

Complaints Policy

This policy is a whole school policy including EYFS

A detailed and ongoing risk assessment has been completed to take into account government guidelines and statutory requirements regarding Covid-19. With this in mind changes to procedures may occur due to identified risks.

Introduction

We believe that our school provides a good education for all our children, and that we work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, we have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents. The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases.

After an inspection report has been provided it must be supplied to parents of children who attend the school.

Aims and objectives

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 and, in all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

A confidential log of complaints is kept by the school and details whether the issues were resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing and action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). The log provides that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the secretary of state or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Education and Skills Act requests access to them. Complaints are available for Ofsted and ISI to view.

Written Complaints about the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements must be responded to within 28 days.

Stage one — the informal stage – discussion with class teacher/member of staff

One of the main aims is to keep everything as simple and as informal as possible and to ensure that every complainant has been treated reasonably. It is expected that the majority of complaints will be resolved at this early stage through informal communication with the member of staff concerned. It should be remembered that many complaints arise as a result of misunderstandings or unresolved concerns. Many of these concerns can be resolved at an early stage by simple clarification, or by the provision of information.

Stage two — formal stage - referral to the Headteacher

In the case of a serious concern, or when a concern has not been resolved at the informal

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stage, it may be appropriate to address the complaints directly to the Headteacher. The procedure now becomes more formal, the complaints must be put in writing and the Headteacher takes on responsibility for the investigation. If the concern is about an action by the Headteacher personally, the complaints should be put in writing to the nominated person, James Shone, in an envelope marked private and confidential, to the school.

The Headteacher (or nominated person) will respond with an undertaking to complete the investigation, as far as possible, normally within five to ten school days. Included with the complaint should be details that might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events and copies of relevant documents. The Headteacher may wish to meet with the complainant in order to clarify the complaint. The Headteacher is free to collect any other evidence deemed necessary. In a situation where this involves an interview with a member of staff who is the subject of a complaint, a friend or representative of the member of staff may be present at the interview if they so wish.

The investigation will begin as soon as possible and once it has been concluded, there are a number of possible outcomes.

- The complaint cannot be upheld due to there being insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion.
- The concern was not substantiated by the evidence.
- The concern was substantiated in full or in part and some details will be given of the action the school may be taking to review procedures or systems although details of any disciplinary procedures will not be released.
- The matter has been fully investigated and appropriate procedures are being followed. These are strictly confidential, especially when they involve staff disciplinary procedures.

The complainant will be informed in writing, or at a formal meeting, of the outcome of the investigation and told that the Headteacher's consideration of the complaint has now been concluded. Depending on the outcome, the complainant can receive one of the following.

- An apology.
- An explanation.
- Immediate action to put things right.
- An assurance that the school will do all that it reasonably can to prevent the situation that caused the complaint from happening again.
- Reasonable financial compensation from school funds if it is considered appropriate.

If the complainant is satisfied, all well and good, but it could very well be that he or she is not happy with the outcome and/or the way in which the process was followed. If he or she decides to "take the matter further" the appropriate course of action is to write to the nominated person, Peter Stone, in an envelope marked confidential, to the school.

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Stage three — formal stage - referral to the complaints committee

Complaints rarely reach this formal level, but the school creates an ad hoc complaints committee for such a situation.

This committee will normally comprise two members of staff and two non-members of staff (who are independent of the management and running of the school) and have not previously been involved in dealing with the complaint. The committee elects its own chairperson.

The complainant must write a formal letter of complaint to the committee containing full details of the complaint, details to support/assist the committee in its work, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events and copies of relevant documents. Receipt of this letter will be acknowledged, in writing, by the chair of the committee within five and no more than ten school days.

The letter will give a time scale for when the committee will hear the complaint. This will usually be within 15 school days of receipt of the complaint. The chairperson will formally write to the complainant, the Headteacher and any other relevant staff or witnesses to inform them:

- of the date, time and venue of the hearing
- of the aims and objectives of the hearing and how it will be conducted
- that any documentation they wish the committee to consider should be sent to the chairperson no later than five days before the hearing
- of their rights to be accompanied by a friend or representative
- how and when the committee will reach its decision.

The hearing will enable each party involved to explain their understanding or interpretation of the events that led to the complaint. The parties may also question each other, call witnesses and question witnesses called by other parties.

Following final statements by the Headteacher and the complainant, the hearing will be concluded by the chairperson who will explain that the committee will consider its decision and write to both parties within, five school days informing them of the outcome. The committee must then reach a decision and decide on any action to be taken. Where appropriate, changes to or requests of review to school systems or procedures should be suggested to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not happen again. It is expected that this will be the end to the matter.

If a complainant believes that the complaints committee has acted illegally or arbitrarily in handling the complaint, he or she has the right to complain to OFSTED, address below, or to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills.

Picadilly Gate
Store Stree
Manchester

Alternatively complainants can contact Independent Schools Inspectorate.

Cap House
9-12 Long Lane

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London
EC1A 9HA

We keep a written record of all complaints in a book. As well as giving brief details of each complaint, there will be an indication of whether they were resolved at a preliminary informal stage, or whether they proceeded to the more formal stages and the complaints committee. Parents, and prospective parents, may request details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year. The complainant is not entitled to access any details of the investigation, except for any statements that may have been provided by their child. Any information relating to the application of disciplinary procedures is strictly confidential. It is important that all complaints are treated with the utmost confidentiality, at all times, by all parties.

Monitoring and review

This policy is the Headteacher's ongoing responsibility and its effectiveness is reviewed annually in consultation with the staff.

Two complaint/concerns have been received during the last academic year 2020/2021 they both had satisfactory outcomes and were dealt with by the Headteacher; no panel review was requested or required and it was dealt with at the preliminary stage.

Signed Headteacher: *Sally Cox*

Date: 4.1.21