



Complaints Policy

Updated: September 2015

Review Date: September 2016

Introduction

We strive to provide an excellent education for all our children. The Head Teacher and staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents and carers. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints. We are committed to taking concerns / queries seriously, at the earliest stage to enable us to support our children and families.

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. In our experience most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before it seriously affects the child's progress. Teachers are asked to keep the Senior Leadership Team informed if there is an issue that a parent / carer has raised.

Where parents / carers feel 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 Head Teacher. The Head Teacher considers any such concern very seriously, and investigates each case thoroughly. Most concerns are normally resolved by this stage.

If a parent / carer feels that an issue remains concerning after raising informally then they may wish to make a complaint and if so the following policy sets out the procedures that should be followed in such cases.

We deal with all complaints in accordance with procedures laid down by the Local Authority, Telford & Wrekin Council.

If the school itself cannot resolve a complaint and you want to appeal further beyond the school, you can do so by contacting the Secretary of State for Education by writing to The Schools Complaints Unit (SCU) at:

Department of Education
2nd Floor
Piccadilly Gate
Manchester
M1 2WD

The remit of the SCU is to consider the complaints policy and any other relevant policies have been followed in accordance with what was set out. The SCU will examine the policy to determine if it adheres to education legislation. The department will not however re-investigate the substance of the complaint. This remains the responsibility of the school.

Aims

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints, and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding. In all cases we put the interests of the child above all else. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

The complaints process

How to make a complaint

A parent / carer / member of the public can make a complaint by putting their concern in writing to the Head Teacher if the process of informal consultation has failed to resolve the concern.

The school, if asked, should help anyone who would like assistance to set out their complaint including access to translation services where necessary.

The parent / carer / member of the public is asked to state in their written complaint what problem remains to be resolved following on from the informal process and what they feel would resolve the problem.

How complaints are dealt with

An acknowledgement should be sent within 5 working days. The parent / carer/ member of the public should be told if their complaint has to be dealt with under a separate procedure.

The parent / carer / member of the public will be informed of the name and contact details of the person dealing with the complaint.

A full response should be sent within 30 school working days, or if a complete answer still cannot be given, information needs to be provided regarding what is being done to investigate the complaint and how long this will take.

Investigating complaints

The person investigating the complaint should aim to:

- Establish the nature of the complaint if not clear and what the parent / carer / member of the public would want to put things right
- Establish what had happened so far and who has been involved
- Meet with the parent / carer / member of the public or contact them if further information is necessary
- Interview those who are involved in the matter and / or those being complained about confidentially allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- Conduct interviews with an open mind and keep confidential school notes or arrange for someone to be an independent note taker to keep confidential notes.

Resolving a complaint

Complaints may be resolved at any stage through a range of ways that may include:

- Acknowledging a complaint is valid in part or in whole
- Providing an explanation or apology
- An admission that the situation could have been handled better or differently
- An assurance that the event should not recur
- An explanation of the steps taken to ensure that it should not happen again
- A proposal of how the parent / carer / member of the public can work together to prevent future concerns
- An undertaking of a review of school policy in light of the complaint

Next steps if the parent / carer / member of the public remains dissatisfied

The parent / carer / member of the public must put in writing to the Head Teacher their dissatisfaction and their reason for continued complaint. The Head Teacher will review the process and may arrange a meeting if further clarification is required. The Head Teacher will write a response within 10 working days.

If the parent / carer / member of the public remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint as dealt with by the Head Teacher they should write to the Chair of Governors asking them to consider their complaint further. The communication needs to be addressed to:

The Chair of Governors
 C/O Haughton School
 Queen Street
 Madeley
 Telford
 TF7 6BW

The Chair of Governors will review the complaint in relation to ensuring the stages in the policy have been followed and refer the parent / carer / member of

the public to the policy if necessary. If the policy stages have been followed, the Chair of Governors will arrange for the complaint to be looked into by the Governing Body. Even at this stage there is provision within the policy for the complaint to be resolved by the chair of the committee before the complaint is heard by the committee itself.

Should any parents have a complaint about the The Head Teacher, they 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 issue through a dialogue with the school, but if parents are unhappy with the outcome, they can make a formal complaint, as outlined below.

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 governors.

The governing body must consider all written complaints within three weeks of receipt. It will arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint, and will invite the person making it to attend the meeting, so that s/he can explain the complaint in more detail. The school gives the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting.

After hearing all the evidence, the governors will consider their decision and inform the parent about it in writing. The governors do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction.

If the complaint is not resolved, a parent may make representation to the Local Authority. Further information about this process is available from the school or from the Local Authority. A further meeting is chaired by an independent person, who considers all the evidence and makes a further judgement in an attempt to resolve the complaint.

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.

Monitoring and review

The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Head Teacher logs all complaints received by the school, and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis.

Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

This policy is reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.