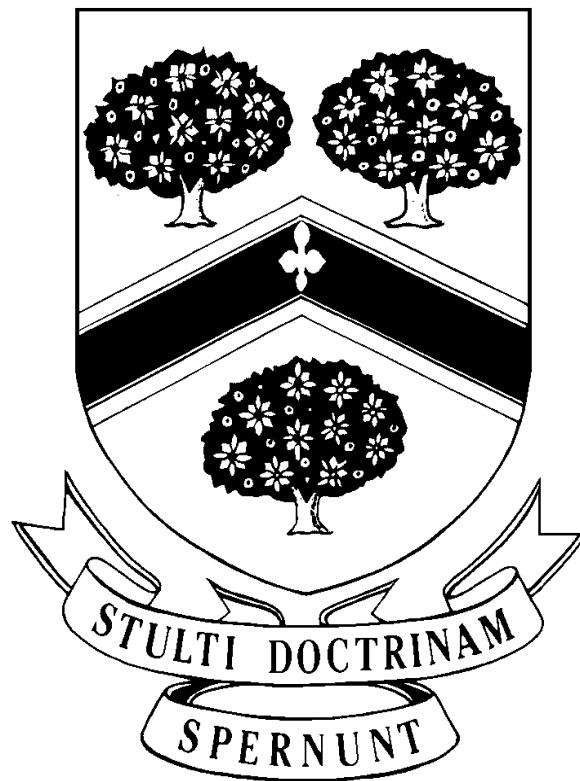


THORNTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

**A SPECIALIST SPORTS, SCIENCE & APPLIED LEARNING
TRUST SCHOOL**



FOUNDED 1673

POLICY FOR COMPLAINTS

REVIEWED: MARCH 2003

POLICY FOR COMPLAINTS **(Curriculum, Collective Worship and related matters)**

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Section 409 of the 1996 Education Act and Article 14 of the School's Articles of Government require the Governing Body to have procedures for the consideration and disposal of complaints relating to matters concerning the curriculum followed within the School. The Secretary of State has approved the procedures set out below. They are comprehensive and cover all relevant complaints from the point when informal discussion becomes inadequate to a point where the next step would be complaint to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State will not consider complaints on matters covered by the procedures until they have been exhausted.
- 1.2** The aim of this document is to set out how complaints will be handled. It describes how anyone with a complaint can make sure that it is dealt with. It is available for inspection free of charge in the School Office.
- 1.3** The procedures do not cover complaints about the actions of individual teachers or the Headteacher. If, in the course of consideration of a complaint, it is decided that disciplinary proceedings should be initiated, separate action will be taken as appropriate. Separate arrangements apply to resolve disagreements about the curriculum requirements specified in statements for children with special educational needs.
- 1.4** The complainant may make his or her representations at each stage of the procedures in person, accompanied by a friend if so desired. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to ensure that information is available to complainants in languages other than English and arrangements made for an interpreter to be present during any oral representations.

SECTION 2 - DUTIES ABOUT WHICH COMPLAINTS MAY BE MADE

- 2.1** The duties covered by the procedure are:
- a) The provision of a curriculum which meets the general requirements of Section 78, 79 and 80 of the 2002 Act;
 - b) The implementation of the National Curriculum and compliance with Orders and Regulations made about its requirements and exceptions to its provision;
 - c) Provision of courses leading to external qualification, only if that qualification and the associated syllabus have been approved;
 - d) Provision of religious education and worship as required by the 1988 Act and other enactments;

- e) The need to act reasonably in deciding whether to apply either with or without the National Curriculum Council for exemption from all or part of the National Curriculum in order to carry out developmental work;
- f) Consideration of appeals by parents about the temporary withdrawal of pupils from part or all of the National Curriculum;
- g) Operation of charging policies in relation to the curriculum;
- h) Compliance with requirements relating to the provision of information;
- i) Compliance with any other enactments relating to the curriculum.

Please note: any matters not covered by the above definitions do not come within the scope of these arrangements.

SECTION 3 - THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Stage 1 : Informal Discussions

- 3.1.** The Secretary of State expects that any concerns expressed by parents and others about the school curriculum and related matters will be dealt with in informal discussion with teachers and/or the Headteacher in the first instance. If dissatisfied, the person concerned may then submit a formal complaint to the Headteacher. He or she must do so in writing, making clear that it is a formal complaint, and specifying its nature as exactly as possible.
- 3.2** If in his/her view the complaint falls outside the scope of the procedures (see section 2), the Headteacher will advise the complainant of any other recourse he or she may have. The Headteacher will consider urgent complaints as quickly as possible. If it is clear that investigation of the relevant complaint will take some time, the Headteacher will notify the complainant of the fact, and of progress during consideration of the complaint. Following that consideration the Headteacher will inform the complainant of:
- a) The decision he/she has reached, and the reason for it;
 - b) Any action taken or proposed, including details of any request made to those complained against to take particular actions to resolve the complaint.

