

## DUDLEY ACADEMIESTRUST

### Compliments and Complaints Policy

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Dudley College of Technology



*Our mission: Working together we will develop inspirational schools which instil ambition and desire in young learners, open their minds, widen their horizons and equip them to succeed in a challenging world.*

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## **1. Introduction**

Dudley Academies Trust is committed to providing high-quality services. Feedback is essential to this and we welcome all comments, compliments and complaints. Compliments and complaints help us to review and develop our services. We aim to achieve the highest standards.

## **2. Compliments and Comments**

### **Definition of a Compliment**

A compliment is an expression of praise, admiration, or congratulation about the standards of service, actions by Dudley Academies Trust or their staff.

We welcome compliments and comments. Visitors are encouraged to complete a 'How Are We Performing' form which is available from Reception and via the Academy's website. Written compliments and comments are always welcome and should be addressed to the Principal at the Academy or the Office Manager.

## **3. Complaints**

### **Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, about the standards of service, actions or lack of action by Dudley Academies Trust or their staff.

## **4. Principles and Values**

Our main aim is to deal with complaints openly, fairly, promptly and without prejudice.

Our procedures for dealing with complaints will;

- Be simple to understand and follow
- Be focused on outcomes
- Keep people informed at all stages
- Where necessary, respect people's desires for confidentiality
- Be carefully monitored and evaluated
- Provide information to the senior leadership team so that the Academy's procedures can be improved.
- The complaints procedure will follow a staged approach which is designed to ensure that every effort is made to deal with complaints in partnership with our community.

## **5. Role of the Principal and the Academy's Complaints/Compliments Coordinator**

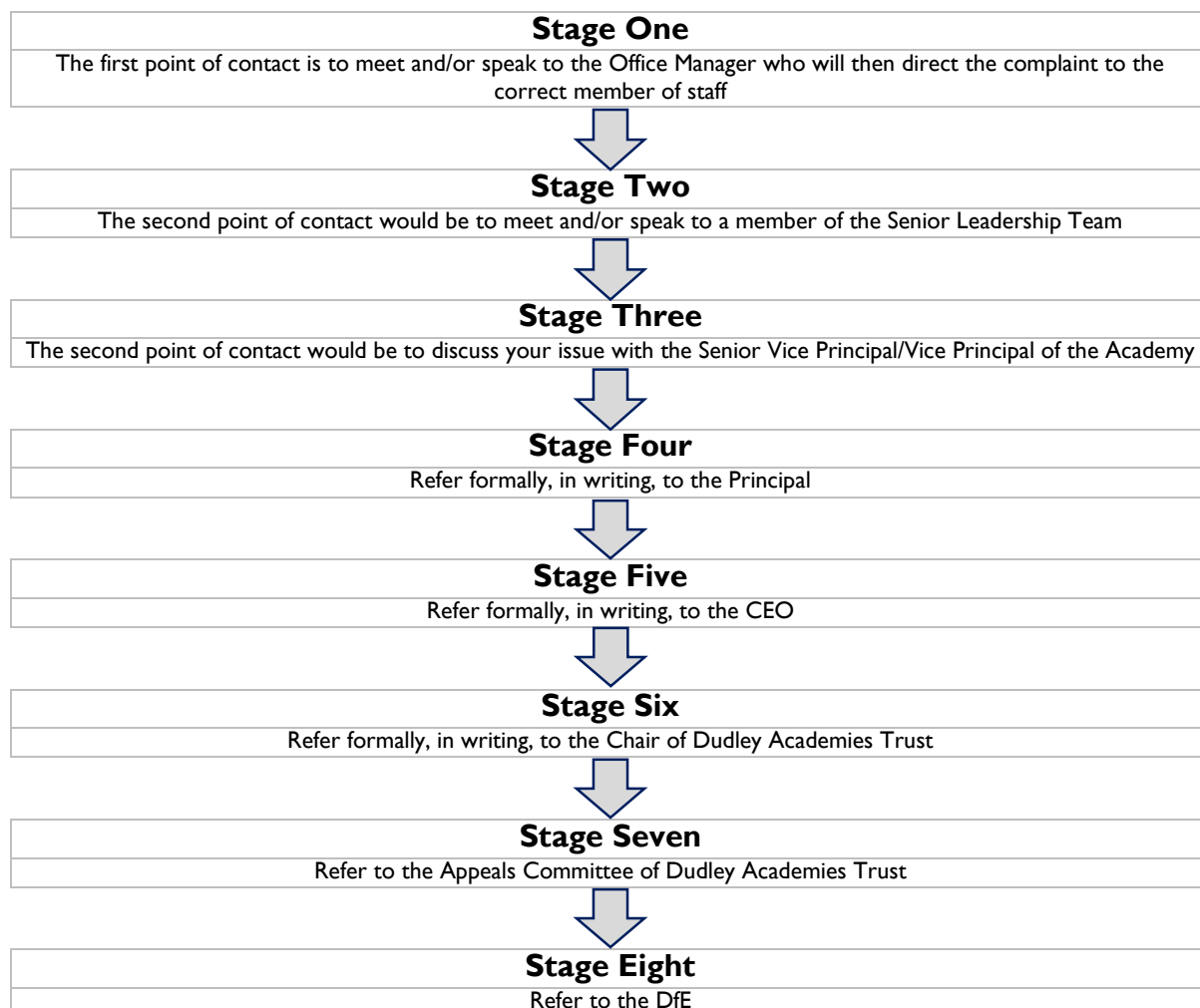
The Principal will oversee all complaints. In the event of the complaint being about the Principal this would then be coordinated by the Chief Executive Officer with the support of the Company Secretary.

