

## **Downsell Primary School Parental Complaints Policy & Procedure**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Complaints fall into two categories. Those concerning statutory provision and those related to the delivery of education and everyday occurrences in the school.

1.2 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, by a parent or person with a legitimate interest in the school, but not employed to work at the school, about school policies or procedures, the conduct, actions or omissions of members of staff employed at the school and the standards of teaching and learning.

1.3 Initially most complaints will be verbal. There should not be a requirement for the Complainant to put their complaint in writing at the informal stages.

1.4 When an anonymous complaint is received the Head Teacher will use her/his discretion as to how to proceed but should not necessarily dismiss any such complaint.

1.5 Any Governor who is approached by a parent wishing to complain about the school should initially direct them to the Head Teacher. There will be some instances, for example, when the complaint is about the Head Teacher, where it would be appropriate for the Complainant to be advised to speak to the Chair of the Governing Body instead of the Head Teacher. Similarly, any complainant who approaches the LA will be referred back to the Head Teacher or Chair of the Governing Body.

1.6 It is important that all concerns are taken seriously. Children learn best when there is an effective partnership between the school and the parents. All members of the school community are entitled to have their points of view properly considered.

1.7 It is very important that all complaints are dealt with as swiftly as possible. Failure to address complaints promptly frequently results in greater dissatisfaction.

Complaints and concerns relating to issues which occurred more than three months before will generally be ruled "out of time".

### **2. INFORMAL STAGES**

2.1 If a parent has a concern, the first point of contact is the class teacher. The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily addressed by the class teacher.

2.2 If the Complainant is not satisfied with the response from the class teacher, they should be referred to the Head Teacher. There will be instances, depending on the seriousness of the complaint, when the Complainant will directly approach the Head Teacher with their complaint or the Chair of the Governing Body will refer complaints to the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher will investigate the complaint and respond to the Complainant as soon as possible either in writing, via telephone or by way of a meeting. Hopefully, this will resolve the complaint.

### **3. FORMAL STAGE ONE**

#### **INVOLVEMENT OF THE CHAIR OF THE GOVERNING BODY**

3.1 If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the response from the Head Teacher, they should be advised of their right to write to the Chair of the Governing Body setting out their complaint. Advice can be sought from the clerk to the Governors.

3.2 The Chair of the Governing Body or a Governor nominated by the Chair (who should not be members of the Governors' Complaints Panel), will meet as soon as possible with the Complainant and then the Head Teacher. A record will be made of any meetings for which purpose the clerk may be present. The Chair (or nominated Governor) may then meet with Complainant and Head Teacher together in an attempt to resolve the matter. The Chair may wish to seek advice and/or support from the LA at this stage in the procedure.

3.3 The Chair will inform the Complainant and Head Teacher in writing of his/her findings and to confirm whatever agreement was reached by them.

3.4 Should either the Complainant or the Head Teacher be dissatisfied with the outcome, they may ask for the matter to be referred to a panel of the Governing Body by writing to the Clerk of the Governing Body setting out the reasons for the referral and providing the other party with a copy.

### **4. FORMAL STAGE TWO**

#### **REFERRAL TO THE GOVERNING BODY COMPLAINTS PANEL**

4.1 It is good practice for the Governing Body, in their autumn term meeting, to elect a Complaints Panel for the resolution of complaints. It is advisable to select three Governors for the panel.

4.2 At the stage of a complaint being referred to the Complaints Panel, the complaint may have developed from the original complaint to include some degree of complaint against the Head Teacher for failing to resolve the matter satisfactorily.

4.3 The Complaints Panel must investigate whether the original complaint was properly dealt with by the Head Teacher. If it finds that it was properly dealt with it will so report to the Complainant, Head Teacher and Chair.

4.4 If it finds that the original complaint was not properly dealt with there will be a need to ensure that it is. For this purpose, the Complaints Panel may select an Investigating Officer from appropriate levels of the school staff. The Investigating Officer would normally be the Deputy Head Teacher unless they, or the Head Teacher, are the subject of the original complaint, in which case an Investigating Officer would need to be sought from the LA.

4.5 The Investigating Officer will investigate the original complaint and will report back to the Complaints Panel. The Complaints Panel will consider whether there is substance to the complaint, and if so, will recommend appropriate action to be taken if necessary.

4.6 The Complaints Panel may recommend that disciplinary action be considered but it does not have any disciplinary powers and any such action should be taken according to the school's Disciplinary Procedures.

4.7 The Complaints Panel will then inform the Complainant of the outcome.

## ~ Downsell Primary Complaints Procedure ~

If you are concerned about any aspect of your child's welfare or education the following procedures are in place.

**Stage 1:** In all instances the first person of contact should be the class teacher/ Phase Leader.

Time Scale - Acknowledge within 1 day of receipt and resolved within 7 days

**Stage 2:** Should you still have any lingering concerns then you should ask to speak to or send a letter to the Head Teacher or Deputy Head.

Time Scale - Acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt and resolved within 10 working days

**Stage 3:** If you should feel that the matter has not been dealt with satisfactorily, then the Chair of Governors or Parent Governor should be contacted through the school address.

Time Scale - Acknowledge within 5 working days of receipt and resolved within 10 working days

**Stage 4:** The Secretary of State will only consider complaints that have passed through all of these stages.