Stage 2 : Formal Complaint to the Governing Body

- 3.3** If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Headteacher's response, the Headteacher must refer the matter to the Governing Body or Committee of it via the Clerk to the Governing Body. The Clerk will write to the complainant with details of how the Governing Body or Committee of it will consider the complaint, and of the complainant's right as explained in paragraph 1.4 above and in the paragraphs below.
- 3.4** If the complaint appears to be urgent, the Clerk will convene a meeting of the Governing Body or Committee to consider the complaint within 12 days of the receipt, being days on which the school is normally in session "school days"). If the complaint is not urgent, the Clerk will convene a meeting to consider the complaint

within 20 school days. The Clerk will give the complainant a minimum of 7 ordinary day's notice of the date, time and place of the meeting; any reasonable request made by the complainant for an alternative date being set at the earliest possible time. If the complainant does not wish to attend the meeting, he or she may present the complaint in writing to the Governing Body or Committee. The complainant must submit any such material to the Clerk no later than 2 school days before the meeting.

3.5 Subject to paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7, the Headteacher accompanied by a friend or representative if he/she so wishes - may be present at the meeting of the Governing Body or committee of it which is convened to consider a complaint.

3.6 Where the complainant chooses to attend in person, the usual order of proceedings shall be as follows:

- a) The Chairman of the Governing Body or Committee will welcome the complainant, any representative and introduce those present.
- b) The complainant may, if he or she chooses, restate the nature of the complaint.
- c) The complainant may be asked for questions by the Governing Body or Committee and by the Headteacher.
- d) The Headteacher may be asked to make a statement to the Governing Body or Committee, regarding the matter complained of and may be asked questions by the Governing Body (or committee) or by the complainant.
- e) The complainant may, if he or she chooses, summarise the complaint.
- f) The Headteacher, complainant and any friend or representative they have brought will be asked to leave.

3.7 The Governing Body or Committee shall consider the complaint at the meeting and any relevant information or factors. They shall only reach a decision after the Headteacher and where relevant, the complainant and any friend or representative or either individual, have withdrawn. The Governing Body or Committee shall decide:

- **To reject the complaint;**
- **To uphold the complaint; or**
- **To investigate the complaint further.**

3.8 The Clerk shall inform the complainant and the Headteacher in writing within 5 school days:

- a) Of the decision reached by the Governing Body or Committee under paragraph 3.6 and the reasons for the decision; if the Governing Body or Committee decides that the complaint falls outside the scope of paragraph 4, the Clerk will inform the complainant of any further resources he or she may have.
- b) If the complaint was upheld, of any action taken or proposed, including details of any request to those complained against, to take particular actions to resolve the complaint; where the complainant is dissatisfied with action taken or proposed to remedy the complaint, he or she may wish to pursue the matter further with the Headteacher, the Governing Body or the Committee as appropriate.

- c) Where the Governing Body's response has failed to satisfy the complaint, the fact that further recourse lies in a complaint to the Secretary of State under Section 409 of the 1996 Act.

SECTION 4 - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 4.1** Where under paragraph 3.6 the Governing Body or Committee decides to investigate the complaint further, the Clerk shall inform the complainant of the steps to be taken and of the progress made. Any subsequent meeting of the Governing Body or Committee shall be subject to the provisions described above in so far as they are relevant.
- 4.2** The Secretary of State may require the Governing Body to make annual returns to the Department for Education giving the number of formal complaints dealt with and their outcomes. These returns will not identify individual complainants.
- 4.3** If you have any questions about the procedures described above, you may wish to contact the Clerk to the Governors who will be able to advise you.

SECTION 5 - THE ROLE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

- 5.1** Section 409 of the 1996 Act lays down that the Secretary of State may not consider any complaint within the scope of these arrangements unless it has first been considered under the Governors arrangements for handling complaints. The intention of this provision is that complaints should, if possible, be dealt with and resolved between the complainant and the parties responsible.
- 5.2** A complainant who is still dissatisfied after these arrangements have been exhausted will be able to complain to the Secretary of State under Section 409 of the 1996 Act.