



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Implementation Date:

Review Date:

Governors Committee:

1. Introduction

The Head Teacher, staff and governors work hard to build positive relationships with all parents. The governing bodies of all maintained schools in England are required, under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides. The law also requires that the procedure be publicised. The requirement to have a complaints procedure in place does not in any way undermine efforts to resolve concerns informally. Taking informal concerns seriously will reduce the number of concerns that develop into formal complaints. This policy document follows guidance published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and sets out the staged procedures that the school follows if a complaint is made.

2. Investigating Complaints

The following formal procedures will be invoked when attempts to resolve an issue informally are unsuccessful, and the person raising the concern wishes to take the matter further. The Head Teacher will have responsibility for the operation and management of the school complaints procedure. Where the complaint concerns the Head Teacher, or a Governor, the Chair of Governors will carry out this role.

At each stage of the complaints procedure, the person investigating the complaint will make sure that they:

- Establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved
- Meet with the complainant or contact them
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right
- Interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- Respect confidentiality
- Conduct any interview with an open mind
- Keep notes of the interview

Individual complaints will not be heard by the whole governing body at any stage, as this could compromise the impartiality of any panel set up for a disciplinary hearing against a member of staff following a serious complaint.

3. Stage One: Concerns heard by a staff member

If a parent is concerned about anything they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's teacher (appropriate staff e.g. enabler)

immediately. Most matters can be dealt with in this way. Teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress. They will always want to know if there is a problem so that they can take action before a child's progress is affected.

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Where possible the school will respect the views of a complainant who feels unable to discuss a complaint with a particular member of staff and, in such cases, will refer the complaint to the Head Teacher. In circumstances where the complaint concerns the Head Teacher the complainant will be referred to the Chair of Governors.

Complaints at this stage of the procedure will receive an initial response within 5 working days.

4. Stage Two: Complaint heard by the Head Teacher

Where a complainant is dissatisfied with the way the complaint has been dealt with at Stage One, the complaint will be referred to the Head Teacher or assigned Deputy Head Teacher. The Head Teacher or assigned Deputy Head Teacher will carry out a thorough investigation of all complaints referred at this stage.

Complaints at this stage of the procedure will be heard within 10 working days from the referral.

5. Stage Three: Complaint heard by the Governing Body Complaints Appeal Panel

Where a complainant is dissatisfied with the way the complaint has been dealt with at Stages One and Two, they must write, giving details of the complaint, to the Chair of the Governing Body. The Chair of Governors will then convene a governing body complaints appeal panel hearing to which the complainant will be invited. The governors' appeal panel is the final stage of the school-based procedure.

Complaints at this stage of the procedure will be heard within 20 working days. Complainants will be given 10 days notice of the date of the appeal hearing and advised, in writing, of the outcome of the Panel hearing within 5 working days of the date of the hearing.

