



Blaydon West Primary School **Complaints Procedure**

Introduction

We strive to provide a good education for all our children and meet the needs of pupils, parents and others who have a stake in the school. This includes the staff, members of the local community and the LA. The governing body believes that constant feedback is an important ingredient in self-improvement and raising standards.

People, whether they be pupils or adults, who have concerns or complaints should feel that they can be voiced and will be considered seriously. All complainants have the right to be accompanied when making the complaint, and pupils may be accompanied by a parent or another adult.

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.

We deal with all complaints in accordance with procedures laid down by the LA. If the school itself cannot resolve a complaint, those concerned can refer the matter to the LA.

Aims

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. In all cases we put the interests of the child above all else. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

Principles

There are various principles behind this policy:

- There is a difference between a concern and a complaint. A concern is likely to require discussion between teacher, pupil and parent. If the concern is not resolved by that means then it could become a complaint. "A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction which needs a response from the school."
- A complaint is likely to arise when there are issues of physical or emotional well-being and security or when the school's stated values or aims are being ignored.
- A breach of the law will always constitute a complaint.
- We will seek to resolve complaints by informal means wherever possible.
- Investigations will be full, fair and swift.
- People will be kept informed of progress and the decisions reached.
- Every effort will be made to respect confidentiality.
- Feedback will be actively sought from pupils and parents in order to minimise complaints and maximise accountability.

The Complaints Process

All staff are expected to encourage pupils and parents who have concerns to follow the complaints procedure.

- 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.

- 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 head teacher. The HeadTeacher considers any such complaint very seriously, and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved by this stage.
- If a complainant is not satisfied with the action taken by the Head Teacher, then the chair of governors will hear the complaint. On receipt of the complaint the chair of governors will inform the Head Teacher, investigate the complaint, and write to the complainant within ten working days, explaining the action taken.
- Should any parents have a complaint about the Head Teacher, they should first make an informal approach to one of the members of the governing body, who is obliged to investigate it. The governor in question will do all s/he can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if parents are unhappy with the outcome, they can make a formal complaint, as outlined below.
- 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.
- The governing body must consider all written complaints within three weeks of receipt. The Complaints Committee will meet to consider the complaint. The complainant will be given seven working days' notice of the meeting, and may take a friend or other person to provide support at the meeting. Within seven days of that meeting the complainant will be informed of the decision, the reasons for it, and any action to be taken by the school. The decision of the complaints committee is final.
- Where a complainant considers that the school is not complying with the legal requirements of council policy in respect of a pupil's

education then the LEA can provide the complainant, the governors or the head with further advice.

- Where a complaint is about the governing body this can be referred to the LEA. If that fails to produce a satisfactory response it can then be referred to the Secretary of State. If the complaint is upheld and the governing body fails to follow the directions of the Secretary of State, the judgement may be legally enforced.

Monitoring and review

The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Head Teacher logs all complaints received by the school, and records how they were resolved.

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.

This policy is reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.

Date reviewed: November 2016

Date for review: November 2018