Policy Ref:
SEMH / CP

Complaints Policy, Procedure & Guide

Education – Cambian Scarborough School

Policy Author / Reviewer	Michelle Blackburn
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1. Monitoring & Review

The author will undertake a formal review of this policy & procedure for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, biennially, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Signed:



Michelle Blackburn

Headteacher

April 2024

2. Concerns and Complaints - Helpful Information

We want you and your child to be completely satisfied with the quality of service you receive from all of us here at Scarborough School. If you are unhappy or worried about anything, then we are here to listen and help.

Rarely, despite our best efforts, things do go wrong and you may wish to make a formal complaint. You can access the school complaints policy via our website:

https://www.cambiangroup.com/specialist-education/our-schools/semh-schools/cambian-scarborough-school/reports-policies or, if you prefer, you can request a printed copy by calling the school on 01723 582073.

The school aims to make our complaint procedure transparent and straightforward, we aim to:

- Treat all complainants with respect and courtesy
- Be impartial and non-adversarial
- Address all points and issues
- Provide a response within agreed timescales
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation by independent person(s) or panel if needed
- Keep the complainant informed of the progress made
- Be sensitive to the needs of all those involved
- Ensure all decisions made are reasonable, fair, lawful, proportionate and rational
- Learn from findings and recommendations to make improvements to our school and the services we provide

3. Who Can Make Complaints

Our complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children and young people that are registered at Scarborough School; any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to the school about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. The individual, group or agent making the complaint is referred to as the complainant throughout this policy.

Staff who wish to make a complaint are to follow the Grievance Policy (which encourages informal resolution ahead of the formal grievance process) or the Whistleblowing Policy.

4. The Difference between a Concern and a Complaint

A **concern** may be defined as: 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.

A **complaint** may be defined as: 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. There is a useful flowchart on Page 8 of this guide to help you with any questions, concerns or complaints you may have. If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In such cases our headteacher; Michelle Blackburn, will refer you to an appropriate member of the education team so that you can discuss your concerns in confidence. However, it may be that you would prefer the matter to be managed directly by the school, in which case the headteacher; Michelle Blackburn, will be available for you.

Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Scarborough School takes concerns and complaints very seriously and will make every effort to resolve matters as quickly as possible. We understand that there may be occasions when you may wish to raise a concern formally, in which case Scarborough School will endeavour to resolve the issue through the stages outlined in this guide.

5. How to Raise a Concern or make a Complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. Concerns may be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as the appropriate consents have been given.

Complaints against education staff (with the exception of the headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to Michelle Blackburn (the headteacher).

To support the complaints process, we have a standardised form available (please see page 9) or you may prefer to send in a letter or email. Please mark written complaints as Private and Confidential and for the attention of Michelle Blackburn.

Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints should they need to be involved at a later stage.

Complaints that involve or are about the headteacher should be addressed to Richard George, Regional Lead for Education. Please mark envelopes as Private and Confidential.

Paper copies of the standardised complaints form are available from the school office; please ask the receptionist if you require one by calling 01723 582073 or in person or by emailing vanessa.moore@cambiangroup.com.

We will consider making reasonable adjustments, if required, to enable complainants to access and complete the complaints procedure. For instance; providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

Our address to send written complaints to is; Cambian Scarborough School, Unit 11 Plaxton Park, Cayton Low Road, Eastfield, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, YO11 3BQ.

Our telephone number is 01723 582073.

Our Headteacher's email address is michelle.blackburn@cambiangroup.com

Our Regional Lead's email address is richard.george@cambiangroup.com

6. Anonymous Complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. We are required to report progress updates to the complainant, which we are unable to do under such circumstances. However, if appropriate, the Headteacher or Regional Lead will determine whether the complaint warrants further investigation.

7. Timescales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the alleged incident or where a series of associated incidents have occurred within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

Complaints will be considered and resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible. As each complaint will require bespoke management, we will have realistic time limits for each action within each stage and these will be shared with you throughout the process. Rigid timeframes set at the beginning of the process may not be practical as each case will be managed uniquely and within realistic timeframes. However, where further investigations are necessary, revised time limits may need to be set. The complainant will be sent details of any new deadline and an explanation for the delay. Changes will be recorded on the Complaints Tracker.

8. Complaints Received Outside of Term Time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day **after** the holiday period.

It is important to note that if other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority, safeguarding teams or tribunals, this may impact our ability to adhere to the timescales within Cambian's Complaints Policy or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

9. Scope of Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints relating to the provision of services delivered by the school, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below:

Exceptions	**Who to Contact**
Concerns regarding admissions or initial assessments prior to admission	Wayne Parkes wayne.parkes@cambiangroup.com 07585 300315
Matters likely to require a safeguarding investigation	Complaints regarding specific safeguarding concerns are managed under our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and in accordance with statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may want to discuss these directly with our Regional Lead for Education, Richard George (richard.george@cambiangroup.com) or talk to your child's social worker if appropriate.
Exclusion from school	Further information about raising concerns regarding exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions Complaints about the application of the Behaviour Policy are made via our complaints procedure.
Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all of our employees to include temporary staff and contractors.
Staff Grievances	Complaints from staff will be managed under Cambian's Grievance Policy.
Staff Conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under Cambian's Disciplinary Policy and procedures if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified if the matter is being addressed.

10. Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints

Scarborough School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain; we will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to have to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will act to protect staff from such behaviour, including that which is verbally or physically abusive, offensive or threatening.

Scarborough School 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 co-operate with the complaint's investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaint's procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaint's procedure or in line with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be considered 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 investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations 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 school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed
- 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 by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- makes direct and frequent contact with staff outside of school hours and expects an immediate response
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

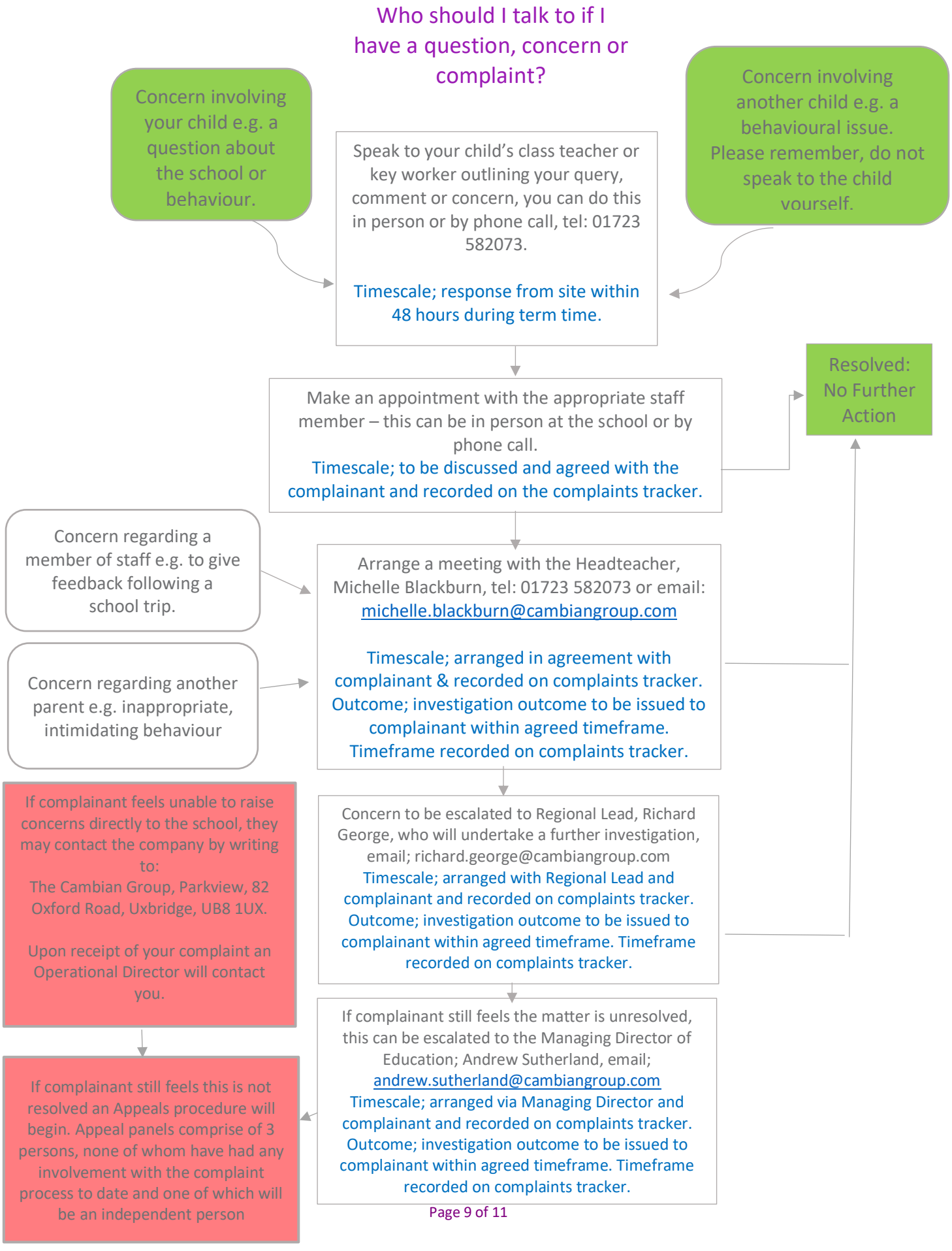
Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school whilst the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent either by letter, phone, email or text as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Regional Lead for Education will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If unreasonable behaviour and/or expectations continue, the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and respectfully ask them to reconsider their approach. For complainants who excessively contact Scarborough School, 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 and the outcome shared to the complainant via letter.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing.

11. Appendix A – Complaints Flowchart



12. Appendix B – Complaint Form

Please complete and return to a named staff member, marking your envelope PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL, we will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken next.

Your name:
Child's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the child (if relevant):
Address: Postcode: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have already spoken to anybody at the school about it.
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.
Signature: Date: