

Serial and Unreasonable Complaints Policy

Document Control

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Related policies and documents

- Concerns and Complaints Policy

Definitions

- Where the word 'Trust' is used in this document it refers to The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust.
- Where the word 'Governing Body' is used it refers to the Local Governing Body of an individual academy within the Trust.
- Where appropriate the Local Governing Bodies of individual academies will publish details of the procedures and practices to implement Trust policies.

Elliot Foundation Academies Trust Vision and Values

Vision

The Elliot Foundation was created as a safe place for children and teachers where all are nurtured to achieve beyond even their own expectations. Our motto, "Where children believe they can because teachers know they can" reflects our conviction that raising expectations for all children and teachers is at the heart of a successful and inclusive society.

Values

For children

We help children to discover themselves and aspire beyond any limitations that their context might appear to place upon them. We help them understand that they can be, 'Heroes of their own lives' building the foundations for healthy and successful lives.

For schools

In addition to the essential functional skills of reading, writing and mathematics, children need to learn how to learn and to believe that they can continue to do so. They must also possess the critical thinking skills to sift fact from fiction to be able to think for themselves, freely and creatively.

For success

To thrive, whatever their chosen path, children need confidence, curiosity and commitment. We will nurture these attitudes across all their learning experiences

For communities

Children at Elliot academies will be raised with an awareness of the world around them and their role in shaping a better future through volunteering and contributing in their communities.

1. Policy statement and objectives

- 1.1. This Policy and the procedures for its implementation aim to clarify the way in which serial and unreasonable complaints are managed. It aims to do so in a way which is clear and concise. The Policy also seeks to promote a consistent and transparent approach to dealing with such matters.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. TEFAT is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and seeks to swiftly resolve all such matters in line with the Concerns and Complaints Policy. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

3. Implementation

- 3.1. TEFAT defines unreasonable behaviour as 'that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school', such as, if the complainant:
 - Refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
 - Refuses to cooperate with the complaints process
 - Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints process
 - Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints process or with good practice
 - Introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
 - Raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
 - Makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
 - Changes the basis of the complaint as the process proceeds

- Repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous actions to investigate or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
 - Refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the Concerns and Complaints Policy has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
 - Seeks an unrealistic outcome
 - Makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and/or by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
 - Uses threats to intimidate
 - Uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
 - Knowingly provides falsified information
 - Publishes information on social media or other public forums
- 3.2 Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.
- 3.3 Whenever possible the Principal will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before determining that the complaint has met the threshold for application of this policy.
- 3.4 If the behaviour continues the Principal will discuss the matter with the TEFAT Director of Governance and Policy ahead of writing to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is not acceptable and asking them to change it.
- 3.5 For complainants who continue to excessively contact TEFAT causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.
- 3.6 In response to any serious incident of aggression, violence or repetitive behaviour or actions that could be deemed as harassment we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from an academy site or Head Office premises.

