celtic cross education

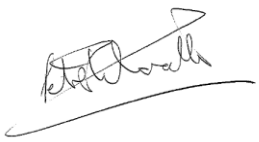
CCE Complaints Policy

November 2020

This policy was ratified by the Full Board in November 2020.

The policy has been signed electronically, due to the circumstances of Covid 19.

The policy will be reviewed in: November 2022



Signed: Date: 4-11-20

Mr P. Wootton, Chair of the Board of Directors



CCE Complaints Policy

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Please send all complaints to enquiries@celticcross.education

Address: Celtic Cross Education
Unit 15 Victoria Trading Estate
Victoria Business Park
Roche
PL26 8LX.

1. Introduction

1.1. The trust is dedicated to providing the best possible education and support for all pupils within its schools. This means having a clear, fair, and efficient procedure for dealing with any complaints to or against a school, so that any issues that arise can be dealt with as swiftly and effectively as possible.

1.2. The trust welcomes feedback on the services it provides. Should anyone be unhappy with any aspect of a school within the trust, it is important that the trust and relevant school learns about this. The trust recognises there is a difference between a concern and a complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage reduces the numbers that develop into formal complaints. The trust aims to ensure that concerns are handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures. The trust's formal complaints procedure is only necessary if efforts to resolve the concern informally are unsuccessful. Where an individual may feel that an issue has not been dealt with appropriately it is important, for all involved, that there is a clear and transparent process for a complaint to be looked into and followed up.

1.3. This policy outlines how complaints will be dealt with by the trust and the relevant school in accordance with the requirements of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010.

1.4. This policy will be followed in respect of all complaints by parents/carers against the trust except in the following areas (where separate policies exist):

- child protection allegations;
- exclusions;
- admissions;
- complaints about statements of SEN/ EHC Plans;
- disciplinary issues relating to members of staff; and
- allegations of abuse
- whistleblowing

1.5. Please note that anonymous complaints will not be examined under this or any complaints procedure.

1.6. All complaints should be addressed to the trust complaints officer in the first instance whose details are recorded above.

1.7. Please note that should a complaint, informal or formal, reveal an issue for which other procedures exist (for example, child protection) then it will be dealt with under those procedures rather than as a complaint.

1.8. All trust staff will be made aware of the trust's complaints procedures and expected to review this policy regularly in order that they are familiar with our process of dealing with complaints and can be of the most assistance when an issue is brought to their attention.

2. Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

2.1. Many enquiries and concerns can be dealt with satisfactorily by the class teacher, Head of School, the CEO or other members of staff without the need to resort to a formal procedure. The trust values informal meetings and discussions and encourages parents and stakeholders to approach staff with

any concerns they may have and aims to resolve all issues with open dialogue and mutual understanding. If an individual has a concern that they would like to take up with the school/trust they should initially inform a member of staff either in person, over the telephone or in writing. The individual will then be invited to an informal meeting with the member of staff most appropriate for dealing with that concern.

2.2. There is no suggested time-scale for resolution at this stage given the importance of dialogue through informal discussion although it would be expected that most issues would be resolved within 10 school days.

2.3. Should face to face discussions appear unlikely to resolve matters, either party may initiate a move to the formal procedure at stage 2 onwards.

3. Stage 2 - Formal Written Complaints

3.1. If a complainant does not feel that their concern has been dealt with as they would like, are unhappy with the outcome of the informal meeting or feel that the issue is serious enough that it warrants it, the complainant should set out the precise nature of the complaint on the form at the end of this policy and return this to the trust Complaints Officer (or the chair of directors if the complaint is about the Complaints Officer). The complainant should keep a copy of this form and all other relevant correspondence.

3.2. The trust Complaints Officer will pass the complaint on to the Head of the relevant school (or the Chair of the School Monitoring Council if the complaint is about the Head) or the CEO if the complaint does not relate to an individual school (or the chair of directors if the complaint is about the CEO who should acknowledge the complaint in writing within 5 school days of receipt of the form. The Head of School /CEO (or the chair of directors/School Monitoring Council) will investigate the concerns and outline their decision if there is one to be made, and any action to be taken as a result of the complaint.

3.3. The Head of School/CEO (or the chair of directors/School Monitoring Council) may call the complainant in for a meeting to discuss the issue outcome, possible solutions, or to explain what has or will happen as a result of the complaint.

3.4. The Head of School/CEO (or the chair of directors/School Monitoring Council) will keep a record of all interactions with the complainant and other staff, meetings and decisions made in reference to the complaint.

3.5. If the complaint is an allegation of abuse, a formal investigation may be instigated by the trust or external child welfare authorities to whom the school reports. Please refer to our allegations of abuse against staff policy for an outline of this procedure.

3.6. The Head of School/CEO (or the chair of directors/School Monitoring Council) will respond to the complainant in writing within 15 school days from acknowledgement of the complaint, outlining their response to the complaint, and any action that has or will be taken. If the Head of School /CEO (or the chair of directors/School Monitoring Council) has decided not to take any further action on the issue, they will explain what they have decided, how they have reached this decision, and will outline the complainant's right to take the matter further and the steps to be taken.

3.7. If in the early stages of the investigation, the Head of School/CEO or the chair of directors/School Monitoring Council (as applicable) considers that the complaint is best dealt with at Stage 3, it will be passed to the Chair of Directors via the company secretary (the Vice Chair where the complaint has been reviewed by the Chair of Directors) and the complainant informed of this action without delay.

3.8. The complainant has 15 school days to consider the outcome of their complaint at stage 2 and instigate stage 3. If no request for a complaints panel hearing is received within 15 school days it will be deemed that the decision is accepted and the complaint will be closed.

4. Stage 3 - Complaints Panel

4.1. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint at stage 2, they may lodge their complaint with the chair of directors (or to the company secretary) in writing, explaining their concern and the steps that have lead up to them taking this course of action.

4.2. If the chair of directors is the subject of a complaint, or has reviewed the complaint under stage 2, the complainant should send the form directly to the Vice Chair of Directors (or to the company secretary to the Directors for the Vice Chair's attention) c/o the trust marking the envelope 'private and confidential'.

4.3. The chair of directors will convene a panel of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. This will comprise of at least one person independent of the management and running of the school/trust. The panel will hear the complaint within 15 school days of the request for a panel hearing.

4.4. The trust shall take reasonable steps to convene a panel hearing at a time and date mutually convenient to all parties.

4.5. The complainant is entitled to attend the panel hearing and be accompanied. The complainant should notify the company secretary in advance if they intend to bring anyone to the hearing.

4.6. The procedure for an appeal is as follows:

1. The complainant and Head of School/CEO will enter the hearing together in accordance with paragraph 3.2. The individual who the complaint is about has the right to attend but attendance is not compulsory.
2. The Chair will introduce the panel members and outline the process.
3. The complainant will explain the complaint.
4. The Head of School/CEO and panel will question the complainant.
5. The Head of School/CEO will explain the school/trust's actions.
6. The complainant and panel will question the Head of School/CEO.
7. The complainant will sum up their complaint.
8. The Head of School/CEO will sum up the school/trust's actions.
9. The Chair will explain that both parties will hear from the panel within 5 school days.
10. Both parties will leave together while the panel decides.
11. The clerk will stay to assist the panel with its decision making.

4.7. The Chair of the panel/company secretary will notify the complainant of the panel's decision in writing within 5 school days of the panel hearing. The letter will set out the decision of the panel together with the reasons underpinning that decision. The letter may set out recommendations which will be made to the board of directors/School Monitoring Council and will set out any further rights of appeal

5. Stage 4 - Complaint to Secretary of State

5.1. If the complainant is dissatisfied with how the complaint has been handled after exhausting stages 1-3 of this policy, the complainant can write to the Secretary of State for Education via the Education Funding Agency (EFA).

5.2. The EFA will consider complaints that fall into any of the following three categories:

1. where there is undue delay or the school/trust did not comply with its own complaints procedures when considering a complaint
2. where the school/trust is in breach of its funding agreement with the Secretary of State
3. where the school/trust has failed to comply with any other legal obligation

5.3. The EFA will normally only consider complaints when every stage of the above process has been completed.

5.4. Further details can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school.

6. Record of complaints

6.1. A written record of all complaints and documentation relating to the handling of the complaint will be kept confidentially by the trust but may be inspected where appropriate by the Secretary of State or any inspection body.

7. Vexatious complaints

7.1. Whilst it is hoped that this policy will reduce any dissatisfaction with the trust, it is acknowledged that there may be rare occasions where a complainant continues to be dissatisfied with the trust and the outcomes achieved under the complaints policy.

7.2. Where a complainant attempts to re-open an issue which has already been dealt with under the complaints policy, the chair of directors/School Monitoring Council will contact them to inform them that the matter has already been dealt with and that either that stage of the policy has been exhausted or that the complaints policy has been exhausted and the matter is considered closed. Where further correspondence is received on the same matter, this may be considered vexatious and the trust will be under no obligation to respond to that correspondence.

8. Duplicate Complaints

After closing a complaint, should the trust received a duplicate complaint from a spouse/partner or grandparent, the new complainant will be informed that the complaint has already been considered and dealt with.

Signed …… (Chair of Directors) Date ……..

Signed …… (CEO) Date ……..

Date reviewed: October 2020

Complaints Form

Your name
Pupil's name
School pupil attends
Your relationship to pupil
Your address and postcode
Your daytime telephone number
Your evening telephone number
Your email address
Your complaint is... (Include details of actions already taken by the school/trust to try to resolve the situation)

Your complaint is (continued) ...

What action have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint?

(Who did you speak to and what was the response?)

What would you like as an outcome from your complaint?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, give details here

Your signature…… Date ……

All functions of the complaints procedure must adhere to the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Please complete and return to the Central Office: enquiries@celticcross.education or by e-mailing the Chair of Directors or Company Secretary on governance@celticcross.education (as appropriate).

Office use

Date received ……

Date acknowledgement sent ……

Responsible member of staff …….