



Complaints Policy

Issued: May 2019

Due for Review: May 2022

Introduction:

Since 1 September 2003 governing bodies (GBs) of all maintained schools and maintained nursery schools in England have been required, under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, summarised in Annex A, to have in place a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides. This does not limit complainants to parents or carers of pupils registered at a school. A complainant could be a member of the wider community or representing an ex-pupil. The law also requires the procedure to be publicised.

The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or pupils, are concerns rather than complaints. DPA Academy of Dance & Performing Arts and D16 Performing Arts College are 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 our formal complaints procedure.

The prime aim of DPA Academy of Dance & Performing Arts and D16 Performing Arts Colleges 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.

The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints.

The policy has four main stages.

In summary they are as follows: -

- Stage 1 (informal): concern heard by an appropriate staff member
- Stage 2 (formal): complaint heard by The Principal
- Stage 3 (formal): complaint heard by Trustees
- Stage 4 (formal): complaint heard by GB's complaints appeal panel.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A concern may be defined as *'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'*.

A complaint may be defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'*.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the

formal stages of the complaints procedure. DPA takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of the team, we will respect your views. In these cases, Karen Thurtle - Principal, will refer you to another team member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, Karen Thurtle will refer you to another staff member or a trustee. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is the most important thing.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, DPA will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

Stage 1 – concern heard by staff member

Concerns can be raised with the Academy at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will resolve the concern. We request that parents make their first contact with a teacher. 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 vast 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 us within 10 school working days. The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

Stage 2 – complaint heard by The Principal

The Principal may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken. The Principal will arrange for the complaint to be acknowledged within 5 school working days of receiving it and a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter following the investigation, the Principal will aim to provide a written response within 10 school working days of sending the acknowledgement. However, if a complaint is more complex to review this can be extended to a maximum of 20 school working days. DPA will provide you with the details of the new deadline and an explanation on the delay. If you are not satisfied with the result at stage 2 please write to or call us within 10 school working days of getting our response. The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

Stage 3 – complaint heard by the Trustees

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 2 or the complaint is about the Principal, then you will need to write to the Chair of Trustees c/o the school. The Chair of Trustees will arrange for the complaint to be acknowledged within 5 school working days of receiving it and a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. Following an investigation, the Chair of Trustees will aim to provide a written response within 10 school working days of sending out the acknowledgement. However, if a complaint is more complex to review this can be extended to 20 school working days. The school will provide you details of the new deadline and an explanation on the delay. If you are dissatisfied with the result at stage 3, you will need to let DPA know within 10 school working days of getting the response. The Academy will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

Stage 4 – complaint heard by Governing Bodies Complaints Appeal Panel.

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 3, then you will need to write to the Clerk of Governors giving details of the complaint and asking that it is put before the appeal panel. Should the Chair have been involved at any previous stage in the process a nominated Trustee, impartial to the complaint, will convene a complaints panel. The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 school working days of receiving it. The hearing will normally take place within 20 school working days of sending the acknowledgment.

The aim of the Appeal panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between DPA and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the Panel's decision in writing within 5 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.

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

Complainants who behave in an unacceptable way

Although fulfilling a public function, our academy is a private place. The public has no automatic right of entry. We will therefore act to ensure that DPA remains a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of our community.

If a parent's behaviour is a cause for concern, we as an academy can ask him/her to leave our premises. In serious cases, the Principal or the local authority can notify them in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any restrictions that the parent may wish to make. Schools should

always give the parent the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing.

The decision to bar should then be reviewed, taking into account any representations made by the parent and either confirmed or lifted. If the decision is confirmed the parent should be notified in writing, explaining how long the bar will be in place. Anyone wishing to complain about being barred can do so, by letter or email, to the Principal or the DPA Trustees.

Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Principal or Chairman, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Complain to Ofsted

Your complaint must relate to the school as a whole and you must have followed the school's complaints procedure.

Ofsted cannot:

- consider issues about individual pupils
- investigate specific incidents
- judge how well a school responded to a complaint
- mediate or resolve disputes between you and the school
- consider complaints if there are other legal ways to pursue them (for example, complaints about admissions or providing education for individual pupils with special educational needs)

You can get in touch with Ofsted by emailing enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or by calling 0300 123 4666.