



ST. MARY'S
ACADEMY TRUST

St Mary's Academy Trust

Complaints Procedure

August 2013

Received by St Mary's Academy Trust Board on

Signed
(Chair of St Mary's Academy Trust Board)

Adopted by Local Governing Body on

Signed
(Chair of Local Governing Body)

To be reviewed by

St Mary's Academy Trust Complaints Procedure

St Mary's Academy Trust would like to think that parents/carers are happy with the way Trust schools are managed.

St Mary's Academy Trust welcomes parents'/carers' views on what our schools are doing well and what our schools could do differently to make things better for parents/carers and/or their child/children.

Why raise a concern or make a complaint?

It is helpful for the school to know about things that are wrong, so that they can try and put them right.

Who can raise a concern or make a complaint?

Anyone can raise a concern or make a complaint about a school.

What if I need help in raising a concern or making a complaint?

Parents/carers can ask a friend, relative or advocate to help you raise a concern or make a complaint. He or she can write and speak on parents'/carers' behalf at any time. However, if parents/carers do ask someone to help, they should let the school know this at the beginning of their concern/complaint. The person helping should make sure that they only write or speak on parents'/carers' behalf and do not express their own views.

You can also contact the Executive Principal who works for the St Mary's Academy Trust.

The Executive Principal can be contacted by writing to:

Executive Principal
St Mary's Academy Trust
Longfields Court
Middlewoods Way
Barnsley
S71 3GN

Or by telephoning: 01226 630182 / 07798 941451

What can I raise a concern or make a complaint about?

Parents/carers can raise a concern or make a complaint about anything that a school is responsible for.

How do I raise a concern or make a complaint?

Parents/carers can raise a concern or make a complaint by following the school's complaints procedure.

The Complaints Procedure:

Each Trust school will have its own complaints policy and procedure which can be obtained from the school. Trust schools' complaints procedures are the same as the procedures set out below.

What to do first – concerns/informal discussion:

St Mary's Academy Trust believes that most complaints can be dealt with through an informal discussion with the appropriate member of staff in school. Because of this, the St Mary's Academy Trust would always advise parents/carers to talk the complaint over with someone in school before making the complaint formal. This would normally be with the child's class teacher and parents/carers should do this as soon as they have a concern or complaint.

However if this does not resolve the concern/complaint, it can then be taken to the next stage of the complaints procedure.

What to do next - formal complaint:

The next stage of the Complaints Procedure is to make the complaint to the Headteacher of the school. This can be done in writing or by making an appointment to see the Headteacher in person.

The Headteacher will decide whether to:

- (i) deal with the complaint themselves; or
- (ii) delegate to an appropriate member of staff

The Headteacher will investigate the complaint by talking to the relevant members of staff within school or where necessary by talking to pupils.

The school will acknowledge the formal complaint in writing normally within 5 school days, and within a further 20 school days an investigation of the complaint will be undertaken.

Once the investigation is complete the Headteacher or the delegated member of staff will contact the parents/carers with an outcome. The outcome will usually be given in writing; however it may also be given by telephone or in person. It is normally given within 5 school days of completing the investigation.

If your complaint is about the Headteacher:

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, parents/carers would need to put your complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors for the school.

The Chair of Governors can be contacted by writing to school and addressing the letter 'For the attention of the Chair of Governors'.

As in the previous stage the Chair of Governors will investigate the complaint by talking to the relevant people in school. They will then contact the parents/carers with an outcome.

If you remain dissatisfied – making an appeal:

If the parents/carers are still not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint they will be advised whether or not they have grounds on which to make an appeal to the Governing Body's Complaints Committee. An appeal cannot be made simply on the grounds that you disagree with the outcome.

At this stage the complaint will be heard by a panel or committee of school governors. These governors would have no previous knowledge of your complaint. To make sure that complaints are heard fairly at this stage we would ask parents/carers do not to discuss the complaint with school governors.

A Complaints Committee meeting with the panel of governors will be held normally within 15 school days of being informing that the parents/carers wish to appeal. This meeting would be the opportunity to give details of the complaint and say why the parents/carers think the outcome offered by the Headteacher and/or Chair of Governors is not satisfactory. Please note that the panel will only hear details of the original complaint. It is therefore important that parents/carers only talk about things mentioned in the previous stage and not about things that might have happened since then. If parents/carers do mention something different, the panel may ask the Headteacher or Chair of Governors to consider the complaint again taking into consideration the new information.

The Governors will hear the complaint and then talk about what they think should happen next. If the Governors agree that the outcome given by the Headteacher and/or Chair of Governors is satisfactory, parents/carers cannot take the complaint any further in school.

If the Governors do not agree with the outcome of the complaint, they will talk to the Headteacher and/or Chair of Governors about what to do next.

The decision of the Complaints Committee will be sent to parents/carers, in writing, soon after the meeting.

It is important to note that some decisions that are made in school are the responsibility of the Headteacher. This means that even if the Chair of Governors or the panel does not agree with the Headteachers' decision, they cannot do anything to change it.

This is the final stage of the formal Complaints Procedure.

The role of the St Mary's Academy Trust

Parents/carers can contact the St Mary's Academy Trust if they feel that school has not followed the correct procedure when dealing with the complaint. The St Mary's Academy Trust can look at how a school has investigated the complaint and tell the school whether this was done right or not. The St Mary's Academy Trust cannot make the school re-investigate a complaint and cannot investigate the complaint itself.

However if parents/carers feel that the school has acted illegally they can take the complaint to the Secretary of State at the Department for Education.

Further information:

Please contact the school or the Executive Principal, St Mary's Academy Trust, for advice if the parents/carers or someone else needs this information in: braille, on audiotape, in large print, or in another language.



Complaints Form – St Mary's Academy Trust

Please fill in this form if you wish to make a complaint about a St Mary's Academy Trust school.
When you have completed this form please send it to the Headteacher.

If in doubt, send it to the **Executive Principal, St Mary's Academy Trust, Longfields Court, Middlewoods Way, Barnsley, S71 3GN**

Your name:

Mr/Mrs/Miss?

Your child's name if appropriate

School name: Class:

Your address:

Postcode:

Telephone no:

Have you already discussed this with a member of staff?

Yes

No

If so when and who was it?

Please use the space below to tell us about your complaint. (Please attach additional sheets if necessary)

Please tell us what you would like us to do to put things right.

Signed:

Date:

Thank you for your comments.

We will be in touch as soon as possible with regard to your complaint.