

POLICY – COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

All complaints that the school receives will be taken seriously. In many cases it will be possible for an immediate response to be given. However, if the complaint is of a particularly serious nature and cannot be dealt with immediately, it will be investigated and a response given in the timescales outlined below. Please be assured that every effort will be made by the school to reach an appropriate resolution. The Governors, not the LEA, carry the ultimate responsibility for resolving complaints within the school management system.

Informal Procedure

It is in everyone's interest that the complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Where the complaint is made in person or by telephone, it is preferable, if possible, to seek to resolve the complainant's concerns at that time on an informal basis. Even some written complaints, which can be resolved simply and speedily by a quick response, can be classed as informal complaints.

When a parent raises an issue with the school it is important to establish whether the parent has a concern regarding a particular issue which they are seeking to have resolved, or whether the parent has a complaint which they want investigating and responded to formally.

Concerns will be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures.

If you feel you need further clarification about concerns that you have regarding what the school is doing for your child then it is important to contact his/her Head of Year.

Please make an appointment to see your child's Head of Year. You should receive an appointment within 5 working days.

During the meeting, your child's Head of Year will listen to your concerns and then give one of two responses: -

- An immediate response to your concerns, or
- An invitation to a further meeting or a written/verbal response within 7 working days. This will give time for the Head of Year to look into the matter you raise more fully.

Formal Procedure:

If you are not happy with the response you receive in the Informal Procedure or you feel that your original concern is of a more serious nature, then it is important to make use of the school's Formal Procedure.

All formal complaints relating to the school must be referred to the headteacher, who can decide:

- (i) To deal with it himself, or
- (ii) Delegate to a member of staff

Where a complaint involves or relates to the Joint Headteacher(s), it must be referred to the Chair of the Governing Body. In the absence of the Chairperson then the Vice-Chair would be expected to deal with the complaint.

- The school will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days.
- You will be given an opportunity to talk to the appropriate member of the Senior Management Team.
- If you wish to make a complaint on behalf of someone else, you will be required to seek his or her agreement, to keep matters confidential. This agreement will be required in writing.
- The school will look into your complaint and tell you what they find and what action if any, they are going to take.
- You will be advised in writing, of any action or decision taken within 10 working days of making the complaint.
- If you are not satisfied with the way the school has handled the complaint or with the response, the next stage is to contact the Chair of the Governing Body.

Parents/carers may contact the Chair of the Governing Body via the Clerk to Governors - Mrs. K. Cooper - on 01226 738521, or alternatively write into the school.

The Chair of Governors will acknowledge receipt of a written complaint within 3 working days.

Appeal Committee:

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the Chair of Governors' investigation, you may appeal to an Appeal Committee of the Governing Body. Their decision is final.

In order to make an Appeal you must have grounds to do so, just disagreeing with the outcome of the investigation is not sufficient.

The grounds for Appeal are:

- i) Not all the complaint was investigated properly or not all the issues were taken into account, thereby producing a flawed decision; or
- ii) the person dealing with the complaint did not follow the school's published procedure; or

- iii) the decision on the complaint does not reflect existing school policies or procedures.

The purpose of the Appeal is not to reinvestigate the complaint, it is to ensure that the Complaints' Procedure was implemented correctly and every issue within the complaint thoroughly investigated.

Referral to the Secretary of State:

If you think the school's governing body or your Local Authority is acting 'unreasonably' you can write to the Secretary of State for Education. Complaints to the Secretary of State are handled by the government's Department for Education (DfE).

This should be a last resort, and you should highlight in your letter the steps you have already taken to resolve the problem. The DfE will not usually be able to investigate your complaint if your child no longer goes to the school where the incident took place.

If you wish to pursue a complaint you can write to the Secretary of State for Children, Young People and Families at the Department for Children, Schools and Families, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT.

The Secretary of State may contact the Governing Body or the LA for more information in order to consider the complaint.

Ratified by Governing Body – 2nd Nov, 2011