

Amberleigh Therapeutic School

Golfa Hall

Complaints Policy

Procedure/Guidance

Policy Issued: March 2023

Policy Author: Sioned Davies (Deputy Head Teacher)

Reviewed by: Richard Knight (Headteacher)

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Overview

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide an outline of the complaints process at Amberleigh Therapeutic School, Golfa Hall so that members of the community are informed of how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at our school.
- Ensure that all complaints regarding Amberleigh Therapeutic School, Golfa Hall are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner.

This policy relates to complaints brought by parents, carers, pupils or members of our school community and applies to all matters relating to our school.

Amberleigh Therapeutic School, Golfa Hall welcomes all feedback, and is committed to continuous improvement. We value open communication within our community and are committed to understanding complaints and addressing them appropriately. We recognise that the complaints process provides an important opportunity for reflection and learning. We value and encourage open and positive relationships with our school community. We understand that it is in the best interests of pupils for there to be a trusting relationship between families and our school.

When addressing a complaint, it is expected that all parties will:

- Raise and discuss issues in a courteous and respectful manner.
- Acknowledge that the goal is to achieve an outcome that is in the affected pupil's best interests and acceptable to all parties.
- Act in good faith and respect the privacy and confidentiality of those involved, as appropriate.
- Recognise that all parties, including the broader school community, have rights and responsibilities that must be balanced.
- Recognise that schools and the Department may be subject to legal constraints on their ability to act or disclose information in some circumstances.

Preparation for raising a concern or complaint Amberleigh Therapeutic School, Golfa Hall encourages members of the community who may wish to submit a complaint to:

- Carefully consider the issues you would like to discuss.
- Remember you may not have all the facts relating to the issues that you want to raise.
- Think about how the matter could be resolved.

Complaints process

Amberleigh Therapeutic School, Golfa Hall is always happy to discuss with community members any concerns that they may have. Concerns in the first instance should be directed to your class tutor. Where possible, school staff will work with you to ensure that your concerns are appropriately addressed. Where concerns cannot be resolved in this way, community members may wish to make a formal complaint to the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher, noting that formal complaints should be directed to a member of the school's leadership team.

If you would like to make a formal complaint, in most cases, depending on the nature of the complaint raised, our school will first seek to understand the issues and will then convene a resolution meeting with the aim of resolving the complaint together. The following process will apply:

Aims

The aim of this policy is to set out clearly the complaints procedure with timescales for resolution of complaints and escalation procedures if required. Amberleigh Therapeutic School will provide an opportunity for a complaint to be made and considered on an informal basis. Where parents or carers are not satisfied with the response or if the parents or carers wish to pursue a formal complaint, this policy establishes a procedure for the complaint to be made in writing.

Complaints Handling

At Amberleigh Therapeutic School we strive to provide a safe and happy environment for all our children. Complaints will be handled using a 3 stage procedure.

- Stage 1: informal resolution - raising of complaint to relevant class teacher/head of department or member of SLT.
- Stage 2: a formal complaint in writing to the Headteacher
- Stage 3: referral to Complaints Panel.

STAGE 1 – Informal Resolution

If a parent or pupil has a complaint or concern, the first step would be to contact the relevant class teacher. In the majority of cases the matter can be resolved quickly and to parents or carers satisfaction in this way. However, if the class teacher is unable to resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary to consult with the Deputy Headteacher or the headteacher.

- Deputy Headteacher - Miss Sioned Davies
- Headteacher – Mr Richard Knight

A written record will be kept by the school of any complaints and the date they were received. If the matter has not been resolved within ten working days or the resolution is deemed unsatisfactory, parents or carers are advised to proceed with stage 2 of this policy.

STAGE 2 – Formal Complaint

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents next action point is to put their complaint in writing to the Head Master - Mr Richard Knight

Upon receiving a written complaint, the Headteacher will decide what action is to be taken. This will usually result in the Headteacher inviting the parents concerned to a meeting to discuss the matter.

It is the aim that a meeting should take place within 2 working days of receiving a formal letter of complaint. A written record a decision will be made regarding resolution of the matter. Parents will be informed in writing of the decision along with the Headteacher reasoning, within 15 working days of the complaint being received. It is hoped that a resolution will be reached at this

stage, however if parents or carers are not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3.

STAGE 3 – Referral to Complaints Panel

If parents are not satisfied with the response of the school, provision will be made for a hearing before a panel appointed on behalf of the proprietors - as detailed by the Education (Independent School Standards) (Wales) Regulations 2003.

The panel will consist of a panel appointed by the proprietor of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and at least one other person who is independent to the management and running of the school.

The parent has the right to attend the panel meeting and may be accompanied by one other person such as a relative, teacher, or friend. The meeting will be minuted and may be recorded if necessary. Any decision made by the panel will be provided in writing within 7 working days of the hearing.

The panel will aim to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that the complainant, proprietor and head teacher, and where relevant the person complained about, are each given a copy of any findings and recommendations.

A written record will be kept of all complaints indicating whether they were resolved at preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing. (See Form 1)

Correspondence, statements and records of complaints are to be kept confidential except where the National Assembly or a body conducting an inspection under section 163 of the 2002 Act requests access to any documents relating to the complaint.

Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy. This policy will be reviewed every two years. The next review is due in March 2025. We will regularly assess whether the arrangements we have put in place are being used correctly and work effectively.

Resolution

Amberleigh Therapeutic School, Golfa Hall may seek to resolve a complaint by:

- An apology or expression of regret
- A change of decision
- A change of policy, procedure or practice
- Offering the opportunity for pupil to discuss further during a community meeting or other support.
- Other actions consistent with school values that are intended to support the pupil and school relationship, engagement, and participation in the school community.

In some circumstances, Amberleigh Therapeutic School, Golfa Hall may also ask you to attend a meeting with an independent third party or participate in a mediation with an accredited mediator to assist in the resolution of the dispute.