



# **Complaints Procedure Policy 2016-17**



## **Introduction and purpose**

Arco Academy prides itself on the quality of the education it offers and strives to maintain excellent relationships with all the people and organisations they deal with. Occasionally parents or other people who deal with Arco Academy may feel dissatisfied in some way with that experience. The purpose of this complaints procedure is to resolve those problems swiftly and effectively. Complaints from parents deserve particular attention, but this policy is intended to apply to complaints received from anyone.

There are a small number of matters which are not dealt with by this complaints procedure, because there are separate procedures, prescribed by law, for dealing with them. These include:

- Reviews of decisions to exclude pupils from a school
- Appeals against a decision not to admit a child to a school

## **How complaints are considered**

Arco Academy aims to resolve most complaints informally, and therefore the first stage of this complaints process is always an informal one. If this is not possible there are two further formal stages. So in summary the stages of the complaints procedure are:

- Stage 1: Informal consideration of the complaint
- Stage 2: Consideration by a senior officer
- Stage 3: Consideration by a panel.

On the rare occasions where complaints arise they will be dealt with by the staff of Arco Academy, including the Deputy Head at the informal stage. The Deputy Head of Arco Academy will deal with formal complaints at stage 2. Complaints that relate to Arco Academy's central functions will be considered by an officer of Arco Academy at the informal stage and a senior officer at stage 2. All complaints which reach stage 3 will be considered by a panel including an independent member.

### **Stage 1**

At this stage the intention is to resolve the complaint informally. If you are unsure who is the most appropriate person in the Academy to discuss your complaint with, you should contact the Academy administrator who will be able to advise you.

On the rare occasions where it is not possible to resolve your complaint in a timely and informal manner then the complaint should be formalised as set out in stage 2 below.

### **Stage 2**

- a) If you are not satisfied with the outcome of stage 1, or your complaint has not been resolved in a timely manner, you may complain in writing to the Deputy Director. You should set out clearly your specific complaint, the reasons why you are not satisfied with the outcome of the informal process and what redress you seek.
- b) The Deputy Director will respond to your complaint within 10 term time days. This may be by holding a meeting with you or responding in writing. If a meeting is held, the Deputy Director will write to you afterwards to confirm the outcome of stage 2 within five term-time days of the meeting.

### **Complaints about the Academy's central functions**

It should be possible for most (if not all) complaints to be resolved by the officers responsible for the function that is the subject of the complaint. This is our primary aim and every effort will be made to ensure that this is the case. The following procedure will apply for stage 1 and stage 2.

#### **Stage 1**

At this stage the intention is to resolve the complaint informally by speaking to the officer responsible for the function your complaint is about. If you are not already in contact with the appropriate officer, or you are unsure who that is, you should contact the Arco Administration, who will direct you to the appropriate officer.

On the rare occasions where it is not possible to resolve your complaint in a timely and informal manner then the complaint should be formalised as set out in stage 2 below.

#### **Stage 2**

a) If you are not satisfied with the outcome of stage 1, or your complaint has not been resolved in a timely manner, you may complain in writing to the Deputy Head. The Arco Administrator will be able to advise you who this is. You should set out clearly your specific complaint, the reasons why you are not satisfied with the outcome of stage 1 and what redress you seek.

b) The Deputy Head will respond to your complaint within 10 term time days. This may be by holding a meeting with you or responding in writing. If a meeting is held the he or she will write to you afterwards to confirm the outcome of stage 2 within five term-time days of the meeting.

### **Complaints that reach stage 3**

In the unlikely event that, having exhausted stages 1 and 2 of the complaints process, it has not been possible to resolve the complaint, then you may complain using stage 3 of the process. It should be noted that stage 3 is the final stage of this complaints procedure and no further appeal or stage is available.

#### **Stage 3 comprises the following:**

a) Where you are not satisfied with the final decision of the Deputy Head in relation to your complaint you may complain in writing to the Director within 10 term time days of the conclusion of stage 2 (which will be the date of receipt of the formal response to stage 2). You should ensure that you clearly set out your specific complaint and the redress you seek.

b) A panel of at least three members will be appointed by the Director to hear the complaint, within 15 term time days of the formal complaint to the Director. The constitution of the panel will be decided by the Director. It will include an independent member. This will be someone who is not involved in the management, running or governance of Arco Academy or any of its schools.

c) You may attend and be accompanied by one person of your choosing. This may be a relative or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

d) The decision of the Panel will be communicated in writing to the Academy and to you within 5 term-time days of the complaint hearing.

e) The findings and recommendations are final and binding on all parties.

**Record Keeping & Confidentiality**

You can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where any legal obligation prevails.

Arco Academy will maintain a record of all complaints that reach stage 2 or 3. This will include:

- (i) whether they were resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and
- (ii) action taken by the Academy as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

