



## **COMPLAINTS POLICY DECEMBER 2017**

### **Aim**

St Edmund's Nursery School & Children's Centre aim to provide high quality education with care for all children at all times. The school/centre aims to offer a welcome to each individual child and family and to provide a warm and caring environment within which all children can learn and develop as they play and explore.

The school/centre believes that children and parents/carers are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt careful attention to their needs and wishes. The school/centre staff aim to work in partnership with parents and the community and welcome suggestions on how to improve the school/centre provision at any time.

Any parent/carers who is uneasy/uncomfortable about any aspect of the school/centre provision should bring it to the attention of the Executive Headteacher/Head of School or any member of the Leadership Team. If this does not have a satisfactory outcome within a reasonable period of time, or if the problem reoccurs, the parent/carers should put their concerns or complaint in writing and request a meeting with the Executive Headteacher/Head of School and/or the Chair of the Governing Body. Both parents and the Executive Headteacher/Head of School can have a friend, partner or colleague present if required and an agreed written record of the discussion should be made and signed by both parties.

This policy should be used in conjunction with the DfE School Complaints Toolkit 2014 and the Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016.

### **Introduction:**

Since the 1st September 2003 governing bodies (GBs) of all maintained schools and maintained nursery schools in England have been required, under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, summarised in Annex A, to have in place a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides. This does not limit complainants to parents or carers of children registered at a school. A complainant could be a member of the wider community or representing an ex-pupil. The law also requires the procedure to be publicised. The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or pupils, are concerns rather than complaints. St Edmund's Nursery School & Children's Centre is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish or be asked to follow the school's formal complaints procedure.

The prime aim of St Edmund's Nursery School & Children's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints.

St Edmund's policy has four main stages. In summary they are as follows: -

- Stage 1 (informal): concern heard by an appropriate staff member
- Stage 2 (formal): complaint heard by Executive Headteacher or Head of School
- Stage 3 (formal): complaint heard by Chair of Governors
- Stage 4 (formal): complaint heard by GB's complaints appeal panel.

Stage 1 – concern heard by staff member

Concerns can be raised with the School and Children's Centre at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will resolve the concern. The school/centre requests that parents/carers make their first contact with their child's class teacher or key person. On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an informal but informed response within a day or two. The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 1, please write to or call the school within 10 school working days. The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

Stage 2 – complaint heard by Executive Headteacher or Head of School.

The Headteacher may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken. The Executive Headteacher or Head of School will arrange for the complaint to be acknowledged within 5 school working days of receiving it and a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. Following the investigation the Executive Headteacher or Head of School will aim to provide a written response within 10 school working days of sending the acknowledgement. However if a complaint is more complex to review this can be extended to a maximum of 20 school working days. The school/centre will provide you details of the new deadline and an explanation on the delay. If you are not satisfied with the result at stage 2 please write to or call the school within 10 school working days of getting our response. The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

Stage 3 – complaint heard by Chair of Governors If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 2 or the complaint is about the Executive Headteacher, then you will need to write to the Chair of Governors c/o the school/centre. The Chair of Governors will arrange for the complaint to be acknowledged within 5 school working days of receiving it and a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. Following an investigation, the Chair of Governors will aim to provide a written response within 10 school working days of sending out the acknowledgement. However if a complaint is more complex to review this can be extended to 20 school working days. The school will provide you details of the new deadline and an explanation on the delay. If you are dissatisfied with the result at stage 3, you will need to let the school know within 10 school working days of getting the response. The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

Stage 4 – complaint heard by Governing Bodies Complaints Appeal Panel. If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 3, then you will need to write to the Clerk of Governors giving details of the complaint and asking that it is put before the appeal panel. Should the Chair have been involved at any previous stage in the process a nominated Governor, impartial to the complaint, will convene a complaints panel. The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 school working days of receiving it. The hearing will normally take place within 20 school working days of sending the acknowledgment. The aim of the Appeal panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the Panel's decision in writing within 5 school working days after the date of the hearing. The letter will also contain what you need to do if you wish to take the matter further. The Governors appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process.

If the matter is still unresolved to the parents/carers satisfaction then they should bring the matter to the attention of the local authority officers responsible for the school/centre at the following address:

Children's Services,  
Bradford Metropolitan District Council,  
Margaret McMillan Tower  
Prince's Way, Bradford BD1 1NN

If the complaint is about the registered childcare (families paying for their child's provision) the following address should be used:

Ofsted  
Piccadilly gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

If the matter is still unresolved to the parents/carers satisfaction then they should bring the matter to the attention of the School Complaints unit. The address is as follows:

The School Complaints unit (SCU),  
Department of Education,  
2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate,  
Manchester, M1 2WD.

For further information and advice regarding this Complaints Policy please contact the School's Strategic Business Manager on 01274 543282.