



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Spring Grove Primary School

We hope that parents and carers will be happy with our school and that any matters of complaint can be resolved at an informal stage in discussion with the school. However, we recognise that there are occasions on which a parent/carer may wish to take their complaint further and this policy sets out to clarify the procedure.

Stage 1: Complaint handled informally

The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher will be the member of staff in charge of resolving complaints. Other members of staff may be asked for information or to help in resolving the complaint.

When a complaint is received the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher will investigate the complaint. Within 10 school days s/he will either write to the complainant to give the result of the investigation and details of any action the school proposes to take, or contact the complainant and invite him or her to a meeting, which will normally be held within a further five school days, to discuss the investigation and its outcome, or in exceptional circumstances its progress.

The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher will keep a record of each complaint received, with any letter received or notes of the first conversation with the complainant, a note of the investigation and its outcome and a copy of the letter to the complainant or a note of the meeting with the complainant. These records should enable trends to be identified including possible issues on gender, disability and ethnicity.

The Headteacher will review the complaints records regularly to consider whether any change to school procedures is desirable.

Stage 2: Chair of Governors

Where it is not possible to resolve the complaint at Stage 1, the next stage is for the complainant to direct the complaint to the Chair of Governors if s/he wishes to pursue it further. The Chair of Governors will investigate the complaint.

It is very important that the complaint is not discussed (even in outline) by the Governing Body as a whole as this would prejudice all the governors present and it would not then be possible for Stage 3 to take place.



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Sometimes, a complainant will simultaneously direct the complaint to the Chair of Governors and to the Local Authority. In these circumstances, the complainant will be advised that all complaints are dealt with directly by school's governing bodies.

Stage 3: Formal Governing Body Complaints Panel

If the complainant is still not satisfied, he or she may ask the Chair of the Governing Body to set up a complaints panel to consider the complaint at a meeting of the panel. At this stage the complaint may well be different from the original complaint lodged as it may include dissatisfaction with the action taken by the school management to resolve the original complaint.

Because it will be necessary to guard against any possibility of conflict of interest, governors who have previously been involved in the complaint or who know the complainant personally or who have any other interest in the complaint should not serve on the complaints panel.

Also, insofar as complaints concern the management of the school or issues of classroom management, it would not normally be appropriate for staff or teacher governors to be panel members, unless it is impossible otherwise to convene a panel to meet in good time. This panel will make a final decision on the complaint on behalf of the whole Governing Body. A member of the school administrative staff or the clerk to the governors will normally act as clerk to the panel, arranging a date for the hearing agreed by all parties (normally within 15 school days of the complainant's request for a panel to hear the complaint), circulating any documents in advance of the hearing, and recording minutes of the hearing.

The members of the panel will appoint one of their number, not a member of staff of the school, as Chair.

The panel will receive any written evidence from the complainant and the action taken to resolve it. Any written evidence will be circulated to all parties before the hearing. It may well be that the outcome of any investigation by the Lifelong Learning, Leisure and Cultural Services department may be submitted as part of the evidence either by the Headteacher or by the complainant. The panel will hear statements from the complainant and the Headteacher (both of whom may be accompanied by a "friend" who can speak on their behalf if necessary), and evidence from witnesses from both



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sides relating specifically to the complaint and the action taken. The panel will be able to question the complainant, the Headteacher and the witnesses, and the Headteacher and complainant can also question each other and the witnesses. The format will be:

1. Introductions by the Chair of the Panel
2. Complainant makes statement of complaint and background
3. Questions to complainant by panel and Headteacher
4. All parties hear and question witnesses called by complainant
5. Headteacher makes statement
6. Questions to Headteacher by panel and complainant
7. All parties hear and question witnesses called by Headteacher
8. Headteacher makes final statement
9. Complainant makes final statement
10. The complainant and the Headteacher leave the hearing
11. Panel considers case in private and reaches decision on whether the complaint is upheld, upheld in part, or rejected. The panel may ask for a particular action to be taken by the school, or for a change in school procedure.

Once the panel has reached a decision it is final. The Chair of the panel will communicate the decision to the complainant in writing, or arrange for the clerk to do so, within 3 school days of the hearing. If the complainant then tries to reopen the complaint, the Chair will write to say that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter is therefore closed.

The only further recourse for the complainant is generally to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, or to the Local Government Ombudsman, on the grounds that the Governing Body has not considered the complaint properly.

April 2019