



# Complaints Policy

## **Venn Academy Trust** **Complaints Policy**

### **General Principles:**

This procedure is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to the academy, or the services that it provides.

An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

To allow for a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the academy as soon as possible. In general, any matter raised more than three months after the event, being complained of, will not be considered.

When complaining you are required to follow the academy procedure to allow your complaint to be acted upon both fairly and timely.

Please ensure you give as much accurate information as possible to allow your complaint to be both investigated and heard.

### **Raising a concern or complaint**

#### **Stage 1: informal**

The academy will take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter quickly. It may be the case that the provision or clarification of information will resolve the issue.

The complainant should raise the complaint as soon as possible with the relevant member of staff or the headteacher/head of school, either in person or by letter, telephone or email. If the complainant is unclear who to contact or how to contact them, they should contact the academy office.

The academy will acknowledge informal complaints within five school days, and investigate and provide a response within ten school days.

The informal stage may involve a meeting between the complainant and the headteacher/head of school and/or the subject of the complaint, if appropriate].

If the complaint is not resolved informally, it may be escalated to a formal complaint.

#### **6.2 Stage 2: formal**

The formal stage involves the complainant putting the complaint to the headteacher/head of school and/or the subject of the complaint in writing (letter or email).

The complainant should provide details such as relevant dates, times and the names of witnesses of events, alongside copies of any relevant documents. The complainant should also state what they feel would resolve the complaint.

If complainants need assistance raising a formal complaint, they can contact the academy office.

The headteacher/head of school (or other person appointed by the headteacher for this purpose) will then conduct their own investigation. The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant within 15 school days.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response and wishes to proceed to the next stage of this procedure, they should inform the clerk to the governing board in writing within ten school days.

### **6.3 Stage 3: review panel**

Complaints will be escalated to the panel hearing stage if the complainant is not satisfied with the response to the complaint at the second, formal, stage.

The panel will be appointed by or on behalf of the trust and must consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. At least one panel member must be independent of the management and running of the academy.

The panel will have access to the existing record of the complaint's progress.

The complainant must have reasonable notice of the date of the review panel; however, the review panel reserves the right to convene at their convenience rather than that of the complainant. At the review panel meeting, the complainant and representatives from the academy, as appropriate, will be present. Each will have an opportunity to set out written or oral submissions prior to the meeting.

The complainant must be allowed to attend the panel hearing and be accompanied if they wish.

At the meeting, each individual will have the opportunity to give statements and present their evidence, and witnesses will be called, as appropriate, to present their evidence.

The panel, the complainant and the academy representative(s) will be given the chance to ask and reply to questions. Once the complainant and academy representative(s) have presented their cases, they will be asked to leave and evidence will then be considered.

The panel will then put together its findings and recommendations from the case. The panel will also provide copies of the minutes of the hearing and the findings and recommendations to the complainant and, where relevant, the individual who is the subject of the complaint, and make a copy available for inspection by the proprietor and headteacher.

The academy will inform those involved of the decision in writing within ten school days of the review panel meeting.

## **Complaints against the CEO, Deputy CEO, executive headteacher, head of school, a governor or the governing board**

### **Stage 1: informal**

Complaints made against the CEO, Deputy CEO, executive headteacher, headteacher, head of school or any member of the governing board should be directed to the clerk to the governing board in the first instance.

If the complaint is about the CEO, Deputy CEO, executive headteacher, headteacher, head of school or one member of the governing board (including the chair or vice-chair), a suitably-skilled and impartial governor will carry out the steps at stage 1.

### **Stage 2: formal**

If the complaint is jointly about the chair and vice-chair, the entire governing board or the majority of the governing board, an independent investigator will carry out the steps in stage 2. They will be appointed by the governing board and will write a formal response at the end of their investigation.

### **Stage 3: review panel**

If the complaint is jointly about the chair and vice-chair, the entire governing board or the majority of the governing board, a committee of independent governors will hear the complaint. They will be sourced from local academies and will carry out the steps at stage 3.