



**SAPIENCE**  
GIRLS ACADEMY

# COMPLAINTS POLICY

**2023-24**

Last reviewed- September 2023  
Next review- September 2024  
Reviewed by- Chair of Trustees  
Approved by- SGA Governing Body

## **CONTENTS**

1. POLICY AIMS
2. GUIDELINES
3. STAGE 1- INFORMAL COMPLAINTS
4. STAGE 2- FORMAL COMPLAINT
5. STAGE 3 – COMPLAINT HEARD BY TRUSTEES’ COMPLAINTS PANEL
6. MONITORING
7. PROCEDURE

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

### 1. POLICY AIMS

Sapience Girls Academy (SGA) aims to establish fair and consistent procedures to deal with complaints relating to the school, and any community facilities or services it provides, as required by Section 29 of the Education Act 2002. The following complaint procedure must be followed by the parents in case of any complaint arises.

1. Speak to the Headteacher on an informal basis and head should resolve the complaint within two working days.
2. Not satisfied – Put the complaint in writing to the Headteacher, who should be able to resolve the matter within five working days.
3. Still unsatisfied- Write to Trustees/ governors and they will arrange a panel hearing. The matter should be resolved within ten working days.
4. The panel can make recommendations and copies of the finding should be provided to the Complainant, Trustees, Governors, Head Teacher and where appropriate to the person complained about.

#### **Note:**

- The panel will include three people who have not been involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of them will be independent of the management and running of the school.
- Parents can bring a relative or a friend for panel hearing.
- All the correspondence, statements and records of the complaints will be kept confidential.
- Written records of all complaints will be kept stating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or preceded to a panel hearing.

### 2. GUIDELINES

- As a school, we encourage dialogue between parents, staff and governors. Whilst this formal procedure is required, it is not intended to cover the normal process of dialogue with parents and pupils, including the expression of negative comments about aspects of the school, and we hope that people will normally use these informal approaches to the school.
- The formal procedure is not meant to cover cases where parents are concerned about developments, and just want teachers or others to keep an eye out for problems: for example, if a parent is concerned that their child is having difficulties in a subject, or there seems to be some aggravation between their child and another student. Such issues should be dealt with more informally. We would expect that the vast majority of complaints are resolved at this stage. Parents are encouraged to take issues to their child's class teacher in the first instance.
- This complaints procedure is for use when someone has either come to an impasse in the process of dialogue, or they feel that a more formal complaint is appropriate.

### **3. STAGE 1 - INFORMAL COMPLAINTS**

- Any complaints received by Reception staff will be forwarded to the appropriate member of staff and the person expressing the complaint will be advised who is dealing with the matter.
- The relevant member of staff will, wherever possible, telephone or write to the person making the complaint by the end of the next working day, either to discuss the matter or to assure them that the matter is in hand.
- The school will respect the views of a complainant who indicates that s/he would have difficulty discussing a complaint with a particular member of staff. In such cases, the complaint will be referred to another staff member.
- Should a member of staff be unable to deal with a complaint, it will be referred to the relevant management staff.
- If the complaint progresses to the appropriate member of the Leadership Team and still cannot be resolved informally, the complainant will be invited to make a formal complaint, as in Stage 2 below.
- Where the first approach is made to a governor, the governor will refer the complainant to the appropriate person and advise them about the procedure. Governors will not act unilaterally on an individual complaint outside the formal procedure or be involved at the early stages in case they are needed to sit on a panel at a later stage of the procedure.

### **4. STAGE 2 – FORMAL COMPLAINT**

- Formal complaints should be made on the Complaints Form, available from the school office.
- Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the Head (or Deputy Head in their absence) will normally ask another senior member of staff to investigate the matter and provide them with all relevant information.
- The Head (or her representative) will inform the complainant that the complaint has been received and indicate the nature and timescale of any investigation and conclusion, which will normally be within 10 working days.
- After considering all the available information, the Head (or his representative) will inform the complainant of the outcome of the complaint.
- If the complainant is still dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further, s/he will be advised of the right to refer the complaint to the Governors.

### **5. STAGE 3 – COMPLAINT HEARD BY TRUSTEES' COMPLAINTS PANEL**

- The complainant should make a formal complaint in writing to the Chair of Trustees. The Chair, or a nominated governor, will convene a Governing Body complaints panel, consisting of three governors, normally within 15 working days of receiving the complaints.
- The governors' appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process and is not confined to merely rubber-stamp previous decisions.

- Individual complaints would not be heard by the whole Governing Body at any stage, as this could compromise the impartiality of any panel set up for a disciplinary hearing against a member of staff following a serious complaint.
- If a complaint is made against the headteacher then a member of the senior management team, which is DH or SLT will deal with the complaint, and follow the above channels. Where you have been through the school's internal complaints procedures and are still unhappy with the outcome or decision from the governing body, you can contact the Secretary of State for Education via the DfE website [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk), by telephoning 0370 000 2288 or by writing to the address below-
- The School Complaints Unit (SCU), Department for Education, Piccadilly Gate Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD 37
- Please enclose with your letter to the DfE a copy of the complaint outcome. This will save time that the DfE will not need to ask for our view of what has happened.

We would advise parents that, unless the school is shown to have behaved unreasonably or not to have followed their own procedures, there is likely to be little further action that can be taken, as governing bodies are empowered to deal with many issues without reference to either the local authority or the secretary of state.

## **6. MONITORING**

All complaints will be reported to the Governing Body and written records kept. They will be reviewed annually, so that potential problems and issues can be identified. Other appropriate policies may need to be reviewed (e.g., Race Equality, SEN) in the light of the outcome.

**Informal concern expressed**

