

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

**This policy was adopted on: July 2012**

**Next policy review: July 2016**

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### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 We believe that our school provides a good education for all our children, and that the head teacher and other staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However the school must have procedures by which parents and other users of the service are able to complain about the provision, which affects them personally. The following policy sets out the procedure that should be followed in such cases.
- 1.2 If any parent, guardian etc, is unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or has a concern relating to the school, we would like to know about the problem.
- 1.3 Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. Each complaint will be investigated fairly, sensitively and as quick as possible. We will treat all complaints as confidential; only allowing access to the file by those investigating the complaint.
- 1.4 We encourage concerned parties to talk informally, in the first instance, to the child's class teacher about the concern. Where the complaint is left dissatisfied with the outcome of this initial discussion, the formal complaints procedure is appropriate recourse of action.
- 1.5 This complaints procedure is drafted in accordance the procedures laid down by the Lambeth Education Authority (LEA). If the school cannot resolve the complaint, those concerned may ask the LEA to intervene.
- 1.6 All parents have the right, as a last resort to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education, if they still feel that their complaint has not been properly addressed.

### **2. Definition and Scope of Policy**

- 2.1 A complaint is a clear expression of dissatisfaction made by person/s with a legitimate interest in the school about:  
the standard of teaching,

- the conduct, action or lack of action by members of the teaching or non teaching staff employed by the school, which affects an individual or group.

Complaints about persons outside the school will be initially dealt with by the head teacher in his role as site manager and referred to the appropriate authority.

2.2 A complaint may be made in person, by telephone or in writing. A complaint form (see appendix one) should be completed to ensure that the complainant and school have the same understanding of what was discussed and agreed. A brief note of further meetings and telephone calls may be kept on file with copies of written responses.

2.3 This procedure should be used for complaints other than those involving:  
\**Pupil admissions*: right of appeal to an independent committee established by the LEA under schedule 33 of the 1996 Education Act.

\**Pupil exclusions*: right to make representations to the governors and ultimate appeal to an independent committee established by the governing body under schedule 16 of the 1996 Education Act.

\**Special Education Provision*: right of appeal to an independent committee against the LEA's statement of a child's special educational needs under section 326 of the 1996 Education act.

\**The National Curriculum*: the right of appeal under section 367 of the 1996 Education Act to the governing body if the head teacher gives, revokes or varies any direction to apply or disapply the National Curriculum to a pupil.

\**Curriculum Matters and Religious and Collective Worship*: under section 409 of the 1996 Education Act is the right to make complaint about the school curriculum and related matters according to arrangements established by the LEA.

\**Complaints by Staff or Prospective Staff*: grievance procedures as agreed and adopted by the governing body.

\**Serious Complaints against Staff*: disciplinary procedures as agreed and adopted by the governing body.

### **3. Complaints Procedure:**

3.1 If any parent, guardian etc, is unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or has a concern relating to the school, they should in the first instance discuss the matter with the child's class teacher. All the teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress and they always want to know if there is a problem so that they can take action.

3.2 The teacher will try to resolve the problem promptly. S/he will make a note about the nature of the complaint and the way it was dealt with in the complaints file, and where appropriate also inform the head teacher or his/her representative.

3.3 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 the problem with the head teacher, or his/her representative. A complaint form (see appendix one) should be completed and submitted to the complaints officer (Richard Courtney) with a request for a meeting with the head teacher or his/her representative.

3.4 The head teacher considers every complaint very seriously and investigates thoroughly. Following the meeting and investigation which the investigator will speak to all parties separately to establish the facts relating to the complaint, a letter outlining the findings and where appropriate, the action taken will be sent to the complainant. Where possible this will be within 10 working days. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage.

3.5 Where an incident has resulted in personal injury the head teacher must inform the Chair of Governors and Executive Director of Education, and where appropriate social services and the police. Human Resources will guide in these cases.

3.6 Should the parent, guardian etc have a complaint about the head teacher, s/he should first make an informal approach to one of the members of the governing body, who is obliged to investigate it. The governor in question will do all s/he can to resolve the matter through dialogue with the school. The parent will be notified in writing of any action taken and a note for the complaint and investigation will be kept in the complaints file.

3.7 Should the parent, guardian etc have a serious complaint about the head teacher or a governor or is dissatisfied with the outcome of the school's investigation of a complaint written request should be sent to the Chair of Governors for the complaint to be heard before the Governing Body. An acknowledgement of the request will be made in writing in five (5) days to the complainant and a hearing convened within 30 working days of the acknowledgement. A panel of three governors appointed by the governing body, ideally the standing complaints panel comprising the Chair and two other unconnected governors (are not school staff governors) will investigate and handle the complaint.

3.8 The Chair will write and inform the complainant, head teacher and other appropriate parties of the time, date and place of the meeting at least 5 working days in advance of it. All relevant documentation will be issued at this time. Following the complaints hearing guidelines all the evidence will be considered and the panel will take a decision about the complaint, any appropriate action required or changes to the schools systems and procedures to avoid a similar occurrence arising.

3.9 The decisions of the panel will be circulated to all involved parties, including the head teacher, in writing within 10 working days of the hearing. The minutes of the meeting will be recorded and kept in the complaints file.

4 Should the complaint still be dissatisfied s/he has the right of appeal to the LEA. The Executive Director of Education at the Authority must receive this appeal in writing within 25 working days of the panel's decision.

## **5. Monitoring**

5.1 The complaints co-ordinator is responsible for maintaining a file containing a list of all complaints, actions taken and the outcome in the central administrative office. On a termly basis the governing body should review the file as part of the general performance evaluation and quality assurance role of the governing body.

5.2 The review and analysis of complaints arising may be used as a valuable tool to identify underlying issues that may need to be addressed.