

## Complaints Leaflet for Parents/Carers



Dear Parent/Carer

### *Introduction*

We aim to provide your child with the very best possible education and opportunity during their time here. However, in any school, individuals who have parental responsibility for a child may occasionally feel concerned about something or have a complaint. If this is the case we want to hear from you. This leaflet explains how you can voice a concern or make a formal complaint, and how we will respond.

A concern is an expression of worry of what may appear to be a very low level issue. It is important to deal with a concern seriously at the earliest stage in order to reduce the likelihood of it developing into complaint. A matter should be viewed as a concern if it is capable of being resolved locally, is not in writing and does not require a formal written response.

A complaint is a formal expression of dissatisfaction; is in writing and will need a formal written response. The school must deal with any matter as a complaint when the person raising the matter requests it at any point or when informal attempts to resolve the concern have been exhausted and the person who raised the concern remains dissatisfied.

### *What do I do if I have a complaint or concern about the school?*

Discuss your concern or complaint with the member of staff. It may be best to make an appointment rather than just trying to discuss in a more ad hoc manner. Agree timescales for change and a further review meeting.

### *What do I do if I feel my complaint hasn't been resolved?*

Contact the school office and ask for an appointment to see the Headteacher or other senior member of staff. An appointment will be scheduled. The Headteacher will listen carefully and ask you any questions and may have to speak with staff in order to fully understand the background to your concern/complaint fully. . You should expect to have a response in a week; again, agree timelines and a further meeting if necessary. This is referred to as the *informal stage* of the complaints procedure.

***If I feel unhappy with what the Headteacher says, what can I do then?***

You can write to the Chair of the school's Governing Body (or designated governor) at the school address. Your letter must set out your complaint and why you are unhappy with the school's response. Please write within 10 school days of receiving the Headteacher/Principal's response from the informal stage. The Chair (or designated governor) will write acknowledging your letter within 5 days and may invite you for an informal meeting to discuss your complaint. They will invite you to meet with them (you can bring a friend or family member to the meeting). They will then probably have to arrange to discuss your concerns with other members of staff. You will receive a full response within 10 school days. This is still the informal stage.

***What happens if I am unhappy with the informal stage?***

You are entitled to ask a panel of governors to meet to consider your complaint. If you want to do this, write to the Chair or Clerk to the governing body within 10 school days of receiving the Chair's response. Confirm that you have a formal complaint and that you remain unhappy with the way the school and Chair of Governors have responded, and that you would like a GB complaints panel hearing to be set up to consider your complaint. There is no need to write all the details of the complaint in this letter but you will be required to provide a summary of your complaint. The Clerk will contact you about the GB panel hearing and explain what will happen. You may bring someone with you if you wish. This part of the procedure is referred to as the ***formal stage*** of the complaints procedure.

In a voluntary aided school, you may be able to channel your complaint to the appropriate Diocese or religious organisations linked with the school.

***What happens at the GB complaints Panel?*** One of the governors will chair the meeting, and she/he will explain what will happen At the meeting/hearing. You may be asked to outline your complaint. Panel members and/or the Headteacher/Principal/Investigating Officer will also be present and may ask you questions. The Headteacher/Principal/Investigating Officer will then explain how the school has responded to the complaint, and then you and the panel may ask the Headteacher/Principal/Investigating Officer questions. You may also ask other people (witnesses) to speak about what happened.

The Chair will close the meeting/hearing and tell all parties a decision will be issued within 10 School of the hearing/meeting.

The panel and the Clerk will remain to deliberate and reach a decision with findings. The Chair of the panel will write to the complainant, Headteacher, Chair of Governors, within 10 school days, setting out the panel's findings and final decisions. The findings and Decision are binding upon the school.

The panel's findings are the school's final response to you about your complaint. Schools are responsible for their own activities. The Local Authority has no power to tell a Local Authority school or GB how to act or carry out any functions. If you are still unhappy with the final decision of the Panel you could write to the Secretary of State for Education who has no power to intervene unless the GB has acted unreasonably or has failed to fulfil its statutory responsibilities or failed to follow its own policy.

### **What Might A Complaint Be About?**

- Your child's academic/social progress
- Bullying by other pupils
- Your child's relationship with teachers or other staff
- Homework – too much or too little of it
- Unfair treatment of your child as you or your child perceives it
- Issues on the health and safety of your child
- Absence (authorised/unauthorised)
- Missing property
- Detentions and other sanctions
- Parents' Evenings
- Any situation that causes you or your child concern

This list is not exhaustive.