



St. Saviour's Church, Coalpit Heath.

The Manor C of E Primary School

Policy: Complaints

Author: Mrs H Eade updated by L Coleborn

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Approved:

Headteacher

Chair of Governors

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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" 2003 and School Complaints Procedures [England] a guidance document from the National Association of Head Teachers March 2009.

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

General Principles:

| An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

To allow for a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, any matter raised more than 3 months after the event, being complained of, will not be considered.

- 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 Head Teacher, [or to the Clerk to the governing body, for the attention of the Chair, if the complaint is about the Head Teacher] who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately. [A](#) copy of the Complaints Policy and Complaint Form (Appendix A) will be provided for completion.

- 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. Details to include are those which will assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents. It is very important to include a clear statement of the potential actions the school needs to undertake in order to resolve the concern.
- 3.5 Complaints received in writing will normally be acknowledged within five working days indicating how the school intends to proceed.
- 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.

APPENDIX A

School Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it to Head Teacher [or Clerk to the governing body], who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name:

Relationship with school [e.g. parent of a pupil on the schools roll]:

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Pupil's name [if relevant to your complaint]:

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Your Address:

Daytime telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give concise details of your complaint, [including dates, names of witnesses etc...], to allow the matter to be fully investigated:

You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of Additional pages attached =

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? [i.e. who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?]

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Signature:

Date:

For School Use:

Date Form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

Complaint referred to:

Date