



POLICY FOR HEARING AND DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

Introduction

Meadow Farm Primary School is committed to working in close partnership with all members of the school community. The school places great value on the role which parents and carers can play in supporting children's learning. Staff and governors actively encourage a positive relationship between the school and the families of children who attend the school.

Statement of Intent

If, at any time, a member of the school community has a concern about an aspect of life at the school, the concern will be dealt with by the school as quickly, sympathetically and effectively as possible. It is hoped that most concerns will be settled amicably at this stage.

However, if there is a continuing concern, this can be directed through the formal stages as outlined in our complaints procedure, detailed below.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether made orally or in writing. This policy addresses general complaints. Complaints about the curriculum, collective worship, racist incidents or provision for children with special educational needs are dealt with under separate procedures.

Implementation of the policy

Legislation

Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, requires that all governing bodies of maintained schools set in place a procedure to deal with complaints, and make arrangements to publicise the procedure. Local authorities are required to adhere to section 409 of the Education Act 1996. This requires that they make arrangements to consider any complaint about the curriculum, religious education or collective worship, where the school or its governing body has acted or is proposing to act unreasonably in relation to a statutory duty. Beyond this, however, local authorities have no legal obligation to investigate the substance of a complaint regarding an individual child, and no powers of direction.

School Complaints Procedure

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The experience of the first contact between the complainant and the school can be crucial in determining whether the complaint will escalate. To this end all staff and governors are aware of the procedure to be followed if a complaint is raised. Also, whilst not wishing to encourage complaints, possible. It can then be investigated more effectively whilst information is fresh in the minds of all parties. complainants should note that they have a duty to raise a matter as soon as conveniently

The school operates a 4 stage complaints procedure. If the complaint concerns the conduct of the Headteacher it will be dealt with in accordance with stage 3.

Stage 1: Complaints heard by a staff member

In the first instance, it is hoped that the complainant will be able to discuss the issues with the member of staff concerned, so everyone has a clear picture of the situation from all points of view. Most problems can be resolved at this informal stage.

The member of staff who is dealing with the complaint should ensure that the complainant is reassured that the matter will be investigated and is clear what action has been agreed.

All staff should be aware of the need for confidentiality.

A brief record of any telephone calls, meetings and agreed actions should always be kept although it is not always necessary to provide the complainant with a written record at this stage. The Chair of Governors/ Senior Teacher should monitor these records.

The school will respect the views of a complainant who indicates that he/ she would have difficulty discussing the complaint with a particular member of staff. In these cases, the complainant should refer the complaint to the Headteacher, who will refer it to another member of staff.

Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels too compromised to deal with the complaint, the complaint will be referred to another member of staff via the Headteacher. The member of staff will consider the complaint objectively and impartially.

If the first approach is made to a governor, the governor will advise the complainant to follow the "Complaints Policy". Governors will not act unilaterally outside the formal procedure or be involved at the early stages in case they are needed to sit on a panel at a later stage of the process.

Stage 2: Complaint heard by the Headteacher

The complainant may be dissatisfied with the way the complaint was handled at Stage 1, and /or wish to pursue their initial complaint. If so, the complainant should submit the complaint in writing, to the Headteacher, within 10 school days of Stage 1 being concluded. A copy of the complaint form is attached to this policy.

The Headteacher may delegate the task of collating information concerning the complaint to another member of staff, but not the decision, nor the action to be taken. The Headteacher will meet with the complainant, hear the complaint, investigate and make every effort to resolve the issue. Subsequent to this meeting the Headteacher will write to the complainant summarising the outcome reached and the process for appeal.

A log of all contacts relating to the complaint will be kept

If, as a result of the investigation, issues arise relating to staff discipline or capability, details should remain confidential to the Headteacher. However, the complainant should be informed that the school has taken appropriate follow-up action.

Stage 3: Complaint heard by the Chair of Governors

If the complaint cannot be resolved at stage 2 the complainant may take their complaint to the Chair of Governors.

The complainant will need to write to the Chair of Governors, care of the school, within 10 school days of the date of the letter notifying them of the outcome of stage 2. The complainant should provide a copy of the written complaint, a copy of the head teacher's letter concluding Stage 2 and give details in writing of why they are not satisfied with the outcome.

The Chair will meet with the complainant, hear the complaint, investigate and make every effort to resolve the issue, having met with the Headteacher. The Chair will write to the complainant at the conclusion of his/her investigation with the outcome reached and the process for appeal. The complaint will move on to Stage 4 if the complainant remains dissatisfied by the outcome.

Stage 4: Complaint heard by the Governing Body Complaints Appeal Panel

The complainant needs to write to the Chair of Governors within 10 school days of the date of the letter notifying them of the outcome of stage 3, notifying that they wish their complaint to be heard by the complaints appeal panel. The Chair, or a nominated governor, will convene a governing body complaints appeal panel.

The remit of the Complaints Appeal Panel is to:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or part
- Uphold the complaint in whole or part
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- Recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur

The governors' appeal panel hearing is the last school based stage of the complaints process and is not convened to merely rubber stamp previous decisions. Individual complaints will not be heard by the whole governing body at any stage as this could compromise the impartiality of any panel set up for a disciplinary hearing against a member of staff following a serious complaint.

