**Silver Birch School**

**Complaints Policy and Procedure**

**Issued:** 31/08/13

**Reviewed:** 19/08/18

**Next review date:** August 2019

**Our aim:**

Silver Birch School is committed to working in an open and accountable way that builds the trust and respect of all our students, staff, parents/carers and associate organisations. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of each of the above and in particular by responding positively to complaints and by putting any mistakes made right.

Therefore, we aim to ensure that:

* making a complaint is as easy as possible;
* we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our performance which calls for an immediate response;
* we deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially;
* we respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc;
* we learn from complaints, use them to improve and review annually our complaints policy and procedures.

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally, and dealt with quickly. Our aims are to:

* resolve informal concerns quickly;
* keep matters low-key;
* enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred.

An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved but if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

# Preamble

**Definition:** Silver Birch School defines a complaint as 'any expression of dissatisfaction (with Silver Birch School, its students, with a member of staff, or with a governor) that relates to Silver Birch School and that requires a formal response'.

**Purpose:** The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

**Silver Birch School's responsibility will be to:**

* acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
* respond within a stated period of time;
* deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint;
* take action where appropriate. **A complainant's responsibility is to:**
* bring their complaint, in writing, to Silver Birch School's attention normally within 1 week of the issue arising;
* raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of Silver Birch School’s staff
* explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
* allow Silver Birch School a reasonable time to deal with the matter;
* recognise that some circumstances may be beyond Silver Birch School's control.

**Responsibility for Action:** All staff and governors of Silver Birch School.

**Confidentiality:** It is imperative that both the complainant and Silver Birch School maintain confidentiality.

**Monitoring:** Governors of Silver Birch School will receive annually an anonymized report of complaints made and their resolution.

# Formal Complaints Procedure

**Stage 1**

In the first instance every effort should be made to resolve the issue informally to the satisfaction of all parties concerned.

**Stage 2**

If you are unable to resolve the issue informally, you should write to the member of staff who dealt with you so that he or she has a chance to put things right. If your complaint concerns a governor of Silver Birch School, rather than a member of Silver Birch School's staff, you should write formally to the individual concerned. In your letter you should set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result, and the remedy you are seeking.

You can expect your complaint to be acknowledged within 4 working days of receipt. You should get a response and an explanation within

15 working days. If you are unsure which member of Silver Birch School’s staff to write to, your complaint should be sent to The Principal.

Our contact details are as follows –

**Silver Birch School**

**@ Shard End Community Centre**

**170 Packington Avenue**

**Shard End**

**Birmingham**

**B34 7RD**

## Telephone: 0121 747 4430/07970 079507 E-mail: enquiries@silverbirchschool.com

**Stage 3**

If you are not satisfied with the initial response to your complaint then you can write to The Principal and ask for your complaint and the response to be reviewed. If your complaint concerns the Principal your complaint should be addressed to the Chair of Governors. You can expect an acknowledgement of your request within 4 working days of receipt and a response within 15 working days.

Silver Birch School's aim is to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. However, inevitably some issues will be more complex and therefore may require longer to be fully investigated. Consequently timescales given for handling and responding to complaints are indicative. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, you will receive an interim response describing what is being done to deal with the matter and when a full reply can be expected and from whom.

Should an appropriate course of action be a formal hearing then a panel of three individuals will appointed by the Proprietor, none of whom are directly involved with the complaint and one of whom is independent of the management of the school. Parents/carers are entitled to be accompanied to the hearing by an appropriate adult should they wish.

Following the hearing the findings and recommendations will be forwarded to the complainant, the proprietor & the principal (and where relevant the individual complained about) in the form of a letter, within three working days of the hearing.

**Stage 4**

If you are not satisfied with the subsequent response from Stage 3 then you have the option of writing to the Chair of Governors, stating the reason why you are dissatisfied with the outcome. You must do this within 10 days of receiving the written response.

The Chair of Governors will respond normally within 10 working days to inform you of the action which will be taken to further investigate your complaint and when you can expect to hear the outcome of the investigation.

## Further recourse

If you remain dissatisfied following the completion of Stage 4 you may take further recourse to the Local Authority, Local Government Ombudsman, Ofsted or Department for Education as appropriate.

## Record keeping

The school undertakes to keep detailed written records of all complaints and these will indicate at what stage a complaint was resolved. Records of complaints are to be kept for a minimum of five years. The numbers of complaints received for an academic year will reported via the school’s prospectus and website.

## Confidentiality

The school undertakes to ensure that all correspondence, statements and records of complaints are kept confidential and are marked as such.

## Complaint review

On completion of a complaint investigation the school undertakes to provide the complainant, the proprietor & the principal (and where relevant the individual complained about) with a copy of any findings & recommendations resulting from the complaint, in letter form, within three working days of investigation completion.