



# COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



January 2009

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The School takes pride in the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure.

## Policy Statement

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

## Procedure

### Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's Progress Leader of mini school. In many cases the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the Progress Leader cannot resolve the matter alone it may be necessary for him/her to consult with a member of the Leadership Team; a Deputy or Assistant Head.

Complaints made directly to the Headteacher will usually be referred to the relevant member of staff unless it is deemed appropriate for her to deal with the matter personally.

The member of staff receiving the complaint will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within ten working days (term time) or in the event that the member of staff and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

### Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Headteacher will meet/speak to the parents concerned, normally within seven working days (term time) of receiving the complaint to discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage.

It may be necessary for the Headteacher to carry out further investigations.

The Headteacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Headteacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headteacher will also give reasons for her decision.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

### Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the Governor who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.

The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matter detailed in the complaint. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Governors. The Governor, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within two working days (term time).

The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

- The complainant needs to write to the Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint.
- The Chair, or a nominated governor, will convene a Governing Body complaints panel.
- The Governors' appeal hearing is the last

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school-based stage of the complaints process, and is not convened to merely rubber-stamp previous decisions.

## The Remit of The Complaints Appeal Panel

The Panel can:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

There are several points which any governor sitting on a complaints panel needs to remember:

- a) It is important that the appeal hearing is independent and impartial and that it is seen to be so. No governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it. In deciding the make-up of the panel, governors need to try and ensure that it is a cross-section of the categories of governor and sensitive to the issues of race, gender and religious affiliation.
- b) The aim of the hearing, which needs to be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. However, it has to be recognised the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that his or her complaint has been taken seriously.
- c) An effective panel will acknowledge that many complainants feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. Parents often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child. The panel chair will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible. The layout of the room will set the tone and care is needed to ensure the setting is informal and not adversarial.