



COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Updated: November 2008
Ratified by GB: November 2008

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Chrysalis School for Autism are committed to providing a high quality service. We view queries, concerns and complaints positively. They give us the chance to correct any misunderstanding, to give an explanation, to offer an apology or to improve our service.

This school complaints procedure policy has been drawn up with reference to the standards outlined in regulation 7 of 'The Education (Independent Schools) and the (Standards) (England) Regulations 2003.

Other school policies which may be referred to are: Code of Ethics; Grievance Procedure; Health and Safety Procedures and Whistle Blowing.

Framework

An effective Complaints Procedure will:

- Encourage resolution by informal means.
- Be easily accessible and publicised.
- Be simple to understand and use.
- Be impartial
- Be non-adversarial
- Allow swift handling with established time limits for action and keeping people informed
- Ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary
- Respect confidentiality
- Address all points raised and provide an effective and appropriate response.
- Provide information to the Senior Management Team so services can be improved.

Approach

At the Chrysalis School we aim to deal with all worries and complaints in a positive and supportive manner. In most cases the individual child's tutor is the first point of contact and we try to deal with all concerns quickly and efficiently. If the parent/carer is not happy with the way the concern has been dealt with, the stages below offer clear guidance as to the action to be taken.

Stage 1 – initial contact with the school

Many concerns are dealt with informally when parents/carers first make them known to the school. In most cases we would expect the child's link ABA tutor to be the first point of contact, either by telephone or in person. If the parent/carer wishes to meet with the relevant ABA tutor we respectfully ask them to make an appointment to discuss the situation. This ensures that:

- we allocate sufficient time to deal with your complaint
- normal school hours are not interrupted.

If for any reason the relevant tutor is unable to meet with the parent/carer, he/she will either

- arrange an alternative appointment
- arrange for another member of teaching staff to speak with the parent/carer
- ask the Principal to meet informally with the parent/carer.

Written records will be kept of all informal complaints and will be kept confidential.

At all times we want to have an open relationship with all the parents and carers with children at the school, and as this is our express aim, we would like all complaints to be handled quickly and with a satisfactory outcome for all parties, without the need for more formal procedures. However we do appreciate that there may be times when more formal procedures are required, and in these cases such complaints will be treated as formal complaints and will be handled in one or more of the following manners.

Stage 2 –formal consideration of complaints

Parents/carers will be asked to confirm the complaint in writing to the Principal (or chair of the Board of Governors if the complaint is about the Principal) and it will be acknowledged in writing. You will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the complaint and any further details. If parents so choose; they can ask someone to accompany them to help them explain the reasons for their complaint.

We have designated a number of individuals to specifically deal with such matters and any person(s) making a formal complaint is invited to decide which of those individuals would be the most appropriate person to deal with the matter:

In the first instance:

1. ABA Link Tutor
2. Anna Wood - Head of ABA
3. Elizabeth Dun - Principal; Child Protection Office and Chair of Curriculum Committee
4. Karen Colpitts - Chair of Governors and Child Protection Governor

You may also refer to our website: www.chrysalisschool.org.uk for further details on Governors and sub-committee members.

The Principal or chair of the Board of Governors will then carry out a full investigation of the complaint and where necessary will talk to witnesses and take statements from others involved. The Principal or Chair of the Board of Governors will keep written records of all related meetings, telephone conversations and other documents, and these will be kept confidential.

Once the school has established all the relevant facts, the Principal or Chair of the Board of Governors will send a written response to the complaint within two weeks of receipt of the letter of complaint. This will give a full explanation of the Principal's or Chair of the Board of Governor's decision and the reason for it.

Stage 3 –consideration by the Board of Governors

If the complaint has already been through stages 1 and 2 and the parent/carer is still not happy with the outcome, the next step is to make a formal complaint to the governing body. Parents/carers should contact the Chair of the Board of Governors by letter, enclosing a copy of the original written complaint, indicating which matters remain unresolved. No new complaint may be included. Letters should be sent to:

The Chair of Governors, 22 Roman Way, Welwyn, AL6 9RJ, and marked 'Confidential'

The Chair of the Board of Governors then has to make provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the governing body, and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. Additionally, if such a panel is convened, at least one person will be independent of the management and the running of the school. Parents/carers will be informed by letter of the date, time and place of the meeting. They can attend the panel hearing and may be accompanied, if they wish.

The aim of the complaints review panel is to resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the parent(s)/carer(s). However, it may sometimes only be possible to establish facts and to make recommendations, which will reassure parents/carers that the complaint has been taken seriously. All those involved in the complaint procedure—the Principal, the parent/carer, the Chair of Board of Governors and, where relevant, the person complained about—will be given copies of any findings and recommendations. A written record will be made of the complaint and all the proceedings that concern it.

The clerk of the Complaints Review Panel will send the parent/carer and the Principal a written statement outlining the decision of the panel within two weeks of its convening. All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an investigation under section 163 of the 2002 Education Act requests access to them.

Record Keeping

Written records to be kept of all complaints indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing.

The record will be maintained by Dr Royce Abrahams, Bridge Cottage Surgery, 41 High Street, Welwyn, Hertfordshire AL6 9EF.

