

Ivory Federation

Propps Hall Junior, Infant and Nursery School Springhead Infant and Nursery School Rushcroft Primary School

PARENTAL COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

RATIONALE

Our school personnel work very hard to build positive relationships with all stakeholders, we recognise that there are ways in which we can continue to improve and we welcome suggestions and feedback from our community.

The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or pupils, are concerns rather than complaints. We are committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage. The way in which we handle concerns and complaints is an opportunity for us to take responsibility for ensuring that we treat people with respect, openness and care. To create and maintain healthy, open relationships and to ensure we remain committed to treating people equally, we seek to focus on being patient, honest and transparent.

The DfE guidance explains the difference between a concern and a complaint.

- A **concern** is defined as “an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought”. We aim to resolve concerns through day-to-day communication as far as possible.
- A **complaint** is defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action”. We aim to resolve complaints informally where possible, at the earliest possible stage.

We try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed. This policy outlines the procedure relating to handling such complaints formally. The prime aim of our school is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Malicious complaints may incur appropriate action by the school. The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints.

This document meets the requirements of section 29 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which states that schools must have and make available a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides.

It is also based on [guidance for schools on complaints procedures](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), including the model procedure, and model procedure for dealing with serial and unreasonable complaints.

SCOPE

This policy does **not** cover complaints procedures relating to:

- Admissions
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)
- Suspension and permanent exclusion
- Whistle-blowing
- Staff grievances
- Staff discipline

The school has separate policies and procedures for dealing with the above matters, more information can be given on request.

Complaints about services provided by other providers who use school premises or facilities should be directed to the provider concerned.

PURPOSE

- To deal with any complaint against the school or any individual connected with it by following the correct procedures.
- To deal with all complaints thoroughly and by being open, honest and fair when dealing with the complainant.
- To be impartial and non-adversarial; respect complainants' desire for confidentiality; treat complainants with respect and courtesy
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response
- To have realistic and reasonable time limits set for dealing with complaints
- To keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process
- To be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and make any reasonable adjustments needed to accommodate individuals.

PROCEDURE

- The complainant should raise the complaint as soon as possible with the relevant member of staff or Senior Leader as appropriate, this could either be in person, by written communication or by telephone.
- We expect complaints to be raised within a 3 month time frame, complaints outside of this period will not be investigated. Exceptions to this time frame will be considered if circumstances support an extension.
- When dealing with the complaint, we will seek to establish: 1) What has happened 2) Who was involved 3) What the complainant feels would put things right.
- We will acknowledge informal complaints within **two** working days, and investigate and provide a response within **five** working days. If the complaint is not resolved informally, it will be escalated to a formal complaint.

Formal Complaint

Stage 1

- A written complaint is to be provided to the Executive Headteacher, this is to include relevant details such as dates, times, and the names of anyone related to the complaint. If available, relevant documentation should also be provided. The complainant should also make clear what they feel would resolve the complaint.
- The Executive Headteacher will acknowledge the complaint within **two** working days, and investigate and provide a response within **ten** working days.
- The Executive Headteacher may convene a meeting to further clarify concerns and seek a resolution. The complainant is free to be accompanied to the meeting by somebody of their choice only if, there is no conflict of interest and if the school have been notified in advance.
- If a satisfactory conclusion is not reached with the Executive Headteacher the complainant can progress to Stage 2. Stage 2 involves the Governing Body.

Stage 2

- At Stage 2, a written complaint must be given in writing to the Chair of Governors.
- The letter should contain the complainants contact details and an outline of the issues wishing to be raised and what resolution they are seeking. This should then be put in an envelope marked 'FAO – the Chair of Governors. Private and Confidential'. This should be left at the main office, the complaint will then be forwarded to the Chair of Governors.
- The Chair of Governors will conduct their own investigation. The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant within **fifteen** working days of receipt of the Stage 2 letter.
- If a satisfactory conclusion cannot be reached, the complainant has **five** working days on receipt of the outcome letter / investigation to make clear that they wish to proceed to Stage 3. After this period of time the complaint will be closed.

Stage 3

- The Chair of Governors will convene a meeting of the Governors Complaints Committee.
- The remit of the committee is to :
 1. *Dismiss the complaint in part or whole*
 2. *Uphold the complaint in part or whole*
 3. *Recommend changes to the school procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur*
 4. *Suggest ways forward to resolve the complaint*
- The committee will be chaired by the Chair of Governors and will consider the complainants original written complaint and may also ask to talk to the complainant concerned personally. The committee will also consider whether it requires any further information or evidence from the Executive Headteacher or any other members of the school staff.
- The committee will reach a conclusion and decide on any course of action it deems necessary to follow.
- They will report back their findings in writing to the complainant concerned, at which point the Governors of the School will consider the matter closed.
- The complainant has a right to appeal the decision made by the Complaints Committee. An appeals committee will be convened with all panel members being impartial to the process so far.
- The appeals process will either uphold the original outcome or overturn the decision of the complaints panel. If the decision is overturned, recommendations will be made.
- If the appeals committee upholds the original outcome, the matter will be considered closed by the school. If dissatisfied, the complainants next course of action is to contact the Local Authority.

**If a complaint is being made in relation to the Executive Headteacher, the process will be initiated at Stage 2*

SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



