



COMPLAINTS – A STUDENT’S GUIDE

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This Policy incorporates the Academy’s vision and core values.

Introduction:

Here at Spires Academy, everyone should feel part of a safe and happy community. From time to time, you may be worried or upset about something. This Guide tells you about various people available to help you, so that you can choose someone you feel you can trust. The experience of students in this and other Academies is that, no matter how bad the problem may seem to be, it is almost always a great help to talk about it.

Upsetting events:

Here are some examples of the kinds of thing which are upsetting and which we want to encourage you to talk to someone about:

- You are having difficulty with one or more of your Academy subjects
- You think you may be ill and are too afraid or embarrassed to tell anyone
- You feel very depressed, or that life is not worth living
- You or your friends are being bullied or treated unkindly by another student
- You think that another student is not eating properly, or may be harming him/herself
- You are worried, angry or hurt about something happening at home
- You think that another student has done, or is about to do, something seriously wrong or dangerous
- You are caught in a serious situation that you don’t know how to get out of e.g. to do with drugs, alcohol, money or sex
- You feel you are being treated unfairly simply because you are a girl, or simply because you are a boy, or because of your colour or religion, or because you have a disability or learning difficulty, or because you are gay.
- You feel that a member of staff has treated you unfairly eg in a punishment given, or in favouring other students
- You feel that you are not given enough privacy or independence.

What You Should Do

If any of these things are happening, please talk to someone about it, even if you feel you can handle the situation. It may be that what’s going on affects other people at the Academy, or that you are unaware of all the different ways a problem can be tackled.

There are a number of different people who will be very happy to talk to you and to help you try to find a solution to the problem. It may help to talk first with another student who is a trusted friend.



However, sometimes you may also need the help and support of an adult or professional. Choose whoever you feel most comfortable and safe talking to:

- **Your tutor, the Student Support Manager or Deputy Head in charge of your mini-school, the Youth Community tutor, a Learning Support Assistant, the Head of School or any member of staff.**

We would expect one of these to be the first person you speak to if you have a **complaint** about the Academy or a member of staff, as it is normally the quickest and most effective way to get to the heart of the problem and resolve it.

However, if you do not feel able to speak to a member of staff, other people to talk to are:

- **Your parents or other relatives**
- **Your social worker**
- **The school nurse**
- **One of the Academy governors**
- **Social Services**
- **An older student at the Academy**
- **Child Line: Telephone 0800 1111**

If you prefer, you can write to one of the people mentioned, although this does sometimes slow things down.

Confidentiality

The Academy understands that you may wish to talk about a problem only if it is kept secret. In many cases, this is possible, but there are two exceptions you should be aware of:

- The Head of School is required by the governors to make sure she is aware of all issues affecting the safety and welfare of students at the Academy. This means that the Head of School will need to be kept informed by staff of the broad nature (but not usually the details) of any serious health, safety or welfare issue of which they are aware. If your problem or complaint involves the Head of School, then one of the governors or Deputy Head of School will be informed instead
- The Academy has a legal duty to keep your parents/guardians informed about your welfare and progress at the Academy. However, if you do not wish them to be informed, please say so, so that the options can be discussed with you.

However, please do not let this stop you from raising complaints or saying when you are worried or upset.

What Academy Staff Will Do

However you choose to contact one of these people (email, letter, telephone contact, face-to-face contact) you will get an initial response within three days. It might be that your concern is recommended to another member of staff who can help you better. However, all Academy staff will try to help you in all circumstances and will tell you what they are doing, who will be involved and how they will help resolve the difficulty.