

Adopted by Governing Body 7 June 2016

TORCH ACADEMY GATEWAY TRUST WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A COMPLAINT OR WISH TO EXERCISE YOUR RIGHTS UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT OR DATA PROTECTION ACT

Introduction

Naturally, we hope that you will be happy with the way in which we work with you and your son or daughter and will not feel the need to complain. However, we recognise that there may be occasions when you feel that you wish to make a formal complaint.

The following details set out the procedure for making a complaint and how to exercise your rights to obtain certain types of information from the Trust.

Most complaints can be dealt with quickly and informally by a telephone call, an e mail or a quick word with the member of staff concerned.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Stage One

If you are not satisfied with an informal approach you should contact your child's tutor or the relevant Head of Year (for pastoral issues) or Head of Department (for purely academic issues), setting out the details of your complaint and making it clear that you are invoking the Complaints Procedure.

The Head of Year or Head of Department will respond to your complaint as soon as possible, usually within 5 school days, and arrange a meeting to explain the outcome if necessary and practical. If the complaint is submitted immediately prior to or during a holiday period, the response will usually be within 5 school days from the beginning of the next half-term or term.

Stage Two

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint to the Head of Year or Head of Department you may write to the Senior School Leader, who will respond to your complaint as soon as possible, usually within 5 school days, and again arrange a meeting to explain the outcome if necessary and practical. If the complaint is submitted immediately prior to or during a holiday period, the response will usually be within 5 school days from the beginning of the next half-term or term.

Stage Three

If you are still dissatisfied, or if your complaint is of a very serious nature, you may complain to the Head of School. Complaints to the Head of School must be made in writing, and be accompanied by any appropriate documentation. You will need to make it clear that you are invoking Stage Three of the Complaints Procedure.

The Head of School will acknowledge your complaint as soon as possible and will explain how it will be investigated. These investigations will often involve other senior staff. Complaints will normally be investigated within 20 school days. If the complaint is

submitted immediately prior to or during a holiday period, the response will usually be within 20 school days from the beginning of the next half-term or term. When the investigation is complete, the Head of School will write to you to explain the outcome of your complaint.

Stage Four

If you remain dissatisfied, or if your complaint is about the Head of School, you should contact the Chairman of Governors via the Clerk to the Governing Body.

Again, your complaint should be in writing, be accompanied by any appropriate documentation and make it clear that you are invoking Stage Four of the Complaints Procedure. Complaints about a decision of the Head of School or the Head of School's actions in response to a complaint must reach the Clerk to the Governing Body within four weeks of the Head of School's decision or response to the complaint.

The Governing Body will:

- Acknowledge your letter within 10 school days. If the complaint is submitted immediately prior to or during a holiday period, the response will usually be within 10 school days from the beginning of the next half-term or term.
- Tell you what arrangements have been made for your complaint to be considered
- Arrange for a meeting with a panel of at least two nominated Governors (who will have no prior knowledge of the matter of the complaint) and one person who is independent of the academy at which you will be able to explain your complaint.
- Advise that you are entitled to be accompanied by a friend or other advisor at such a meeting.
- Provide you with a clear explanation of the Governors' findings and actions, electronically or otherwise (a copy will also be sent to the person complained about unless disclosure is precluded by other regulations or protocols).

The Governing Body will normally complete the investigation of a complaint within 20 school days.

Copies of all correspondence relating to the Complaint will be retained, confidentially, by the Clerk to the Governors at the College except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection or undertaking another statutory function requires access to them. The records of complaint are normally held for ten years. A written record will be kept of all complaints, and whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a panel hearing. **Further Action**

The decision of the Governing Body is final. The Governing Body will not consider any subsequent complaint that is materially the same as a complaint that has already been considered at Stage Four nor will it enter into any further correspondence with a complainant in these circumstances save to bring to their attention the right to complain to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) or OfSTED who consider the complaint according to their own procedures.

The Head of School, in consultation with the Chair of Governors, may cease to respond to a complainant who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder the school's consideration of their or other people's complaints. If such a decision is taken the Head of School will advise the complainant in writing.

**Address for written
complaints:**

Clerk to the Governors
Torch Academy Gateway Trust
The Banks
BINGHAM
Nottinghamshire

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