 3 – Complaint heard by Headteacher**

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 2, the Headteacher will arrange further investigation. Following the investigation, she will normally give a written response within 10 school working days. If you are dissatisfied with the result at stage 3, you should let the school know within 10 school working days of getting the response.

## **Stage 4 – Complaint heard by the Governing Body’s Complaints Appeal Panel**

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 3, then you should put your complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors, at the school address, giving details of the complaint. The Chair or a nominated Governor will convene a complaints panel including at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The hearing will normally take place within 10 school working days of the receipt of the written request for Stage 4 investigation. Parents will be invited to attend the panel hearing and, if they wish, they may be accompanied. One member of the panel is independent of the running and management of Stour Valley Community School.

The aim of the Appeal Panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the Panel’s decision in writing within three school working days after the date of the hearing. The letter will also contain what you need to do if you wish to take the matter further. A copy of the panel’s decision will also be kept by the school for future inspection.

Written records will be kept of all complaints, indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing. All correspondence, statements and records of complaints will be kept entirely confidential.

**N.B.** In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of the Headteacher, the Head teacher and Chair of Governors will be informed of the complaint. The Chair will arrange for the matter to be investigated. In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of a member of the Governing Body the member will be informed of the complaint. Where the complaint concerns the Chair of the Governing Body, the complaint would be referred to the Trust Board for investigation.

**The Governors appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process.**

**Stage 5 - Complaints to Trust Board, a similar process to stage 4, but at Trust level.**

The Governing Body’s decision will usually be final. However, if you are still dissatisfied you may contact the Trust Board. Your final recourse is to complain to Ofsted.

Ofsted details:

Enquiries@[ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:ofsted.gov.uk) or call 0300 123 1231 between 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday

Online complaints: <http://live.ofsted.gov.uk/onlinecomplaints>

Written complaints:

Enquiries Ofsted  
Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann’s Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

Ratified by Governing Body	SVCS LGB
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