



## **Complaints Leaflet**

### **Introduction**

We aim to provide your child with the best possible education and meet his or her needs as well as we can. However, in any school, parents may occasionally feel concerned about something or have a complaint. If this is the case, we want to hear from you. This leaflet explains how you can voice a concern or complaint, and how we will respond.

#### *What is a complaint?*

It can be a concern, problem or feeling of dissatisfaction that you have about an aspect of the school and/or any community facilities or services that the school provides.

### **What do I do if I have a complaint about the school?**

Tell a member of staff. Preferably speak with your child's class teacher after school when you pick your child up. She/he will discuss your complaint with you and seek to resolve the matter. If this is not possible, arrange an appointment to meet with them or contact the teacher direct by the email address provided. Your child will not be penalised or treated less favourably in any way as a result of you making a complaint.

### **There are certain specific complaints that are handled differently**

- If your child is refused admission to the school you have a statutory right to appeal to an independent appeals panel. The school will be able to give you details.
- If your child has been excluded for between 5 and 15 school days, you have a right to make representation to the governing body. If your child has been permanently excluded you have the right to an independent appeal.
- If your child has Special Educational Needs (SEN) and you have a complaint about her/his SEN provision, the school will be able to give you details of the Local Authority's dispute resolution arrangements, the Parent Partnership service and the SEN Tribunal for disputes about a Statement of Special Educational Need.



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### **What do I do if I feel my complaint hasn't been resolved?**

You may contact the school office and ask for an appointment to see the headteacher. The headteacher will listen carefully and ask you any questions to help her understand the situation fully. She will probably then have to talk to other people, but will get in touch with you as soon as she can respond fully but this period will never exceed 2 working weeks. This is referred to as the informal stage of the complaints procedure.

### **If I am still unhappy with the headteacher's response, what can I do next?**

You may then write to the Chair of the school's governors at the school address, setting out your complaint and why you are unhappy with the school's response. Please write within 14 days of receiving the headteacher's response. The Chair will write to you acknowledging your letter within a few days and may invite you for an informal meeting to discuss your complaint. If not, the Chair will then write again once s/he has investigated more fully. You should receive a full response within 14 days. This is still referred to as the informal stage of the complaints procedure.

### **What happens if I am unhappy about the Chair of Governor's response?**

You are entitled to ask a panel of governors to meet to consider your complaint. If you want to do this, write to the Chair or Clerk to the governing body within 14 days of receiving the Chair's response. Say that you have a formal complaint and that you remain unhappy with the way the school and Chair of Governors have responded, and that you would like a panel of governors to consider your complaint. There is no need to write all the details of the complaint in this letter but you will be required to explain clearly what you are complaining about. The Clerk will contact you about the panel and explain what will happen. You may bring someone with you if you wish. This part of the procedure is referred to as the formal stage of the complaints procedure.



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### **What happens at the panel meeting?**

One of the governors will chair the meeting, and s/he will explain what will happen. You may be asked to outline your complaint. Panel members and/or the headteacher, who will also be present, may ask you questions. The headteacher will then explain how the school has responded to the complaint, and then you and the panel may ask the headteacher questions. You may also ask other people (witnesses) to speak about what happened. After this, everyone except the panel and the person taking minutes will leave, so that the panel can consider its findings. The Chair of the panel will write to you within a few days setting out the panel's findings. They will also write to the headteacher and Chair of Governors. Their findings are binding upon the school. The panel's findings are the school's final response to you about your complaint. Schools are responsible for their own activities, and the Local Authority cannot get involved. The Local Authority cannot tell a school or governing body what to do. If you are still unhappy you could write to the Secretary of State for Education, but again there is no power to intervene unless the governing body has acted unreasonably or has failed to fulfil its statutory responsibilities.

### **How to complain - Summary**

1. Talk to your child's class teacher
2. Talk to the headteacher
3. Write to the Chair of governors
4. Write to ask for a complaints panel.

FINALLY please be assured that we will take any complaint seriously and treat you fairly. If something has gone wrong we want to try and put it right.