



## **COMPLAINTS POLICY**

### **Introduction**

The procedure below fulfils the requirements of The Education Act 2002 (Section 29) for “all governing bodies to have a procedure to deal with complaints relating to aspects of the school, and any community facilities or services that the school provides.”

This procedure does not apply to (and should not be used for) statutory appeals in relation to:

- Admissions
- Exclusions
- Assessment of children with special educational needs

Similarly, it should not be used for dealing with complaints that make allegations against staff of child abuse, or relate to staff discipline or capability, where other statutory procedures apply. The governing body is not responsible for handling complaints about third party providers offering community facilities or services through our premises or using school facilities for external events. The governing body will however take reasonable steps to ensure that such providers have their own complaints procedures.

### **Who can raise a concern or make a complaint?**

Anyone who has dealings with the school can use this procedure, whether a pupil, a parent or carer, a visitor, a neighbour, or a provider of a service to the school. If you wish to raise a concern or complain on someone else’s behalf, the school will usually only deal with this if the person on whose behalf you are complaining is unable to do so for themselves.

### **How will my concern or complaint be handled?**

Our procedure has three stages:

1. Responding to concerns
2. Investigating complaints
3. Appeal to the governing body

### **Resolution Meeting**

At any point in the handling of your complaint, there is also the possibility of a ‘resolution’ meeting with the Chair of Governors. If you have concerns about the time being taken, or would like a resolution meeting, you should contact the Clerk to the governing body.

We expect concerns and complaints to be brought to the attention of the school as quickly as possible. Complaints notified to the school after three months from the date of any

incident will usually be ruled 'out of time', unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school may escalate a concern to a complaint in order to speed up the resolution of the issue.

### **Complaints not in scope of the procedure**

A complaints procedure should cover all complaints about any provision of facilities or services that a school provides with the **exceptions** listed below, for which there are separate (statutory) procedures.

- Admissions to schools
- Statutory Assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Exclusion of children from school
- Whistle-blowing
- Staff Grievance and Disciplinary
- Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities.

### **Responding to concerns**

If your concern is about something that a person has or has not done, for example a member of staff, the Headteacher, a governor, or a volunteer, you should contact the school office to make an appointment to discuss the concern with that person or their manager. If your concern is about an aspect of school practice or policy, you should contact the Headteacher. We want to respond to your concern as quickly as possible, but it may not be possible to arrange an immediate meeting: an appointment within a few days may be necessary. We can reassure you that most concerns are usually resolved at this stage. We will give you a verbal response, usually within 5 school days, and confirm this in writing.

### **Investigating complaints**

If you remain dissatisfied by our response to your concern, then you should make a formal complaint in writing to the Headteacher, outlining the areas that you feel have not been resolved, even if you have already met and discussed the concern. All letters should be sent to the school address, marked 'Confidential: for immediate attention'. The Headteacher will arrange for the complaint to be investigated. If your complaint is about the Headteacher, you should contact the Chair of Governors who will arrange for it to be investigated. If your complaint is about the Chair of Governors, you should contact the Clerk to the governing body, who will make the arrangement. In all cases:

- state that you are making a complaint
- give specific details of your complaint
- say what you want the school to do to put things right and what outcome you would like

The Headteacher, staff member or person nominated to investigate and respond to your complaint will

- Contact you and arrange to meet or discuss the complaint and confirm with you, what will be investigated;
- Review any documents and meet with relevant staff and/or witnesses where appropriate

- Seek and consider independent advice, such as from the local authority;
- Write a response letter with a decision and explain how to make any appeal.

### **Timescales**

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 school working days and follow up with the outcome of the investigation in writing within 10 school working days. This process should take no longer than 10 school working days (from the date the school acknowledges receipt of the complaint.) If there is likely to be a delay, the person dealing with your complaint will contact you again to explain why and indicate a new timescale.

### **Appeal to the governing body**

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation, you may appeal to the governing body. The Clerk will arrange for a panel of governors to consider your appeal.

You should write to the Clerk within 10 school days of the date of the response letter. The governing body will arrange for a panel of three governors to hear your complaint. You will be invited to a meeting with the panel. Following the hearing with the panel of governors the clerk will notify you of the governor's decision.

This will include informing you that the school's procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed. There is no further right of appeal to the school against the decision.

### **Resolution meeting**

You may at any time contact the school and ask for a Resolution meeting (and the school may offer a Resolution meeting at any time) which means that the formal investigation and appeal procedure can be suspended and a meeting held to resolve matters informally, usually within 10 school days of the request or offer being made. Should the Resolution meeting fail to resolve the complaint, the investigation or appeal will be resumed.

### **The Secretary of State**

You have a separate right to complain to the Secretary of State if you believe that the governing body has acted unreasonably or is failing to carry out its statutory duties properly. Telephone 0370 000 2288 or go to <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>

### **Serial and Persistent Complainants**

We will do our best to be helpful to people who contact us with a complaint or concern or a request for information. However, in cases where the school is contacted repeatedly by an individual making the same points, or who asks the school to reconsider their position, we will act in accordance with the school's unreasonable complainant's policy.