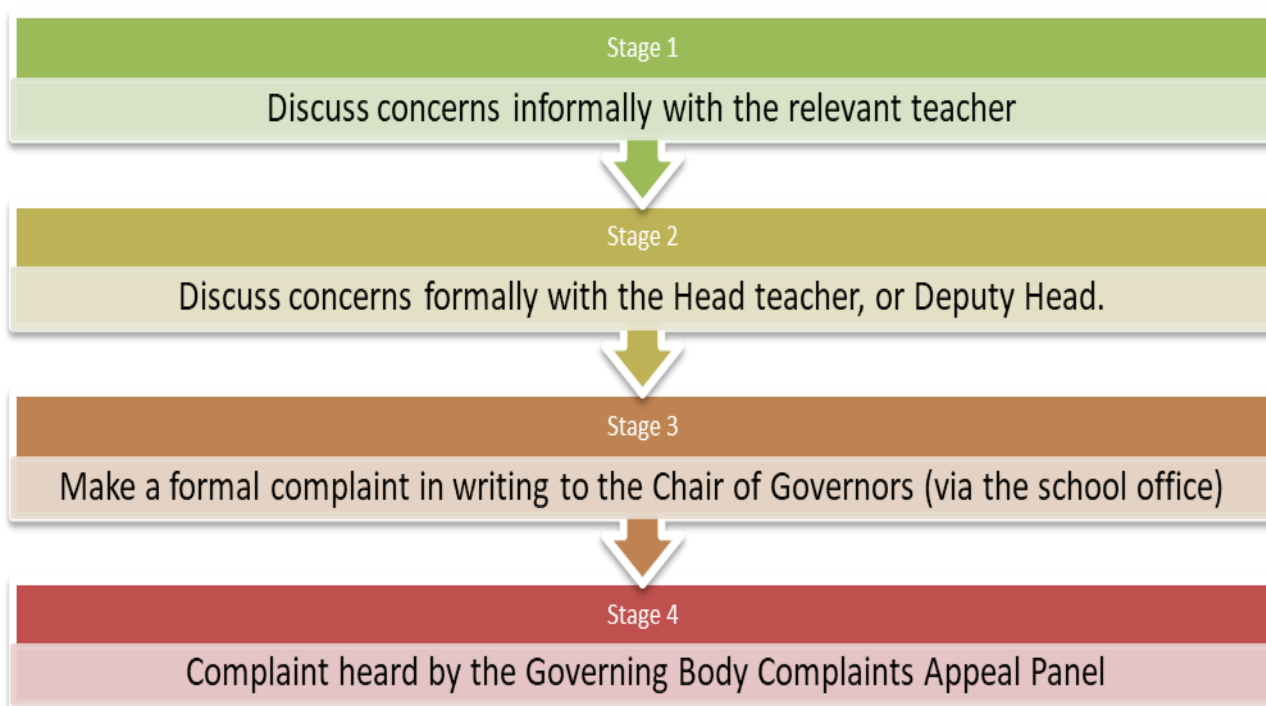
The governing body will nominate 3 governors to have delegated powers to hear the complaint at this stage. These governors must have no previous knowledge of the complaint. The panel will choose their own Chair. The panel will usually meet within 15 school days of receiving the complaint.

The Chair of the panel should notify the Headteacher and the complainant as to whether they will be invited to attend the panel meeting, or if only written material will be considered. However, both parties will be treated equally. If the Headteacher is invited to the meeting, the complainant will be invited also.

If the complaint relates to a staff disciplinary or capability matter about which the Headteacher has already taken action, the governors should focus on how the original complaint was managed to avoid prejudicing any on-going disciplinary or capability procedures.

The Headteacher and complainant should be informed of the Panel's decision in writing within 10 school days. The letter will confirm the end of the school's and governing body's involvement with the complaint and explain any further rights to appeal. The complainant should be advised that the Local Authority has no role unless the complaint relates to a service provided by the Local Authority. If a complainant is not happy with the outcome from Stage 4 they may write to the Secretary of State.

A summary of the 4 stages of complaints procedure



Monitoring and review

The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Headteacher logs all complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis.

Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

Policy prepared by: Mrs Samantha Eyre

Date prepared: March 2025

Date ratified by the FGB Committee: 19th March 2025

Signed:

Mr David Allan

(Chair of the FGB Committee)

Signed:

Mrs S Eyre

(Head Teacher)

Review date: March 2028

Appendix One

| Complaint Form for Meadow Farm Primary School | |
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| Complainant's Name: | Name of child: |
| Complainant's relationship to child: | |
| Address of Complainant: | |
| Post Code: | Phone number: |
| Please give details of your complaint: | |
| What action, if any, have you taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak to, when and what was the response?) | |

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

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details

In addition to face to face meetings, which method of communication are you happy for us to use to contact you regarding this complaint? (Tick as many boxes as appropriate)

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Letter in book bag | Telephone call to mobile |
| Telephone call to house land line | Royal Mail post to home address |

| | |
|---------|-------|
| Signed: | Date: |
|---------|-------|

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|---------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Official Use: | Date acknowledgement sent: | Complaint referred to: |
| | Acknowledgement sent by: | Referred on date: |