



Complaints Policy

Principles

Schools are public institutions serving a community. The members of that community have expectations regarding the standards, the ethos and the codes of behaviour of the school. Parents in particular, but others also upon whom the life of the school impinges, may on occasions feel that the school is failing to adhere to its stated and implied aims and practice. Their complaint may be regarding a specific incident, or a general culture/attitude. The school has a responsibility to treat all complaints seriously, to investigate them thoroughly and to use them positively as vehicles for self-review and improvement. We intend that those who feel they have a complaint against the school find the organisation open and responsive.

Aims

1. To provide a service which is regarded as reliable and honourable, accepting that mistakes and deficiencies occur in any organisation but seeking to work effectively and positively for improvement.
2. To ensure that those with complaints against the school, its system, staff or pupils have urgent access to a senior member of staff (personally/by telephone) in order to voice their complaint.
3. To ensure that complaints are investigated thoroughly and that appropriate measures are taken where deficiencies are proved.
4. To ensure that there are clear and open lines of communication between the school and those wishing to express concern or complaint, and that those lines of communication remain open throughout any investigation, until it is resolved.
5. To ensure that an apology is forthcoming where the school, its systems, staff or pupils are found to be culpable or deficient.
6. To review any area of the school where a complaint has been made and is proved to be justifiable, effecting change where necessary.

Practice

1. Any individual who wishes to make a complaint regarding any aspect of school life should contact an appropriate member of staff. If in any doubt, the complaint should be made directly to the Headteacher, either in writing, by phone or with a prearranged appointment.
2. Where the complaint is of a relatively minor nature, the complaint should go to the form tutor, subject teacher or Progress Manager concerned, who will deal with the complaint personally, or refer it to a more senior member of staff, in which case, the Headteacher should be notified of the complaint, the person making the complaint and any action taken.
3. Where the complaint is of a more serious nature, and specifically where it regards the attitude, behaviour or actions of a member of staff a formal complaint should be made directly to the Headteacher and/or the Chair of Governors.
4. Where the complaint is against the Headteacher it should go to the Chair of Governors via the Clerk to Governors.
5. Anyone making a complaint should receive a response from the school giving some indication of the action to be taken and the timescale needed before the matter can be resolved. The details below give an indication of the parameters within which the school will operate in relation to complaints/concerns:

- Concerns may be raised either via the Planner, or by letter, e-mail or phone call.
 - Notes in a child's Planner will usually be addressed within 3 working days providing the child ensures the note is shown to the appropriate member of staff.
 - Letters will usually receive either a verbal (usually by phone) response within 3 working days or a written response within 5 working days. Verbal responses will generate a brief written note of the discussion and its outcome, to be held in the child's file for future reference.
 - Concerns raised by phone will usually be addressed within 3 working days.
 - Emails will usually receive an email response within 3 working days. Those sent at weekends may not be dealt with until the following working week, and emails sent in holidays will probably elicit no reply until term-time.
6. A complaint should never be left unresolved: the school will respond to anyone making a complaint once the issue has been explored thoroughly, with a full explanation, and if culpability is proved, an apology. This will be verbal or in writing, as appropriate to the situation.
 7. There should always be an invitation to the individual making a complaint to come in to school to discuss the matter, or to make contact again if not happy with the explanation offered, or the outcome.
 8. Where a complaint is found to be justifiable the Headteacher will take such action as is necessary to prevent a recurrence. This may involve disciplinary action against a pupil or pupils, professional discussion with or disciplinary action against a member of staff, review of a system or procedure.
 9. All those implicated in a formal complaint will be kept fully informed of the nature of the complaint and be given every opportunity to put their case, in the company of a representative of their professional body, or a friend, if desired.
 10. Where the complainant feels that an issue has not been resolved satisfactorily, he or she may refer the matter to the Governing Body, through the Chair of Governors. A Committee of Governors appropriate to the complaint will be convened to investigate the complaint and the procedures already undertaken to resolve the issue. Interested parties will be invited to provide information either in writing or personally. Governors will decide whether the complainant's case has been met and will give and explain their decision to both sides.
 11. Should the complainant still feel that there remains a valid, unaddressed complaint, he/she may contact the Local Authority, who will offer advice and/or take appropriate action
 12. The Headteacher and Leadership Team monitor the nature of formal complaints at the school in order to identify trends and address any recurring issues.
 13. Governing body will be presented with a summary of formal complaints at each full governors meeting. Report shall include the number of formal complaints received, number resolved within prescribed time scales and number outstanding.

The school has reference to the Department for Education's, Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016, guidance and will refer to this document when necessary.

Reviewed: May 2016

To be reviewed every 3 years – next review May 2019