

## Complaints Policy

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 We believe that our school provides a good education for all our children, and that the Headteacher and other staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents. The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases.
- 1.2 If any parent is unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or has any concern relating to the school, we encourage that person to talk to the child's class teacher immediately.
- 1.3 We deal with all complaints in accordance with procedures set out by the LA. If the school cannot resolve any complaint itself, those concerned can ask the LA to intervene.
- 1.4 All parents have the right, as a last resort, to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education, if they still feel that their complaint has not been properly addressed.

### 2 Aims and objectives

- 2.1 Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

### 3 The stages of the complaints procedure

#### Informal stage (stage 1)

- 3.1 If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the child's progress.
- 3.2 Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Headteacher. The Headteacher considers any such complaint very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage.

#### Formal Stage (stage 2)

- 3.3 Formal complaints need to be made in writing to the Headteacher in the first instance or to the Chair of Governors if they are unsatisfied with the Headteacher's response. The maximum time delay for an investigation into a historical issue is normally three months, as after this time evidence cannot be reliably found to support the investigation. It is important to include a clear

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statement of the actions you would like the school to take to resolve your concerns.

- 3.4** Formal responses in the form of a letter detailing whether parts are upheld or not and any actions the school will take will be sent within 10 working days of receipt of the written complaint.
- 3.5** Formal complaints will be investigated by the Headteacher in the first instance, and follow up phone calls or meetings may take place. For this reason it is important to include contact details in the complaint. If the complaint requires the Chair of Governors to investigate, this should be clearly indicated.

### External review of proceedings (stage 3)

- 3.6** If unsatisfied with the Headteacher's/Chair of Governor's responses, complainants can request a review of the evidence used to decide if complaints are upheld. A team of three governors not involved in responding to the original complaint will review the evidence and send a formal response letter.
- 3.7** If still unsatisfied, complainants can request that the Secretary of State reviews the school's procedures to check they are compliant and following regulations in accordance with Section 29 of the 2002 Education Act (which outlines Governing body complaints procedures). The Secretary of State can only respond to complaints under Section 496 of the 1996 Education Act if;

*"...a governing body (or LA) has acted, or is proposing to act, unreasonably with respect to any power conferred or duty imposed by that Act. Such a complaint is unlikely to be successful where a school can show that it has acted reasonably in seeking to resolve a complaint and has used a 'fair' procedure."*

In the case of spurious complaints or those used in a vexatious manner, the mechanism for responding to these complaints will be different, and will only outline why the complaints are not to be investigated.

Anonymous complaints will not be investigated under this procedure except in exceptional circumstances. This could include serious child protection or bullying allegations, or anything relating to the safeguarding of children. In this case the complaint will be forwarded onto external agencies so that appropriate formal investigations can take place.

Formal complaints can have one of four possible results:

- Complaint upheld (1) – in this instance, evidence was found that the school could improve in response to the complaint, and an action will be taken to improve provision in the school. The response will include an apology and a summary of the actions to be taken.
- Complaint partially upheld (2) – in this instance, some aspects of the complaint could have been found to require action, even if the entire complaint is not upheld. This response will include an apology and a summary of the actions to be taken in response. Any aspects that are not upheld will be outlined clearly.
- Complaint not upheld (3)/Lack of Evidence (4) – in this case, evidence could not be found to support the complaint. A response will be sent outlining the

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content of the complaint and why no action will be taken. In some instances, it may be impossible for an investigating officer to find further evidence, for example if there are two different accounts of a conversation from the two parties involved, and there are no other witnesses. In these cases, the officer cannot uphold the complaint, but that is not to say that an incident did not occur, simply that supporting evidence could not be found.

If a complaint relates to a Local Authority procedure or the provisions from an external agency, such as those responsible for admissions, the national curriculum, exclusion appeals or special educational needs, although the school will acknowledge the complaint and outline their response, this will only relate to any elements that are within the school's direct control. The complainant will be signposted to the contact details of those agencies responsible for the provision that is the subject of the complaint.

### **4 Monitoring and review**

- 4.1** The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Headteacher logs all complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved.
- 4.2** Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. The complaints procedure is made available to all parents in the school prospectus and on the school website, so that they can be properly informed.

**Signed:**

**Date:**