Timescale

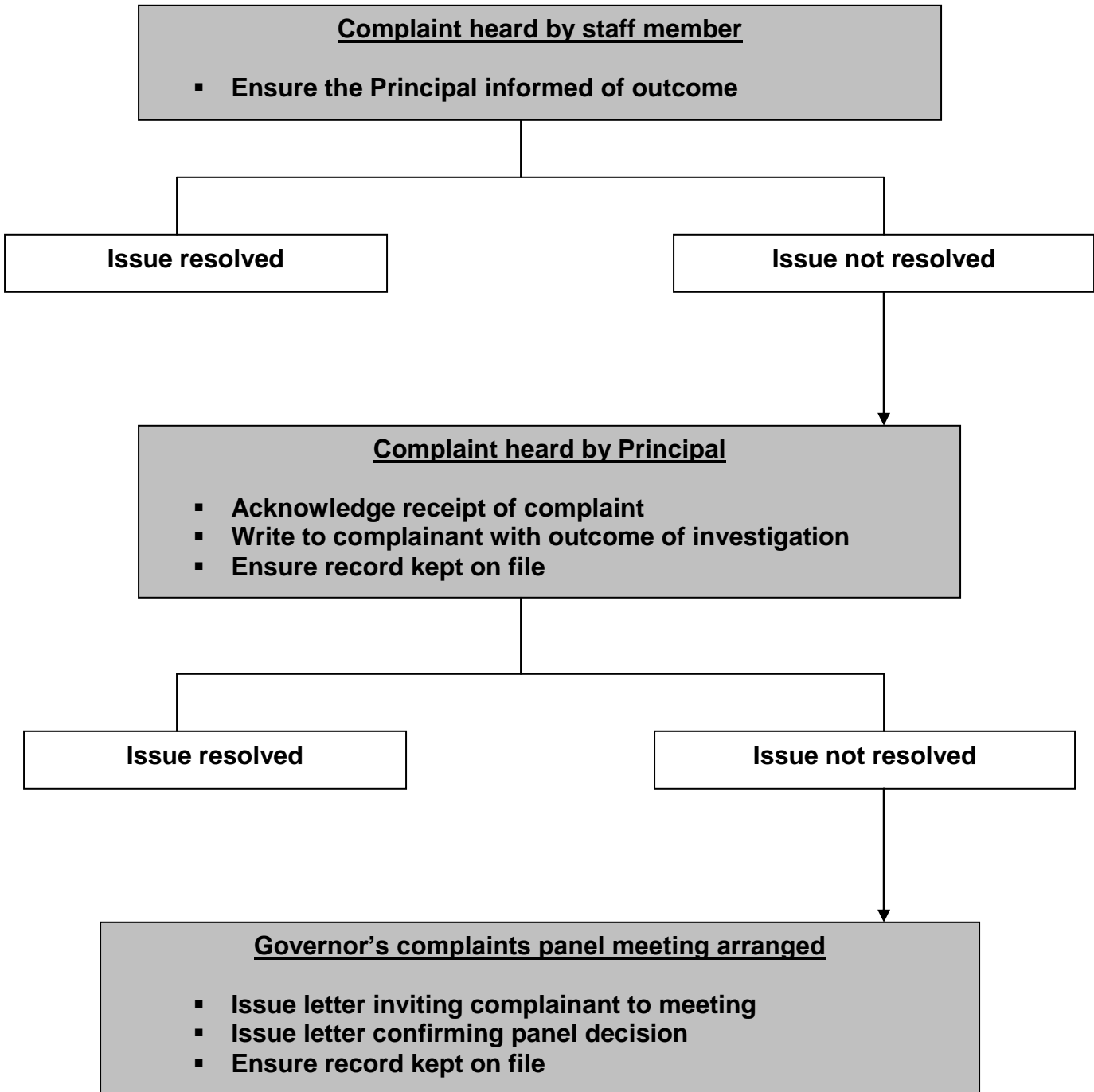
Parents and carers are encouraged to approach the school informally as soon as possible about any concern they may have. A problem shared is a problem halved! We will note what you have to say and give you a realistic time scale within which to report back to you on the steps we have taken. This will always be within a week.

At times you may feel that an issue needs to be brought to the attention of the Principal. Letters will be acknowledged directly upon receipt and a detailed written response will be provided within a week.

Letters to the Chair of the Governors will be acknowledged directly and a detailed written response will follow within a fortnight.

The complaints review panel will meet within a month of receipt of a serious complaint should this have been requested and no other method been found to resolve the issue. A written statement outlining the decision of the panel will follow within a fortnight of that meeting.

SUMMARY OF DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS FLOWCHART



THE CHRYSALIS SCHOOL FOR AUTISM
COMPLAINT FORM

Please complete and return to.....who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name

Pupil's name

Your relationship to the pupil

Address

.....

Postcode

Phone No (Day) **Evening**

Please give details of your complaint

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**What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.
Who did you speak to and what was the response?**

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What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

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Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

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Signature

Date

OFFICIAL USE

Date acknowledgement sent

By whom

Complaint referred to

Date