



## Complaints Procedure

The school actively seeks to promote a harmonious environment and positive relationships amongst pupils, parents, staff and governors but acknowledges that there may be occasions where individuals may wish to communicate their concerns about any aspect of the school, be it activities, lessons, facilities or another person. It is anticipated that most such occasions shall result in a dialogue between the dissatisfied party and a member of staff or the headteacher and that such dialogue shall reach a mutually satisfactory conclusion and resolution of the matter, including apologising where necessary. However, we recognise that not all instances shall be so resolved.

On occasions where dialogue does not reach a mutually satisfactory conclusion, the individual concerned may wish to access a process through which such a criticism may be considered and addressed. This complaints policy and the accompanying procedure provide the framework within which any person may raise a criticism related to any aspect of the school and have confidence that it will be considered seriously and dealt with appropriately, regardless of the nature of the complaint

### Dealing with Complaints – Formal procedures

1. The formal procedures will be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.
2. The headteacher has responsibility for the operation and management of the school complaints procedure.

#### Principals

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- be easily accessible and publicised;
- be simple to understand and use;
- be impartial;
- be non-adversarial;
- allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress;
- ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary;
- respect people's desire for confidentiality;
- address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary;
- provide information to the school's senior management team so that services can be improved.

## Complaints Procedure

**All complaints shall be considered whether made for example in writing, by email or, in person or by telephone.**

### **For a general complaint:**

**Step 1** If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education or support 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 resolved positively in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before it seriously affects the child's progress.

**Step 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 head teacher. The head teacher will consider all matters of concern very seriously and investigate each case thoroughly. Most complaints would normally be resolved at this stage.

**Step 3** Only when an informal complaint fails to be resolved by the head teacher should a formal complaint be made to the governing body. Complaints should be made using the appropriate Complaints Procedure Form stating the nature of the complaint, who has been spoken to already and the preferred outcome. The parent should send the Complaints Procedure Form to the Chair of Governors via the school office.

### **For a complaint about the head teacher:**

**Step 1** If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the behaviour, leadership or management of the head teacher, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with the head teacher; most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way.

**Step 2** Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the head teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Chair of the Governing body. The Chair will consider all matters of concern very seriously and investigate each case thoroughly. Most complaints would normally be resolved at this stage.

**Step 3** Only when an informal complaint fails to be resolved by the chair should a formal complaint be made to the governing body. Complaints should be made using the appropriate Complaints Procedure Form stating the nature of the complaint, who has been spoken to already and the preferred outcome. The parent should send the Complaints Procedure Form to the governing body via the clerk to the governors).

### **For a complaint about a school governor:**

Any complaint made against the Chair of Governors or another member of the Governing Body should be made in writing to the clerk to the Governing Body. Where a complaint is against the chair of governors or another governor, the complaint will move straight to step 3 of the procedure.

### **Complaint Heard by Governing Bodies Complaints Appeal Panel**

The complainant needs to write to the Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint. The Chair, or a nominated governor, will convene a GB complaints panel.

**The Chairman of Governors will:**

- **acknowledge the letter/email within two working days;**
- **gather information from the Head Teacher;**
- **review the complaint with up to three Governors;**
- **write to parents, explaining the school's position and any proposed actions within ten working days of the parent's letter/email**

The chair of governors will nominate a governor to co-ordinate the procedure and will appoint a **complaints panel** consisting of 3 governors who are not employees of the school. The nominated co-ordinator will chair the complaints panel.

The co-ordinator will arrange a meeting of the complaints panel to discuss the complaint and will invite the person making it to attend the meeting so that they can explain the complaint in more detail. The school will give the complainant at least five days' notice of the meeting. If the complainant cannot attend the suggested date, a further date will be set. If the complainant does not attend the second date, a third and final date will be set, at which time the meeting will proceed without the complainant present.

The head teacher will write a report addressing the complaint and ensure that the complaints panel members and the complainant receive a copy 4 days before the meeting. (If it is a complaint about the head teacher, the Chair of Governors will write the report).

The complainant is invited to write a report addressing the issue and must ensure that the complaints panel members and the head teacher (or Chair of Governors) receives a copy 2 days before the meeting. Other written evidence will not be accepted at the meeting, except in exceptional circumstances.

**Checklist for a Panel Hearing**

The panel needs to take the following points into account:

The panel must take the following points into account:

- the hearing is as informal as possible;
- after introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint (with the support of parent partnership or other advocate if required);
- the panel members and head teacher (or Chair of Governors) may ask questions;
- the head teacher (or Chair of Governors) is then invited to explain the school's actions (with support of DHT, SENCo or other supporter if required);
- the panel members or complainant may ask questions;;
- the complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint;
- the head teacher (or Chair of Governors) is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint;
- the chair of the panel explains that both parties will hear from the panel within 3 working days;
- both parties leave the meeting while the panel decides on the issues.

When the panel has fully investigated the complaint, the chair of the panel, on behalf of the governing body, will write to the complainant confirming the outcome of the complaint and any agreed action to be taken. The panel can:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- decide on appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

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### **Complaint Form**

**Please complete and return to Mr S Talbot (headteacher) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.**

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| <b>Your name:</b>                      |
| <b>Pupil's name:</b>                   |
| <b>Your relationship to the pupil:</b> |
| <b>Address:</b>                        |
| <b>Postcode:</b>                       |
| <b>Day time telephone number:</b>      |
| <b>Evening telephone number:</b>       |

**Please give details of your complaint.**

**What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.  
(Who did you speak to and what was the response)?**

**What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?**

**Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Official use**

**Date acknowledgement sent:**

**By who:**

**Complaint referred to:**

**Date:**

