

STUDENT COMPLAINTS

POLICY

My Choice School wants to listen to the views of the students we teach and care for and to respond quickly and efficiently to put matters right when problems occur.

A complaints procedure which is accessible, responsive and efficient is an important aspect of this and provides an opportunity to improve services, learn from mistakes and should offer solutions to difficulties where appropriate.

It is important that our complaints procedure is effective and enables us to respond in the best way when there are problems.

Making a complaint may not be easy for a student and they may worry about getting another student or member of staff into trouble. Students need to be given a clear message that it is their right to complain if they are not happy about something and have this complaint heard. If a complaint is made on behalf of a student the same procedure should be followed.

We use the **Student Voice** and the **Student Council** to encourage students to give their input into the school community, to make suggestions, identify their likes and dislikes and become accustomed to expressing themselves and feeling seen and heard. This empowers them to use the Student Voice form to raise their concerns, queries or complaints.

Student Voice forms are available in the classrooms and the Head or Deputy Head of the Student Council will ensure that students have access to the form, and have opportunity to complete the form, canvassing students periodically to complete it. The Student Voice Form can be handed to a member of staff or school management.

We have a **Student Questionnaire** that covers Safety, Fairness and Health and Wellbeing. This is issued at minimum annually and can be used to prompt discussion between students and classroom staff and also staff and also enable SMT to follow up any concerns and queries that students may have.

Students can also raise a complaint verbally to any member of staff. Staff must always be available to listen to student's concerns and complaints and queries.

Students have access to Mental Health interventions during their school week, which can be used to support general emotional wellbeing. During these sessions their voice can be captured and the Student Questionnaire can be used as a tool.

When a student makes a complaint this must always be recorded and always kept on file.

If the complaint is regarding a member of staff, that member of staff should not be involved in taking any responsibility in the consideration of or response to that complaint. Students should never be subject to any reprisals regarding their complaint or anyone involved in this process. If a complaint is made about a member of staff the Headteacher, DSL and Head of Education must be informed in order to initiate Management of Allegations.

It may be that students would not wish to make a complaint to someone within the school. Students will be informed that they can speak to other Senior Management of My Choice, who visit the school regularly.

These people are:

- **Dawn Ives** Director / RI of My Choice.
- **Debbie Woodgate** Operations Manager

Students also have the opportunity to speak to the Independent Safeguarding Reviewer who visits termly, commissioned by My Choice School.

It is the Headteacher's responsibility to ensure that complaints are dealt with in an appropriate and effective manner and monitored regularly.

PROCEDURE

Listen to what the student has to say, do not interrupt, judge or dismiss.

If the student is sharing a complaint or concern verbally then advise them that you will write it down so that it is recorded accurately. Read it back to them to ensure that it is recorded correctly. If the student wishes to write the complaint themselves then provide them with the means to do so, either a Student Voice form or a paper and pen.

The Student Voice form has a scale of expression faces:



Faces 1 – 3 will be considered as complaints even if they are not defined as such by the student.

Inform the student that all complaints will be investigated and taken seriously.

If at any time there are Child Protection and Safeguarding concerns within the complaint, immediately refer to the Safeguarding Procedure.

A copy of the Student Voice form or written complaint should be given to the Headteacher or Head of Education.

Wherever possible the situation should be resolved by the Headteacher through mediating between the student and the matter or subject of the complaint.

It is important that if the student's complaint is regarding the Headteacher, they have access to the Head of Education or Senior Management at My Choice to hear their complaint.

Students will be informed about the next step; this may be that the complaint has to be investigated further or that other people will need to be spoken to. The outcome of the complaint will be discussed with the student and recorded so that they can have a copy.

The Headteacher will ensure that parent / carer and social worker (where appropriate) will be advised about the complaint, the process in place and the outcome.

Students should have an acknowledgement that their complaint is being dealt with within 48 hours. A formal response to the student should be completed within 28 days, with the student being kept updated as to what is happening in the interim period of time. It is considered to be best practice to attend to the complaint and the outcome as soon as possible. The response to the complaint should always be given verbally to the student to ensure that they understand and have immediate opportunity to ask questions; the response to the complaint should also be written.

The complaint and response should be placed in the Student File and also in the Student Council File. Student Voice Follow Up Form is available for SMT to record the outcome and any related reports such as incident references. The record of the complaint and response will include:

- Who has made the complaint
- Date of the complaint
- Nature of the complaint
- Actions identified
- Records referenced
- Outcome of the complaint

The Student Voice Follow Up Form will be kept in the Student Council File however this is a management tool and is not shared with the student. It will be available for My Choice Senior Managers / Directors and for Ofsted.

Policy Link:

Safeguarding

Managing Allegations

Reviewed May 2025

Review due June 2026