



Policy on Complaints

Adopted by The Governing Body: 2008

Reviewed and updated by Resources committee of governors 21st February 2012

Reviewed and updated by Performance and Standards committee of governors 9th June 2015

Reviewed and updated January 2018

Reviewed and updated November 2018

1 Introduction

1.1.1 We strive to provide an outstanding education for all our children. The headteacher and staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents, carers and families. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents or guardians. These obligations date from 1st September 2003 under section 29 of the Education Act 2002, which requires all schools to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides. We have had procedures in place since 2008 and have updated them at regular intervals. Our current procedures have been updated in line with:

- **School complaints toolkit 2014, DfE August 2014**
- **Model complaints policy for schools, Warwickshire County Council 2014.**

1.1.2 This following policy sets out the procedures that the school follows in such cases. Please note that concerns about allegations regarding safeguarding and or staff discipline should be dealt with through the separate agreed procedures that have been adopted for these purposes. Separate procedures also exist for appeals about Special Needs assessments, school admissions, exclusions and complaints linked to racism.

1.2 If any parents or carers are unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or have any concerns relating to the school, we encourage them to **talk to the child's class teacher immediately**. If the concern relates to the child's class teacher then the headteacher should be approached.

1.3 All parents and carers 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. Complainants are advised to write to **The School Complaints Unit (SCU) at Department for Education, 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate, Manchester, M1 2WD.**

2 Aims, objectives and principles

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

Our procedures are designed to:

- Be well publicised and easily accessible
- 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 process



- Allow a mediation process if agreed by the complainant
- Allow for a hearing of a panel of governors, where appropriate
- Respect people's desire for confidentiality, wherever possible
- Address all points of issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress where necessary
- Provide information to the school's Senior leadership team (SLT) so that services can be improved

3 Concerns and Complaints

- 3.1 We believe that there is an important difference between a concern and a complaint. Concerns may be aired less formally and are usually resolved through a conversation with your child's class teacher or another member of staff. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction that requires a response from the school. It is our hope that by taking concerns seriously this will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints. In resolving formal complaints, we will follow the complaints process or procedure.

4 The Complaints Process

- 4.1 If a parent or carer 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. In our experience, 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 are making expected or better progress. Staff naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take positive action before any issue seriously affects the child's progress.
- 4.2 Where parents or carers feel 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 senior member of staff such as the Phase Leader or Deputy Head teachers. The Headteacher Mrs Stringer will be available should the problem not be resolved. The headteacher considers any such complaint seriously, and will investigate each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved by this stage.
- 4.3 Where a parent or carer approaches a school governor in the first instance, the next step will be to refer the parent or carer to the appropriate person and advise them of the school's complaints procedures. Apart from the Chair of Governors, governors will not act unilaterally on an individual complaint outside the formal procedures or be involved at the early stages as they may be needed to sit on a panel at later stage of the procedure.
- 4.4 Should any parents or carers have a complaint about the headteacher, they should first make a formal approach to the Chair of Governors, **Mrs Sharon Smyth** who is obliged to investigate it. The Chair of Governors will do all she can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if parents or carers are unhappy with the outcome, they can seek to have their complaint heard by the **Governing Body Complaints Appeal Committee**, as outlined below in 4.5. Individual complaints will not be heard by the Full Governing Body at any stage.
- 4.5 The complainant will need to write to the **Clerk to the Governing Body** (ideally using the school complaint's form – see appendix 1), giving details of the complaint and asking that it is put before the **Governing Body Complaints Appeal Committee**. The envelope should be marked 'FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION' 'PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL' and staff in school will ensure that the letter is forwarded without delay. The Chair (or if the Chair has been involved at a previous stage in the process, a nominated governor) will convene a **Governing Body Complaints Appeal Committee**. This panel will consist of between 3 and 5 governors.
- 4.6 The **Governing Body Complaints Appeal Committee** will consider all written complaints within 15 working days of receipt. It will arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint, and will



- invite the person making it to attend the meeting, so that s/he can explain the complaint in more detail. The school will give the complainant 5 working days' notice of the meeting.
- 4.7 After hearing all the evidence, the governors will consider their decision and inform both parties - the parent or carer and the school - about it in writing within 5 working days. The governors do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent or carer's satisfaction.
- 4.8 If the complaint is not resolved, a parent or carer has no right to take the complaint further than the governing body. The Local Authority cannot investigate school matters on a parent's or carer's behalf nor can it review how the school has dealt with a complaint. However, a parent or carer may request **mediation** to resolve their complaint. Further information about this process is available from the school. A further meeting is chaired by an independent person, who considers all the evidence and makes a further judgement in an attempt to resolve the complaint.
- 4.9 If any parent or carer feels that the school has acted unreasonably or not followed the correct procedures they can write to the Secretary of State for Education. (see 1.3)

5 Monitoring and Review

- 5.1 We believe that as well as resolving an individual's complaint, the process of listening to and resolving complaints contribute to school improvements. When individual complaints are heard we may identify issues that need to be addressed.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. Parents and carers are made aware of this policy via school communications - newsletter, website, twitter and new parent/carer meetings. This policy is made available on our website to all parents and carers, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.
- 5.4 This policy will be reviewed every three years, or before if necessary.



Signed:

Date:

OFFICIAL USE

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

Complaints Process from start to finish

