

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

### **POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS**

We welcome suggestions for improving our work in school. Be assured no matter what you want to tell us, our support and respect for your child will not be affected in any way. Please tell us of your concern as soon as possible as it is difficult for us to investigate an incident or problem if it took place sometime previously. We do appreciate the assistance we receive from parents in addressing any problems that arise.

We receive very few complaints. Problems sometimes arise from misunderstandings, which are easily addressed. Most concerns and complaints can be sorted out quickly by speaking with your child's class teacher. When parents and teachers treat each other with mutual respectful support, this provides a very good role model for all our children.

If, having spoken to the class teacher, you still have concerns, you should speak to the Headteacher. She will investigate the problem and discuss her findings with you so that we can find a way forward together which serves the interest of both the school and your child. In the unlikely event of the problem remaining unresolved, you can put your complaint in writing if necessary, and could subsequently refer it to the Chair of Governors.

The procedure to be followed in the event of a complaint being made is summarised in the following stages:

#### **Stage 1:       INFORMAL RESOLUTION**

- It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's class teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult with the Headteacher.
- Complaints made directly to the Headteacher will initially usually be referred to the appropriate member of staff unless the Headteacher deems it appropriate for her to deal with the matter personally.
- If the teacher is unable to deal immediately with the matter, a clear note including the complainant's name, phone number and date, should be sent to the parent as soon as the matter has been investigated.
- The teacher must ensure that the parent is clear what action or monitoring situation has been agreed.
- The member of staff will make a written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received, and give a copy to the Headteacher. Should the matter not be resolved within **two weeks** or in the event that the staff member and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then 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 Head will meet/speak to the parents concerned, normally **within 5 working days** 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 which she will endeavour to complete **within 5 working days** of contact with parents.
- The Headteacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint, as well as any action taken by the school as a result of the complaint whether or not the complaint is upheld.
- Once the Headteacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of 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 the complaint is against the Headteacher, the Stage 2 procedures are carried to the Education Director at the South England Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- 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 Clerk to the Governors (Bursar), 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 matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The designated person in this respect is the Education Director of the SEC. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chair of Governors. The Clerk to the Governors (Bursar), on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally **within 14 days**.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than **three working days** prior to the hearing.
- 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.
- It is the responsibility of the chair of the hearing to ensure that there are accurate minutes of the meeting.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete **within 10 days of the Hearing**. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if

any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head, the Governors and, where relevant, the person against whom the complaint has been made.

**A written record will be kept of all complaints that are made, whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing and any actions taken by the school as a result of the complaint whether or not the complaint is upheld. 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 the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requires access to them.**

### **For the Early Years Foundation Stage**

The record of complaints is kept for at least three years. We will notify complainants of the outcome of an investigation **within 28 days** of receipt of a complaint.

Parents may make a complaint directly to the Department for Education or Ofsted – details as follows:

Parents can contact Ofsted at any time with a complaint at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/contact-us>

Tel: 0300 123 1231

Address: Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

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