

GENERAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE for SPON GATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The person responsible for managing complaints (Complaints Co-ordinator) is: The Headteacher.

STAGE 1 - THE FIRST CONTACT: GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS INFORMALLY

There is an expectation that every effort will have been made to resolve a concern/complaint informally before escalation to Stage 2 can be considered.

If anyone has a concern/complaint it may be registered either verbally or in writing. If the member of staff first contacted cannot immediately deal with the matter, they will make a clear note of the date, name, contact address, phone number and brief details of the concern/complaint. It is good practice to agree the written note of the complaint with the complainant. This information will be passed to the Complaints Co-ordinator at the earliest opportunity and recorded in the school's log.

An opportunity will be given to the complainant to discuss the concern/complaint with an appropriate member of staff, who will clarify the nature of the concern/complaint and the outcome required.

The Complaints Co-ordinator will identify the appropriate procedure and either conduct the investigation themselves, or nominate an appropriate colleague to do so. The Co-ordinator will communicate verbally with the complainant to ensure they are clear about what action or monitoring of the situation has been decided on, only putting this in writing if this seems the best way to make things clear.

STAGE TWO - FORMAL REFERRAL TO THE HEAD TEACHER

If the complaint is about the Head teacher, or the Head teacher has been so involved as not to be impartial, the complaint must be put in writing and addressed to the Chair of the Governing Body and sent to the school address.

Otherwise:

The complaint should be submitted in writing to the Head Teacher. (*The attached complaint form may be used*). Help for the complainant can be obtained from the Children, Learning and Young People's Directorate, Customer Liaison Officer, with the writing of the complaint. Telephone 024 7683 1569.

Help and guidance for the investigating officer can be obtained from the Education and Learning Service; contact the nominated Education Improvement Adviser in the first instance.

Where the Head Teacher has acted as Complaint Co-ordinator at Stage One, another senior member of staff may be designated to collect some of the information from the parties involved, or another senior member of staff may be nominated to be the Investigator.

The complaint will be acknowledged in writing within **five school days**, giving the name of the person who will conduct the investigation and a target date for providing a response, usually within **10 school days**.

The investigator may ask the complainant to meet with them to give extra information or to explain any information provided previously.

Once all the relevant facts have been established, the Head teacher or designate will provide a written response.

The written response will include:

- a full explanation of the decision reached and the reasons for it.
- where applicable, what action the school will take to address the complaint and prevent recurrence.
- information on how and the timescale to request a review by the governing body, if not satisfied with the outcome.

STAGE THREE - GOVERNING BODY REVIEW OF HEAD TEACHER'S OR CHAIR'S INVESTIGATION

A request to review a complaint investigation should be made in writing to the Chair of the Governing Body within **20 school days of the date of the outcome letter** and should give the reasons for requesting a review.

For example:

- a claim that material information was not taken into account in investigating the complaint
- a claim that procedures have not been properly applied in handling the complaint
- a claim that there has been an incorrect interpretation of Council or school policy

As much detail as possible should be provided. If insufficient detail is given this may result in a delay, or a request being made for further clarification.

The Governing Body will then nominate three members to form a Complaint Panel to review the complaint and any further documents submitted by the complainant. These must be governors who have had no prior involvement with the complaint.

The Clerk will convene the Complaints Panel hearing within **20 school days of receipt of the review request** and at the same time provide panel members with copies of all relevant correspondence and documentation.

The Complaints Panel can set time limits for both sides to present their case and for the length of the hearing overall. These will be communicated to everyone involved by the Clerk.

The complainant, the Head teacher and other witnesses will be given a minimum of **5 school days'** notice of the hearing. The complainant will be advised of their right to bring a friend, or to be represented by someone of their choice.

The Outcome of a Review may include:

- upholding the result of the original investigation.
- upholding the result of the original investigation, but making recommendations for improving practices.
- finding the complaint was justified and overturning the original decision.

The Chair of the Panel will notify the complainant in writing of the outcome of the review and of any action to be taken, within **7 school days** after concluding the review. The complainant will also be advised of any right of further appeal, e.g. Governors Appeal Committee, to the Local Authority, Secretary of State, or Local Government Ombudsman.

The Chair will ensure that any required action is put in place.

Unreasonable Behaviour by Complainants

If a complainant acts in an unreasonable manner, for example:

- taking actions that are out of proportion to the nature of the complaint
- pursuing a complaint in an unacceptable manner by using threatening, intimidating or abusive language or behaviour
- continuing to pursue a complaint once the complaints procedure has been exhausted

The Head teacher/ Chair of the Governing Body may inform the complainant that their behaviour is unacceptable and take any action appropriate to limit the impact of the complainant's behaviour on the School, its staff and its representatives. This could ultimately include limiting the complainant's contact with the School to written communication with a named individual unless in an emergency.

School Complaints Procedure Complaint Form

Data Protection Act 1998

The personal data that you provide will be used for the purposes of investigating your complaint and for producing statistical data to enable the school's management to monitor the effectiveness of the school's complaint procedure. The information you give will be held securely and in confidence.

Please complete and return to The Headteacher (Complaints Co-ordinator) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

(Mr/Mrs/Miss/ Ms/Other)

First Name:

Last Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

If the complaint relates to a pupil, please give:

Pupil's name:

And relationship to the pupil:

Please give details of your complaint.

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

What would you like us to do to make improvements or put things right?

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

Signature:

Date: