

# COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS

## Introduction

The Governors are committed to ensuring that the highest standards are maintained at the school both in the provision of education to pupils and in every other aspect of the running of the school. A complaint procedure is an important part of the management of a well-run school allowing parents the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have through appropriate channels, as well as members of the general public. This procedure has been adopted by the Governing Body to ensure a systematic and fair approach to the resolution of such concerns.

Complaints relating to the curriculum should be addressed under the separate Curriculum Complaints Procedure. Similarly complaints about SEN provision should follow the SEN procedures. Any complaints by staff should be addressed under the school's Grievance Procedure.

This procedure is designed to allow parents and carers of registered pupils at the school a means of making complaints which they can be confident will be addressed properly.

A complaint may result in disciplinary action by the school against a member of staff, which would be confidential between that member of staff and the school, but otherwise parents should be kept fully informed of the handling of any complaint. Any complaint will be kept confidential unless it is necessary to involve other parties and will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

In general, any written complaint should be addressed to the Principal although it is expected that attempts will be made to resolve difficulties informally with the class teacher/form teacher/Head of Year/tutor before being referred to the Principal. The informal stage of the procedure should be exhausted before the matter is referred to the formal stage. If any substantial complaint is made to a member of staff it should be referred to her or his line manager or Principal, as appropriate, if it cannot be resolved immediately by the member of staff to the satisfaction of the parent.

## Stages in the Procedure

There are two stages in the School's Complaints Procedure. An informal stage when the Principal or member of staff acting on his or her behalf will try to resolve the problem and a formal stage when the matter is referred to the Governor's complaints panel if the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the first stage.

### Informal stage

Most parents' concerns can be adequately resolved by discussion with the (class teacher/form teacher/Head of Year/tutor) or with other members of staff. There may be no need for the complaint to be put in writing which would formalise matters and may lead parents to feel less prepared to articulate concerns perhaps because of a fear that such action may prejudice the interests of their child.

If the concern is not met to the parents' satisfaction by discussion then the initial recipient of the complaint should refer the matter to the Principal or a designated member of the senior management team. It may be appropriate at this stage for the complaint to be put in writing.

The Principal, or a designated member of the senior management team, will investigate the circumstances of the complaint and may find it appropriate to ask for written statements from staff or pupils and to call for any relevant documentation.

If the complaint is against a member of staff, that member of staff has a right to be given details of the complaint and the opportunity to make representation about it. These will be taken into account by the person investigating the incident.

The Principal or designated member of staff will respond to the parent with the outcome of the investigation, normally within 10 school working days of receipt of the substance of the complaint. The response may be in writing or at a meeting with written confirmation of the outcome.

The parents must be informed of his or her right to have the matter referred to Governors' complaints panel if the outcome of the informal stage is not satisfactory. Any such request by a parent should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governors of the school.

### **Formal Stage**

When the Clerk receives a formal request for the Governors to consider a complaint, the clerk will refer the matter in the first instance to the chairman of governors or another nominated governor. He or she will investigate, may speak to the parties involved and will prepare a written statement of findings to be submitted to the parent. The parent must be informed of the right to refer the matter to the complaints panel of the governing body if he or she is not satisfied with the outcome.

If a hearing is requested, the clerk will write to the parent, the Principal and the chairman of governors giving details of the meeting, requesting copies of any documents to be put before the meeting and names of any witnesses who either party may wish to attend. The parent will be informed of the right to be accompanied by a friend. The hearing should be on reasonable notice and be held as soon as practicable after receipt of the referral.

The procedure at the hearing needs to be appropriate for the circumstances and is at the discretion of the chair of the complaints panel but is likely to involve:

- presentation of the complaint
- a reply by the Principal or governor
- questioning by all parties
- representation about ways to resolve the complaint satisfactorily

If necessary, the panel will withdraw to consider their findings of fact on the evidence put before them and their conclusions, which may include measures to redress problems identified. The panel's decision is final.