For all formal complaints, any correspondence will be documented and retained for future reference. This will also include the outcomes and any action to be taken.

The Academy's first point of contact is the Office Manager.

The Office Manager will ensure all complaints and compliments are dealt with appropriately and within the agreed timescale.

## 6. Structure for the Complaints Procedure



- Stages 1, 2 and 3 are **informal stages** which are dealt with at the Academy level.
- Stages 4, 5, 6 and 7 are **formal stages**.

Any person expressing continued dissatisfaction should be advised on the next stage in the procedure.

### Stage One: Discuss concerns informally with the Office Manager

- All issues reported to the Office Manager will be logged and followed up within 10 working days.
- The Office Manager will refer the complaint to the appropriate member of staff.
- Complainants will be advised to speak to the Head of Year, Head of Department or Pastoral Manager, so everyone has a clear picture of the situation from all points of view. Most problems can be resolved at this informal stage.

- The member of staff who is dealing with the complaint should ensure that the complainant is reassured that the matter will be investigated and is clear what action has been agreed. All parties should be aware of the need for confidentiality.
- A brief record of any telephone calls, meetings and agreed actions should always be kept, although it is not always necessary to provide the complainant with a written record at this stage.
- If either the complainant or staff member feels the matter needs to be taken further, this will be referred to Stage 2.

### **Stage Two: Discuss concerns informally with a Senior Member of Staff**

- More serious concerns which remain unresolved at the end of Stage One will be referred to a Senior Member of Staff. He / She will then investigate the matter further.
- A log of all contacts in relation to the complaint should be kept.
- The Senior Member of Staff will communicate the outcome to the complainant either verbally or in writing, within 10 working days from receipt of the referral from Stage One. The Office Manager, the Senior Member of staff or the Complainant can refer the matter to Stage 3.

### **Stage Three: Discuss concerns informally with the Senior Vice Principal/Vice Principal**

- Senior Vice Principal/Vice Principal will investigate the matter further. If as a result of the investigation, issues arise relating to staff discipline or capability, details should remain confidential to the Senior Vice Principal/Vice Principal. The complainant must be informed of the other action the Academy has taken within 10 working days from the communication with the member of the Senior Leadership Team or the Office Manager of the Complainant.

### **Stage Four: Make a formal complaint to the Principal**

- A formal complaint to the Principal can only be made once all previous avenues have been explored.
- The formal complaint should be in writing to Principal at the Academy address
- The Principal will deal with this within 10 working days of the receipt of the formal complaint.
- If Complainant is still unhappy the next stage will be referral to the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust.

### **Stage Five: The complaints can be referred to the Chief Executive Officer**

- The Chief Executive Officer should only proceed with this formal stage of the Complaint Procedure if they have received a complaint in writing.
- The Principal will deal with this within 10 working days of the receipt of the formal complaint.

If Complainant is still unhappy the next stage will be to be referred to the Chief Executor Officer of the Trust.

### **Stage Six: Refer to the Chair of the Dudley Academies Trust**

- The Chair of the Trust should only proceed with this formal stage of the Complaint Procedure if they have received a complaint in writing.
- It is essential that this process is fair and objective. Any member of Dudley Academies Trust board who has been involved with the complaint at an earlier stage would be unable to give objective consideration to the issue.
- If Complainant is still unhappy the next stage will be referral to the Appeals Committee of the Trust.

### **Stage Seven: Refer to Appeals Committee of Dudley Academies Trust**

- It is for the Trust to agree upon the procedures for the Complaint Panel meeting. However, the Trust will usually convene a small panel of two - five members who have not previously been involved in the complaint within 10 working days of the formal complaint being received.
- The Chair of the panel should notify the Chief Executive Officer and the complainant as to whether they will be invited to attend the panel meeting. Alternatively, the panel may decide to consider written material only. Both parties must be treated equally. For example; if the Chief Executive Officer is invited to the meeting, so must the Complainant.
- If the complaint relates to staff disciplinary or a capability matter about which the Chief Executive Officer has already taken action, the members should focus on how the original complaint was managed to avoid prejudicing any on-going disciplinary or capability procedures.
- The Chief Executive Officer and Complainant should be informed of the panel's decision in writing within ten Academy days.
- The Complaints Panel's decision is final.

### **Stage Eight: Refer to the DfE**

If the Complainant believes that Dudley Academies Trust acted “unreasonably”, they can complain to the Secretary of State in the Department for Education under Section 496 of the Education Act 1996. Please note that “unreasonable” is used in a strict sense and means acting in a way that no reasonable Academy or Authority could act in the circumstances. The Complainant should write to The Secretary of State, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT.