



Sunderland High School

The best in everyone

Complaints

All concerns and complaints expressed by parents, the public and others who use Sunderland High School's facilities are taken seriously by us.

This is a key policy of Sunderland High School. It applies to all members of the school community including those in our EYFS setting. The policy is available to all parents, prospective parents, school governors, members of the UCST Board and ISI Inspectors. This policy is available in printed form upon request or it can be accessed and downloaded via the school's website, www.sunderlandhigh.co.uk. By contacting either Mrs E. Martin (school registrar, 0191 5677674) or Miss C. McArdle (Junior School Secretary, 0191 5143278) additional copies of the policy can be made available. In addition, larger print copies can also be produced upon request.

Sunderland High School seeks to implement this document through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document.

Sunderland High School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the school's Equal Opportunities Policy document.

This document is reviewed annually by AJS or as events or legislation change requires. The next scheduled review date is September 2011.

Policy Statement

This policy aims to set out clear timescales for the management of a complaint as agreed with the person(s) making the complaint. At Sunderland High School we are committed to bringing out the best in everyone and to achieving the very best we can. Feedback on our performance is welcomed: it is the lifeblood of the school, as it helps us to continue to improve. There are many opportunities for members of the school community to give feedback on our performance:

- **Parents can write directly to the Chair of the Local Governing Body, Revd Canon Stephen Taylor, c/o SHS, Langham Tower, Mowbray Road, Sunderland**
- Pupils can give feedback through pupil questionnaires, the Junior School Pupil Council and the two Senior School Pupil Forums
- Parents can give feedback through parent reply slips, the two Parents' Forums, the PTA, our annual parent questionnaires and through the LGB.
- Visitors to the school can give feedback through the 'Comments, Compliments and Complaints' leaflets which are on display in each of the foyers of the school and which are distributed to those groups who use the school's facilities.
- Staff can give feedback in staff meetings, through the Staff Consultative Forum and Committee, and through the Appraisal system.
- Both the Head of Junior School and the Head of School operate an 'open door' policy for pupils, parents and staff, and are committed to making themselves accessible to the different groups who make up the school community.
- In addition, the school has a Complaints Policy which may be used by anyone who wishes to make a complaint about the school. A copy is attached.

The school is required to make available to the Independent Schools' Inspectorate information on the number of **complaints** received each year. It can be difficult to judge what constitutes a formal complaint. For the purposes of reporting to the ISI, it has been decided that the following will be treated as formal complaints:

1. Any complaint which is described by the complainant as a 'formal complaint'.
2. Any complaint which is copied to/made directly to either the Local Governing Body or the United Church Schools Trust.
3. Any complaint which is not able to be resolved satisfactorily at school level, and which is referred on to the LGB or to UCST.
4. Any other complaint or concern which the Head deems more significant than a routine academic/pastoral/operational concern.

Parents and other individuals who wish to complain (for the purposes of this document, the word 'parent' is used to refer to any complainant) may pass on concerns or complaints either verbally or in writing, including by initial completion of our 'Compliments, Comments and Complaints' leaflets.

1. Concerns and complaints are part of the essential information which helps us to know how well we are doing. If parents or prospective parents contact the school to make a complaint, whether by telephone, in writing or in person, the following action will be taken:
2. The person receiving the complaint - who may, for example, be a member of the Administration Team, a member of the Senior Management Team or a member of the Teaching Staff - will **LISTEN** to the complaint.

3. Anyone making a complaint has the right to have that complaint considered initially on an informal basis if they so desire.
4. If the parent making the complaint is not satisfied with the response made on an informal basis then the complaint should be followed up in writing. Using the **QUALITY RESPONSE FORM** (attached) the person receiving the complaint will then **RECORD** what the parent has said.
5. They will **CHECK** their **UNDERSTANDING** of the complaint with the parent to make sure that they have the correct information
6. They will then **PASS ON THE COMPLAINT** to the appropriate person, and will tell the parent when they can expect an initial response, even if that initial response is only to let the parent know what type of investigation is being undertaken.
7. The person dealing with the complaint will **MAKE AN INITIAL RESPONSE WITHIN THE AGREED TIME PERIOD** but certainly within 28 days. Some concerns can be dealt with quickly. Others take more time. The parent will be kept informed of progress.
8. When the complaint has been dealt with, the parent will be **INFORMED OF THE ACTION TAKEN** and a record of the complaint and the action taken will be filed.
9. If the parent making the complaint is not satisfied with the response to a written complaint, a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the school and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint will be set up.
10. The school will ensure that where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one person will be independent of the management and running of the school.
11. When a hearing is held, the parent making the complaint is allowed to attend and be accompanied at the panel hearing if they wish.
12. Provision will be made for the panel to make findings and recommendations. A copy of these will be sent to the complainant by email or otherwise and, where relevant, the person being complained about. Copies of these reports will be made available for inspection at the school by the UCST Board and Head of Sunderland High School.
13. The school will maintain a written record of all complaints for a minimum period of four years together with information as to whether such complaints were resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a LGB Appeal Panel.
14. The school will ensure that all records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential and secure except where the Secretary of State or a body

conducting an inspection under section 162A of the 2002 Act, as amended, requests access to them.

15. In addition, the school will make provision for the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year to be made available to parents and prospective parents within this policy, updated yearly.
16. Should parents wish to make a complaint about EYFS provision then they may do so by contacting Ofsted (www.ofsted.gov.uk) Alternatively, parents may contact the Ofsted helpline on 0300 123 1231, or email them at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk. Ofsted have produced a leaflet that gives information about how parents may raise concerns with a provider; how to raise your concerns with Ofsted; what Ofsted can and will do when parents complain to them; and their enforcement and other powers.
17. The school will provide Ofsted, on request, a written record of all complaints made during any specific period and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.
18. The written record of complaints and their outcomes will be reviewed regularly at senior leadership level.

The number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the last school year (2009/10) was 17 (due to school restructuring)

Complaints Procedures

Sunderland High School's Complaints Policy is a public document. A copy is attached. Please read it before going on.

All complaints and concerns expressed by parents, the public and others who use the school's facilities are an important source of feedback from those who experience our services. Their comments are part of the essential information which helps us to answer the question 'How well are we doing?' *Concerns raised by pupils are also important but are not addressed in this policy: they are addressed through the school's pastoral system.*

- Complaints may be made by telephone, in writing or in person.
- They may be received by members of the Administration Team, members of the Senior Management Team or by members of the Teaching Staff.
- The person making the complaint needs to know that the complaint will be **TAKEN SERIOUSLY**.
- They need to know **WHO** will be dealing with the matter.
- They need to know **WHEN** they might expect a response.

If you are the person receiving a complaint, please adopt the following procedure:

1. LISTEN TO THE COMPLAINT. Let the person complaining have their say. The initial task is to hear the complaint, rather than to respond, defend, comment or apologise. Do not probe for further details except as clarification.
2. USING THE QUALITY RESPONSE FORM (attached) RECORD WHAT HAS BEEN SAID in as much detail as seems appropriate. It is helpful to have specific names, times etc.
3. CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING of the complaint with the person to make sure that you have the correct information.
4. Say that you will PASS ON THE COMPLAINT to the appropriate person, and that they will GET BACK to the person making the complaint WITHIN A SPECIFIED TIME, even if that is only to let them know what investigation is being undertaken. It is essential that the time as promised is honoured.
5. DECIDE WHO SHOULD DEAL WITH THE COMPLAINT, obtain their agreement, and pass on the QUALITY RESPONSE FORM to them.

If you are the person receiving the complaint and the matter is to do with you, it may be possible to respond immediately. *For example, if a parent is complaining about a particular punishment which you have given and if the telephone call has come straight through to you, it may be best to deal with the matter there and then.*

If, however, you need more time to consider your response or to find out more about the incident, it is in order for you to explain that you will need time (a ‘holding’ response) but that you will get back to them within a specified time. *In this case, let the complainant know in broad terms what you are going to do to find out the background and in specific terms when they will hear from you.*

A WRITTEN RECORD of the matter must be made:

1. PAGE 1 OF THE QUALITY RESPONSE FORM must be completed by the person receiving the complaint.
2. The person responding to the complaint must complete PAGE 2 of the Quality Response Form with a brief description of the action taken.
3. When the action is complete, the Quality Response Form must be SIGNED OFF by the person responding to the complaint.
4. The Quality Response Form is then FILED. It may be appropriate to make a copy of the form to place in the file of a specific pupil or pupils.
5. The person responding to the complaint is advised to make a DETAILED FILE NOTE for themselves.

Finally...

It is important to apologise when something has gone wrong. The fact that a complaint has been made means that, whether it is the school’s fault or not, the quality of our service has been perceived as less than excellent. The word ‘sorry’ can go a long way to help to sort out a problem.

Related Policies and Documents

- Complaints Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Data Protection

SUNDERLAND HIGH SCHOOL

QUALITY RESPONSE FORM

Receiving a Complaint

Name of Person Receiving the Complaint	Date	Time
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Name of Person Making the Complaint	Address
Telephone Number (Home)	Telephone Number (Work)

Relationship to School *(please tick appropriate box)*

<input type="checkbox"/>	PARENT	Name of child	Class
<input type="checkbox"/>	SERVICE USER	Specify which (e.g. YTS, etc.)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	FACILITY USER	Specify which (e.g. Hall, etc.)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	NEIGHBOUR		
<input type="checkbox"/>	GENERAL PUBLIC		

Brief Description of the Complaint stating names, dates, times, venues, etc.
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Name of Person who is to deal with the Complaint
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Please pass this Form to the above named person. The responsibility for dealing with the complaint now lies with that person.

Responding to a Complaint

Brief Description of Response. This may be brief and immediate or it may require a longer, extended response.

Action

Signing Off

Person Making Complaint has been informed of action	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>please tick</i>
Signature of Person Responding	<input type="text"/>	
Date	<input type="text"/>	
Form filed in Complaints Book in the Office	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>please tick</i>

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Provision

With regard to EYFS, a record of complaints will be kept for a period of three years.

Parents making a complaint about EYFS provision are also entitled to make a complaint to Ofsted if they so wish. Ofsted can be contacted at the following address:

Ofsted
Royal Exchange Buildings
St. Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

Telephone 0300 123 1231

Complainants will be notified of the outcome of an investigation within 28 days of the school having received the complaint.

The school will provide Ofsted, on request, a written record of all complaints against EYFS provision made during any specified period and the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

Links to other policies and documents

UCST Whistleblowing Policy
Compliments, Comments and Complaints Leaflet

Dr Angela Slater
Reviewed September 2010

