



St. Saviour's Church, Coalpit Heath.

The Manor C of E Primary School

Policy: Complaints

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Date: 06.03.07

Approved: Headteacher

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Chair of Governors
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Complaints Policy

1. Rationale

Complaints against schools can take many forms and are often made in a variety of ways. Good judgement is needed in determining when a concern becomes a complaint and the steps that could be taken to resolve an issue before it becomes a complaint. In order to avoid unnecessary delay in dealing with complaints and any confusion on the part of whoever has made the complaint, it is important to have a clear and agreed procedure in which the different roles and responsibilities of the Head Teacher, the Governing Body and the Local Authority are clearly defined. This policy is based on published guidance by South Gloucestershire Council - "Complaints Against Schools - General Principles and Procedural Guidance".

2. Aims

- 2.1 to provide guidance for both School and complainants as to correct procedures
- 2.2 to establish the roles and responsibilities in handling complaints

3. Guidelines

- 3.1 Most concerns can often be dealt with informally by the Class or Head Teacher and this should be encouraged wherever possible.
- 3.2 Where a concern gives rise to a complaint, this should normally be made to the Head Teacher (or to the Chair of Governors where the complaint is against the Head Teacher). Governors or others approached by complainants should therefore refer them to the Head Teacher or the Chair of Governors as appropriate.
- 3.3 If the matter cannot be resolved through these informal processes, the complainant should be told of his/her right to make a formal complaint in writing to the Governing Body and be given a copy of the Complaints Policy.
- 3.4 All complaints will be recorded, treated in confidence, action logged and reported to the Chair of Governors. Records will be kept for six years.
- 3.5 Complaints received in writing will normally be acknowledged within two working days.
- 3.6 There are certain categories of complaint for which there are specific and set procedures and it is not open to Governors to determine their own procedures and policies in the following areas: the curriculum under the relevant Education Act; admission to school; failure to assess a child's special education needs; the exclusion of pupils from school; and child protection. All such areas of complaint are dealt with by the Local Authority and complainants should be referred to the appropriate contact.

- 3.7 Any complaint made directly to the Local Authority will automatically be referred to the Chair of Governors, unless it is against the actions of the Governing Body itself or falls within one of the specific categories outlined above.
- 3.8 The Chair of Governors will report the receipt of a complaint to the Governing Body (without any discussion of the detail) and refer it to the Local Authority if it is a complaint against the Governing Body itself or falls within one of the specific categories outlined above; to the Head Teacher if no opportunity has been given to attempt to resolve it informally; or, if it falls within the Governing Body's remit, to a nominated panel of three Governors for investigation.
- 3.9 The Chair of Governors will inform the complainant in writing of the referral to the Local Authority, to the Head Teacher or to the Governors' Panel.
- 3.10 The Governors' Panel will not include the Head Teacher nor any Governor who has a specific interest or involvement with the complainant.
- 3.11 The Panel will begin its investigation within three weeks of the complaint being referred to it.
- 3.12 All parties to the complaint will be given a fair opportunity to express their point, which may necessitate inviting the complainant to speak to the Panel, if appropriate but without, as part of the investigation, bringing together both parties. However, it may be appropriate subsequently to bring both parties together with a view to resolving the matter. Such a course of action would first need to be recommended as an outcome from the investigation.
- 3.13 The outcome of the Panel's investigation will be given to the complainant in writing within five working days of its completion.
- 3.14 The outcome of the investigation will be reported to the Governing Body in confidential session and only in summary form to establish the reasons for any recommended action.
- 3.15 If a complainant considers that the Governing Body has acted unreasonably, or not dealt with their case fairly and according to the School's policy and procedures, there is the right of appeal to the Local Authority.
- 3.16 Finally, complainants have the right of appeal to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if they consider that the Local Authority has acted unreasonably.