



Aspire-Learn-Succeed

Complaints Policy

Policy on Complaints

(Ref Section 29 of the Education Act 2002)

Introduction

Our school is committed to providing a safe, stimulating, consistent and accessible service to children and their parents/carers. We work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents/carers and always aim to provide high quality services for everyone. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents/carers. The following policy sets out the procedures that the school follows in such cases.

Aims and objectives

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints, and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding. In all cases, we put the interests of the child above all else. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

The complaints process

Stage 1 Initial contact with school - Complaint heard by staff member

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. If a parent/carer has a complaint about some aspect of an activity or about the conduct of a member of staff, it will often be possible to resolve the problem by simply speaking with the individual concerned. As a school, we are committed to open and regular dialogue and we welcome all comments on our services, regardless of whether they are positive or negative. In our experience, most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school and making good progress; they naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before it seriously affects the child's progress.

Therefore, in the first instance parents/carers are encouraged to speak to the relevant member of staff, if deemed appropriate. However, the school will respect the views of a complainant who indicates that he/she would have difficulty discussing a complaint with a particular member of staff. In these cases, the matter can be referred to another member of staff, eg the Deputy Head Teacher.

Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels too compromised to deal with a complaint, the matter may be referred to another staff member, eg the Deputy Head Teacher.

In some instances, when informal discussion with a member of staff is considered to have been unsuccessful in resolving a situation to the satisfaction of either party, such informal discussions may be held with the Head Teacher in order that a mutually agreeable outcome is found. The Head Teacher considers any such complaint very seriously, and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage. Where the first approach is made to a governor, the next step would be to refer the complainant to the appropriate person and advise them about the procedure. It is helpful if governors do not act unilaterally on an individual complaint outside the formal procedure or be involved at the early stages in case they are needed to sit on a panel at a later stage of the procedure.

Stage 2 Formal consideration of a complaint - Complaint heard by Head Teacher

If informal discussions of a concern/complaint have not produced a satisfactory resolution to the situation, parents/carers should put their complaint in detail and in writing to the Head Teacher. As part of the school's consideration of the complaint, you may be invited to a meeting to discuss the complaint. If you wish, you may ask someone to accompany you to help explain the reasons for your complaint.

If the Head Teacher has good reason to believe that the situation has child protection implications, he/she should inform the designated Safeguarding Officer and ensure the local Children's Services department is contacted, according to the procedure set out in the Safeguarding Policy. If any party involved in the complaint has reason to believe that a criminal offence has been committed then they will contact the Police.

The Head Teacher may arrange a date and time to meet the parents/carers concerned. This meeting may also involve any other relevant individuals such as members of staff, to discuss the complaint and any response to it.

Stage 3 More formal consideration of a complaint – Complaint heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel

Only if an informal complaint fails to resolve the matter should a formal complaint be made to the governing body. This complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint, and how the school has handled it so far. The parent should send this written complaint to the chair of governors.

The governing body must consider all written complaints within three weeks of receipt. It will arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint, and will invite the person making it to attend the meeting, so that s/he can explain the complaint in more detail. The school gives the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting.

After hearing all the evidence, the governors will consider their decision and inform the parent about it in writing. The governors do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction.

If the complaint is not resolved, a parent may make representation to the LA. Further information about this process is available from the school or from the LA. A further meeting is chaired by an independent person, who considers all the evidence and makes a further judgement in an attempt to resolve the complaint.

If any parent is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then s/he is entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education.

Monitoring and review

The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly.

Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy.

This policy will be regularly reviewed.

Signed:
Chair of Governors

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Head Teacher