

HOW TO LISTEN TO COMPLAINTS

As soon as you realise that you are listening to a complaint, remember these points:

Say who you are

If you are unknown to the person, introduce yourself.

Ask for their name and use it

Anonymous complaints are difficult to resolve.

Be open-minded

Set aside any prejudices about the complainant or the issue raised and listen in an open-minded way.

Take time to find out exactly what the problem is

It is easy for someone to forget to tell you an important detail, particularly if they are upset or annoyed.

Check you are being understood

Make sure that the person understands what you are saying. Do not use jargon; it can confuse or annoy someone 'not in the know'.

Treat all complaints seriously

However small or trivial it may seem to you, the complaint will be an important problem for anyone who takes the trouble to complain.

Stay calm and cool

Do not argue with the person - be polite and try to find out exactly what the person thinks is going wrong or has gone wrong.

Don't rush

Take your time. Let people have their say and let off steam if they need to. Listen carefully and sympathetically to their problems before replying and attempting to find a solution or offer a next step.

Be courteous and patient

Be sympathetic and helpful, but do not blame other colleagues.

Don't take the complaint personally

To an angry or upset person, YOU are the school and the only one they can put their feelings to right now.

Don't pass the buck

Try not to keep transferring an angry person from one place to another. Make sure you know the contact person for anything you cannot deal with yourself.

Don't be flippant

First impressions count. You and the school may be judged on your immediate reaction.