

Highcliffe Primary School

Policy on Complaints

1 Introduction

- 1.1 We strive to provide a good education for all our children. The headteacher, staff and governors work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents or guardians. The following policy sets out the procedures that the school follows in such cases.
- 1.2 If any parents are unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or have any concerns relating to the school, we encourage them to talk to the child's class teacher immediately.
- 1.3 We deal with all complaints in accordance with procedures outlined. If the school itself cannot resolve a complaint, those concerned can refer the matter to the Secretary of State for Education.
- 1.4 All parents have the right, as a last resort, to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education, if they still feel that their complaint has not been properly addressed.

2 Aims and objectives

- 2.1 Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints, and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding. The interests of children must be considered above all else. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

3 The complaints process

- 3.1 If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. In our experience, most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before it seriously affects the child's progress. It is in the interests of all parties that complaints are resolved as quickly as possible. Complaints regarding specific incidents should be raised within three months of an incident occurring. However, the circumstances of complaints outside of this timescale will be considered on an individual basis.
- 3.2 Where parents feel that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the headteacher. The headteacher considers any such complaint very seriously, and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved by this stage.
- 3.3 Should any parents have a complaint about the headteacher, they should first make an informal approach to the chair of governors. The chair of governors will appoint a governor to investigate the complaint, and the appointed governor will do all s/he can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school. If parents/carers are unhappy with the outcome, they can make a formal complaint, as outlined below.

- 3.4 Only if an informal complaint fails to resolve the matter should a formal complaint be made to the governing body. This complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint, and how the school has handled it so far. The parent should send this written complaint to the chair of governors.
- 3.5 The governing body will consider all written complaints within three school weeks of receipt. The chair of governors will appoint a governor to investigate the complaint. The governor will arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint, and will invite the person making it to attend the meeting, so that s/he can explain the complaint in more detail. Every attempt will be made to resolve the complaint at this stage through dialogue with all parties.
- 3.6 If the complaint is still not resolved, the parent/carer should write to the chair of governors requesting that the complaint is taken to a Hearing Committee of the governing body. The committee should be convened within three weeks of receipt of the request. The complainant will be invited to speak to the committee, as will the school. If the complaint is about the Headteacher, the appointed investigating governor will present the evidence of the investigation to the committee. After hearing all the evidence, the governors will consider their decision and inform the parent about it in writing.
- 3.7 If any parent/carer is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then s/he is entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education.

4 Monitoring and review

- 4.1 The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The headteacher logs complaints received by the school, and records how they were resolved. Governors may ask to examine this log.
- 4.2 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 and carers, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.
- 4.3 This policy will be reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.

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