



Elvetham Heath Primary School

GENERAL COMPLAINTS POLICY

The Policy

The Education Act 2002 Section 29 (1) (a) and (b) requires governing bodies to have procedures to deal with complaints not covered by other existing statutory requirements and to publicise these procedures. Under Section 29 (2), governing bodies should have regard to any guidance from the Secretary of State.

The School has a policy of encouraging parents and pupils to express their concerns on what goes on within the school, so that staff receive an early warning of potential difficulties. The vast majority of these concerns are dealt with immediately, satisfactorily and at an informal stage. However, occasionally things can go wrong and it is not always possible to predict how a minor concern can escalate into a major, stressful and time-consuming complaint. The General Complaints Procedure document, together with this Policy document aims to ensure that all parties are aware of, and have confidence in, a clear process and channel of communication.

The General Complaints Procedure document, which should be read in conjunction with this policy, helps clarify governors' powers and the Local Education Authority's (LEA) role when responding to general complaints. The procedure aims to:

- Resolve concerns through informal discussions at the earliest stage
- Promote efficiency, with well-defined timescales and named contacts
- Focus on resolution and service review rather than blame
- Be accessible to people with disabilities, special needs or language barriers
- Promote confidentiality and discretion
- Include fair and transparent investigative processes for staff as well as complainants
- Indicate other sources of advice, for example CAB (Citizens Advice Bureau), parent/partnership services, ACE (Advisory Centre for Education) and the LEA complaints adviser
- Be forthright in dealing with vexatious, abusive, malicious and anonymous complainants.

General Principles

Publicity

Parents should always know how they can raise concerns or lodge a formal complaint. The complaints procedures should be easily accessible and well publicised.

Efficiency and Consistency

Each stage of the procedure will have publicised time limits. Where it is not possible to meet these, information about progress will be given to the complainant.

Confidentiality

All conversations and resultant correspondence with respect to a concern will be treated with discretion at all times. It is vitally important that parents feel confident that their complaint will not penalise their child. However, from the outset all parties involved in a complaint will need to be made aware that some information may have to be shared with others involved in the operation of the complaints procedure.

Redress

If the outcome of the complaints procedure shows the school was at fault, it is sufficient for the school to provide redress in the form of an acknowledgement that the complaint was valid.

Staff Awareness and Training

Governors and School staff, including non teaching staff, will be made familiar with the complaints procedure so that they can advise parents about the process.

Record Keeping

If complaints are to contribute to raising the quality of education, then they will be recorded and monitored termly by senior staff and governors.

Stages of the Process

Procedures should help parents feel confident that their concerns will be dealt with as quickly and effectively as possible.

Stage 1: The First Contact; Guidelines for Dealing with Concerns and Complaints Informally

Stage 2: Referral to the Head teacher for Investigation

Stage 3: Review by the Governing Body

Stage 4: Review by the Local Education Authority

Stage 5: Secretary of State

Stage 6: The Local Government Ombudsman

Details of the School's Policy towards vexatious or abusive complaints are also included in the Complaints Procedure.

A copy of the Procedures can be viewed on the School website and a copy can be obtained from the School Office.

Ratified by Premises & Safeguarding Committee 17th May 2017

Next due for review May 2019