

Hanson School

Complaints Policy

May 2015

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The Policy Introduction

The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or pupils, are concerns rather than complaints. Hanson 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, you may wish or be asked 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. The prime aim of Hanson 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.

General Complaints Procedure A problem or concern should be raised promptly with the form tutor or member of staff responsible for the area or action you are concerned about. If your concern is more serious you may prefer to make an appointment to discuss it with the Principal/Head of Year. All staff will make every effort to resolve your problem promptly at this informal stage. Most concerns and potential complaints can best be resolved through informal discussion with the Principal or member of the Leadership team or relevant member of staff.

The Hanson School Policy has four main stages and the following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints. 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 Principal.
 - Stage 4 – Complaint is heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel.
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- 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. The school requests that parents make their first contact the student's Form Tutor. Concerns that may require investigation, or discussion with others, will receive an informal but informed response within two days. However, if you are dissatisfied with the response of the member of staff (or the Principal if they have been involved at the informal stage) then you may wish to put your concerns in writing as a complaint. You should make it clear if you wish the matter to be dealt with as a complaint. The Complaints Co-ordinator will investigate the complaint and provide a written response. This will normally be within 10 school days of your letter, but you will be kept informed if, for example, more time is needed to complete the investigation. If your original concern was about an action by the Principal personally, and you have already discussed it at the informal stage, then you should put your complaint in writing to the Chair of the Governing Body (Stage 2).
 - Stage 2 – Complaint heard by Complaints Co-ordinator Formal complaints shall be put in writing and addressed to your child's Head of Year. 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; following which a further

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response will be made to report on the action the school has taken to resolve the issue. Alternatively, a meeting may be convened to discuss the issue 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 are still not satisfied and what you would like the school to do.

- Stage 3 – Complaint heard by Principal If you are dissatisfied with the response of the Complaints Co-ordinator, at Stage 2, (or the Principal if they have been involved at the informal stage) then you may request that the Principal arrange a further investigation. Following the investigation, the Principal will normally give a written response within 10 school working days. If you are dissatisfied with the result at Stage 3, you will need to let the school know within 10 school working days of the date of the written 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 will need to write to the Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint. Please address your letter via Hanson School. The Chair will investigate your complaint and, in most cases, seek to resolve the matter through discussion with yourself and the Principal. At the end of this stage the Chair will provide you with a written response. This will normally be within 10 school days, but you will be kept informed if more time is needed. If you are not satisfied with the Chair's response at the end of stage 2, the complaint can be referred to the Governing Body by writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body. The Chair or a nominated Governor will convene a complaints panel to investigate your complaint. The hearing will normally take place within 15 school working days of the receipt of the written request for a Stage 4 investigation. You may be invited to speak to the panel at a meeting and be accompanied by a friend or representative. 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. * N.B. In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of the Principal, the Principal and Chair of Governors will be informed of the complaint. The Chair of Governors 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. The Governors appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process.
- School Curriculum Complaints There is a specific procedure for complaints about the school curriculum and matters relating to it. In general these are dealt with in a similar way to other complaints, however, there are some specific differences:
- You may complain either to the LEA or the Governing Body in the first instance.
 - The complaint will be investigated by whichever of these is responsible for the matter complained about.
 - The Governing body will inform both the complainant and the LA of the outcome of its investigation.

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- There is a right of appeal to the LA, and then to the Secretary of State. In general, internal school matters are the responsibility of the school governing body. However, you may have a complaint which relates to something which is the Local Authority's responsibility. Arrangements for complaining to the Council are summarised in a separate leaflet (see below). The LEA will provide advice to parents and schools on best practice procedures for dealing with complaints. The LA will, where appropriate, check to make sure that the complaint has been reasonably dealt with. Where required, LA officers may play a role in helping schools to investigate and resolve particular complaints. School admissions and exclusions Separate complaint and appeal procedures exist for these matters, and appropriate information is available on request from the school.

Special needs

There is a separate appeal procedure for these matters, and appropriate information is available on request from the school. Complaints against school staff If your complaint amounts to, or includes, an allegation against a member of staff, this may need to be considered under the school's disciplinary procedure for employees, rather than the complaint procedure. You will be advised if these procedures are to be used in dealing with your complaint.