

St Margaret's CE Junior School



Policy for Complaints

Date adopted in DRAFT form: 1st February 2017

Date adopted by Governing Body: 30th March 2017

Date for review: 30th March 2018

Rationale

This school's values are concerned with meeting the needs of pupils, parents and others who have a stake in the school. The governing body believes that constant feedback is an important ingredient in self-improvement and raising standards. Pupils, parents, carers, or other adults who have concerns or complaints should feel that these can be voiced and will be considered seriously.

All complainants have the right to be accompanied when making the complaint, and pupils may be accompanied by a parent or another adult.

There are various principles behind this policy:

- There is a difference between a concern and a complaint. A concern is likely to require discussion between teacher, pupil and parent. If the concern is not resolved by that means then it could become a complaint.
- A complaint is likely to arise when there are issues of physical or emotional well-being and or security when the school's stated values or aims are being ignored.
- A breach of the law will always constitute a complaint.
- We will seek to resolve complaints by informal means wherever possible.
- Investigations will be full, fair and swift.
- People will be kept informed of progress and the decisions reached.
- Every effort will be made to respect confidentiality.
- Feedback will be actively sought from those voicing complaints in order to minimise complaints and maximise accountability.

Who was consulted?

Parents, pupils, staff and governors were consulted in formulating this policy and reference was made to prevailing guidance from the local authority and statutory guidance.

Relationship to other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other school policies.

Responsibilities

The **headteacher** will ensure that:

- all complaints are dealt with in the first instance by a member of the leadership team (or the headteacher), who will document the complaint (names, dates, times, events)
- acknowledge in writing within three days of receipt, and consult with all those directly concerned
- the complainant will receive a written explanation of the action taken within ten working days following the complaint.

All **staff** are expected to encourage pupils, parents and carers who have concerns to follow the complaints procedure.

The complaints process – Guidance for Parents

How to share a concern

If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the child's progress.

What to do if the matter is not resolved through informal discussion

Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the headteacher. A request for an appointment will be acknowledged within 3 days of it being received. The headteacher considers any such complaint very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage making formal complaint to the governing body unnecessary. The Headteacher will provide the parent with a written explanation of the action taken and the outcome of the investigation within 10 working days of complaint.

Sharing a concern about the headteacher

Should a parent have a complaint about the headteacher, s/he should bring this to the attention of a member of the governing body who will investigate it. They will do all they can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if a parent is unhappy with the outcome, s/he can make a formal complaint, as outlined below. A list of governor names is available from the school office.

How to take the matter further

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 the governing body.

On receipt of the complaint the chair of governors (or his/her representative from the governing body) will inform the headteacher, investigate the complaint, and write to the parent within ten working days, explaining the action taken.

If the parent is not satisfied with the decision of the chair of governors (or his/her representative) then a formal written complaint may be made to the governing body through the clerk to the governors.

Within 15 working days of receiving the written complaint a Complaints Committee will meet to consider it. The parent will be given at least seven working days' notice of the meeting, and may take a friend or other person to provide support at the meeting. The governors will do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction. Within seven days of that meeting the parent will be informed of the decision, the reasons for it, and any action to be taken by the school. The decision of the complaints committee is final.

Who to appeal to next

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.

Complaints Time Line

	Time scale
Parent discusses concern/ issue with class teacher	Agree a suitable appointment within 3 days
If unresolved make an appointment to discuss the concern/ issue with the Headteacher or member of the Senior Leadership team in his absence.	Acknowledge request for an appointment in writing within 3 days of receipt Written explanation of action taken within 10 working days of complaint
If unresolved parent make a written complaint to the Chair of the Governing Body	Chair of Governors or representative investigates and provides a written response within 10 working days
If unresolved parent makes a formal complaint to the Governing Body resulting in a Governor Complaint Committee Investigation	Governor Complaints Committee will meet within 15 working days of receiving complaint.
Parent making the complaint invited to attend a meeting with the Governor Complaint Committee	At least 7 days notice of meeting required
Parent informed of Governor Committee decision	Within 7 days of decision
If unresolved parent can make an appeal to the Secretary of State for Education	

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

All complaints and the action taken will be documented and a summary included in the headteacher's termly report to the governors, with advice on any implications for policies.