

Complaints Procedure

Introduction

We strive to provide an excellent education for all our children. The Principal, Headteachers and staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents and carers. However, the School is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents or guardians. The following policy sets out the procedures that the school follows in such cases.

Aims and objectives

Our School aims to be honest, fair and open 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. In all cases, we put the interests of the child above all else. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed and then resolved.

The complaints process

If any parents or carers are unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or have any concerns relating to the School, they should in the first instance talk with their child's class teacher / subject teacher / form tutor. 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 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.

Where parents or carers feel that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher / subject teacher / form tutor, they should make an appointment with the Year Group Leader / Head of Year / Head of Key Stage or Head of Department.

If time has been given and in the unlikely event that the situation still hasn't been resolved, the parent or carer should make an appointment through the Receptionist to discuss the situation with the Headteacher. The Headteacher considers any such complaint very seriously, and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are resolved by this stage. The Headteacher will inform the Principal of any serious complaint.

Should any parents or carers have a complaint about the Headteacher, they should make an appointment with the Principal. If a parent should have a complaint against the Principal they should first make an informal approach to the Chairman of the Governing Body, who is obliged to select a member of the Governing Body to investigate it (usually, but not restricted to, a member of the Governing Body who sits on the respective committee e.g.

Junior School Committee or Senior School Committee). The Governor in question will do all she/he can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the School, but if parents or carers are unhappy with the outcome, they can make a formal complaint, as outlined below. The Governing Body member should always ascertain that the above procedure has been adhered to before undertaking any formal or informal investigation.

All informal complaints will normally be investigated and a response given within 14 days of the original contact with the relevant member of staff.

Only if an informal complaint fails to resolve the matter should a formal complaint be made to the Governing Body. This complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint, and how the School has handled it so far. The parent or carer should send this written complaint to the Chairman of the Board of Governors.

The Governing Body must consider all written complaints within 30 days of receipt (excluding school holidays and weekends). 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 Board will form a panel of three Board members to hear the complaint. The School gives the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting. The person making the complaint may be accompanied by another person.

After hearing all the evidence, the Governors will consider their decision and inform the parent about their findings and any action they may have decided upon in writing within 2 weeks of the hearing. The Governors do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction.

If the complainant is still unhappy with the outcome he/she will be offered a second panel to hear their complaint, again within 30 days, comprising two different members of the Board and also an independent, external panel member who is not a member of the Board or management. In the same way as for the first hearing, notice will be given, the complainant may be accompanied and the findings and final decision will be communicated in writing to the complainant plus the person(s) about which the complaint was made within 2 weeks of the hearing.

If the complaint is not resolved, a parent may make representation to the Ministry of Education.

Records

Written records should be kept of all complaints indicating the nature of the complaint and any action taken, plus any statements taken. The record should note if the complaint was resolved at the informal stage or if it went to a more formal hearing. These records should remain confidential and be kept in a location with the school's management in the complaints log (one is kept at each of the two sites). These records may only be shared where legal requirements permit access.

Other matters

It is of paramount importance that every child feels safe and secure in the School environment. Under no circumstance should a parent or carer take matters into their own hands and speak to the child of another parent about an issue whilst on the School property or under the care of the School. Should this occur, the matter will be taken very seriously and various actions may be taken including but not limited to, a letter of warning or a ban from entering the School premises for a period determined by the School.

Any aggressive behaviour, including but not limited to verbal abuse towards members of the staff of the School will be viewed and handled in the same light as outlined above.

This policy should be reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.

September 2016