

# Complaints Policy

Approved by RET Board

Approved on February 2015

SLT contact Headteacher

Revision due Every 2 years



## 1. Rationale

- a. The Education Act of 2002 requires schools to have a procedure in place for the handling of complaints from parents. The purpose of this statement is to provide a framework for staff within which to work and to ensure that complaints are dealt with quickly, fairly and consistently.
- b. Working Practice with Parents
  1. We seek to work closely with parents.
  2. General information is given to parents through:
    - Written communication (newsletters, planner, reports etc...)
    - Electronic communication (email, VLE, SMS etc...)
    - Formal and informal meetings (parents evening, telephone calls etc...)
  3. Parents are also asked to complete a questionnaire annually and at parent/teacher evenings.
- c. Typical issues that may lead to complaints are:
  - A child's relationship with another or others in a class
  - Allegations of bullying
  - The placing of a child in a particular tutorial or teaching group
  - The amount of homework being set – too much, too little
  - The relationship between the child and a particular teacher
  - The wish to withdraw a child from a school activity
  - Disagreement with a punishment given, e.g. a detention after school
2. Complaints may also be received from a member of the public or a visitor.

## 2. Policy

- a. This complaints policy is distinct from any formal disciplinary proceedings for staff. If a complaint did result in a disciplinary procedure, then the complaint would be put on hold and the complainant will be advised of the delay and updated every 3 weeks.
- b. This policy does not apply to complaints covered by a separate statutory procedure such as admissions, exclusions or SEN statements.
- c. If a complaint is made against a member of staff or governor this person will be informed and have the opportunity to respond.
- d. Complaints made to the School:
  1. In dealing with complaints the school will ensure that the person complaining is given fair treatment and the opportunity to state their case fully.
  2. A complaint other than one involving serious allegations of misconduct should be dealt with informally at first and at the most local level; e.g. Reception may receive a verbal complaint from a parent or member of the public and this should be responded to at the time, with a promise to call back within a given time. Reception will pass the complaint immediately to the named member of the leadership team. A holding response must be given within at least three working days to the complainant. The final response will come from the Headteacher or from a member of the senior staff.
  3. If a complainant is not satisfied with the informal approach to resolving the matter then they may make a formal written complaint within 10 school days of the school's response.
  4. If the complaint involves a child, the relevant tutor will be informed.
  5. Written complaints, will receive a response by letter within 5 working days. All written complaints will receive an answer in writing giving the final outcome when this has been achieved. If this is longer than 10 working days, interim contact will be made by telephone to update the complainant. The written answer will be authorised by the Headteacher or another named senior manager and it will be added

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to the complaints log (which is a confidential document and exempt from FOI under data protection provisions). The log will be scrutinised weekly between the Headteacher and Lead Advisor and the complaints log reported in confidence to the relevant governors' committee.

6. If the complaint cannot be resolved locally, a senior leader will try to resolve it. If this is unsuccessful, the Headteacher will become involved.
  7. If the complaint is serious, e.g. involves allegations of misconduct against a staff member, the complainant will be requested to make the complaint in writing and informed that the Headteacher has immediately been informed.
- e. Complaints made to the governing body:
1. The Chair of Governors will refer the matter to the Headteacher who will ensure that the complaint is dealt with at the appropriate level in the school in accordance with the guidance above.
  2. If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of an investigation then they may make a formal written complaint to the Headteacher within 10 school days of the decision letter from the investigation. The Headteacher will investigate and respond within 15 school days. If a longer time is needed to resolve the matter this will be explained to the complainant.
  3. If a complainant is not satisfied following a response from the Headteacher then they may make a formal written complaint to the governing body within 10 school days of the decision letter.
  4. The Chair of Governors will convene a panel of at least three governors who will hear the complaint and whose decision shall be final:
    - **At least** one person on this panel will be independent of the management and running of the school.
    - No one who has so far been involved in handling the complaint can be a member of the panel.
    - Parents are invited to attend this panel hearing and be accompanied, if they wish, by a friend or adviser.
    - Governors will be aware of equal opportunities issues when looking at the composition of the panel.
  5. Decisions and recommendations made by the panel will be sent to the complainant and, where relevant, to the person complained about. Copies of these letters / emails will be made available for inspection on the school premises by the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher.
- f. In the case of a complaint made to the Chair of Governors/Governing Body about the Headteacher, the following procedure will apply:
1. The Chair of Governors will investigate the matter and respond in accordance with the guidance above.
  2. If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of an investigation then they may make a formal written complaint to the Chair of Governors within 10 school days of the decision letter from the investigation. The Chair of Governors will investigate and respond within 15 school days. If a longer time is needed to resolve the matter this will be explained to the complainant.
  3. If a complainant is not satisfied following a response from the Chair of Governors then they may make a formal written complaint to the governing body within 10 school days of the decision letter.
  4. The Vice-Chair of Governors will be asked to convene a hearing panel of at least three governors who will hear the complaint and whose decision shall be final:
    - At least one person on this panel will be independent of the management and running of the school.
    - No one who has so far been involved in handling the complaint can be a member of the panel.

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  - Governors will be aware of equal opportunities issues when looking at the composition of the panel.
5. Decisions and recommendations made by the panel will be sent to the complainant and, where relevant, to the person complained about. Copies of these letters / emails will be made available for inspection on the school premises by the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors.
- g. Written records will be kept of all complaints, indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing.
- h. All correspondence, statements and records of complaints will be kept confidential (excluding those whom the school is required to notify, as detailed above; inspectors conducting inspection under section 162A of the Education Act 2002; or the Secretary of State, should they ask for access to such records.)