

Complaints Policy



Wayfield Primary School

THE PRIMARY
FIRST TRUST

Reviewed: November 2018

Review Date: November 2019

What is a complaint?

It was decided, for all practical purposes, that a complaint in the context of this policy, is a situation where someone external to the schools staff, is not satisfied with a perceived situation prevailing or service provided by the school and draws the matter to the attention of the school.

This policy does not cover the complaints procedure that employees of the school might wish to make.

The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Head Teacher logs all complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis.

The reason(s) for this Policy

The school intends to treat complaints in a positive way by taking them seriously and endeavouring to be fair in dealing with them. It is recognised that what might start as a complaint develops into a provision in the school that hitherto had been overlooked. Hopefully, this will also foster mutual respect and an understanding of the other party's difficulties.

The pathway for dealing with complaints

If a complaint proves to be too serious or complicated to be dealt with by class teachers or administrative staff, the matter should be referred to the Head Teacher, (or in their absence the Deputy Head).

Careful consideration will be given at that stage as to whether it would help the investigation if a third party was involved, also whether a meeting with the complainant(s) would be appropriate.

If the Head Teacher is unable to resolve the matter, the complainant should be advised of their right to take the complaint to the governing body and a point of contact given.

If parents have a complaint about the Head Teacher, they should first make an informal approach to the Chair of the Governors who is obliged to investigate it. The Chair will do all they can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if parents are unhappy with the outcome, they can make a formal complaint, as outlined below.

See Appendix A for detailed timeline.

Following the outcome of this procedure, complaints may be considered by the Education Funding Agency only in specific circumstances shown at Appendix B.

Timescales

Up to and including head teacher level it is hoped that a complaint will be fully dealt with within 10 days.

If referred to governors, the matter should be dealt with within a further 15 working days.

Documentation

All complaints that require more than a simple explanation by a member of the school staff should be given to the Complaints Officer in the school office (Miss Claire Grant).

The written complaints and those verbal ones that cannot be dealt with immediately, should receive a written reply and if it appears that they are going to take something like the allotted 10 working days to resolve, then a written acknowledgement should be sent NO LATER than 5 working days after the complaint was first received.

Even if a final outcome is conveyed orally to the complainant, it is better to confirm it in writing, giving a

clear explanation of the rationale behind the decision.

The complaints experience

Complaints should not be perceived to be about winning or losing, but should be viewed constructively. Even where a complainant has got their facts wrong, the outcome should be aimed at satisfying their concern by educating and informing. There will be odd occasions when this does not resolve the matter, but at least the school will have tried to listen, understand, inform and in general to have done its best to remove the grievance.

However, when dealing with the large majority of reasonable people in the community, a positive approach can be invaluable and needs to be adhered to by all staff because handled wrongly, complaints can be compounded, spread out of proportion to a wider audience and damage staff morale and the school image.

This Policy has been assessed under the Diversity Impact Assessment criteria and we do not expect any adverse impact.

APPENDIX A

Flow Chart for complaints procedure

Stage One – Informal Concerns - Complaint heard by staff member

The majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However if you are not satisfied with the outcome at stage 1, please write to the school within 10 school working days and state why you do not think that the concern has been dealt with to your satisfaction. The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage. If you have difficulties writing the school can arrange for someone to write this letter for you.



Stage Two – Formal Complaint - Complaint heard by the Head Teacher

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 1, the Head Teacher will arrange further investigation. Following the investigation s/he will give a written response within 14 working days. If you are dissatisfied with the result at Stage 2, you should let me know within 10 working days of getting the response, again giving your reasons why.



Stage Three – Review - Complaint heard by governing body's complaints appeal panel

If the complaint has not been resolved at Stage 2, you should write to the Chair of Governors at the school address giving details of the complaint. The Chair, or a nominated governor, will convene a GB complaints panel. Individual complaints would not be heard by the whole GB at any stage, as this could compromise the impartiality of any panel set up for a disciplinary hearing against a member of staff following a serious complaint.

The panel will comprise of three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The hearing will normally take place within 10 working days of the receipt of the written request for a stage 4 investigation. The complainant will be invited to attend the hearing and, if they wish, may be accompanied. The aim of the Panel is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. This will be minuted by the Clerk to Governors.

All parties will be notified of the Panel's decision in writing within five school working days after the date of the hearing. The letter will explain if your complaint is entitled to further investigation by any other body, or whether you have the right to take this matter to any other official body and if so, to whom they need to be addressed.

The governors' appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process.

Following the outcome of stage 3 of this procedure, complaints regarding Academies may be considered by the Education Funding agency only in specific circumstances shown next.

APPENDIX B

Circumstances in which the EFA can look into complaints about academies

The EFA can only look at complaints about academies that fall into the following two areas.

- a. The academy did not comply with its own complaints procedure when considering a complaint or the academy's complaints procedure does not comply with statutory requirements.

The EFA cannot review or overturn an academy's decisions about complaints but will look at whether the academy considered the complaint appropriately. The EFA will generally only do this after a complaint has been through the academy's own procedure but may investigate sooner if there is evidence of undue delays by the academy. If the EFA finds that an academy did not deal with a complaint appropriately it will request that the complaint is reconsidered. Similarly, if the academy's complaints procedure does not meet statutory requirements then the EFA will ensure this is put right.

- b. The academy has failed to comply with a duty imposed on it under its funding agreement with the Secretary of State.

One of the EFA's main responsibilities is to ensure that academies comply with their funding agreement with the Secretary of State. The EFA will seek to resolve any concerns regarding potential or actual breaches of the funding.

APPENDIX C

School Complaint Form

If you have tried unsuccessfully to resolve your complaint and wish to take the matter further, please complete this form and send it to the Head Teacher. {If your complaint is against the Head Teacher you will need to send the form via the school to the Chair of Governors}

Your Name.....

Pupil's name

Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant)
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Address

Telephone number (day)

Telephone number (evening)

Please give brief details of your complaint ...

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What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? (Who did you speak to and what was their response?)

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What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

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... Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details

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Signed:..... T Williams, Head Teacher

Date:.....

Signed:..... R McDonald, Chair of Governors

Date:.....