

Kenmore Park Infant & Nursery School



Parental Complaints Procedure



Reviewed: September 2020

Ratified by the Governing Body: 14th October 2020

Annually.



PARENTAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARER(S)

We want our pupils to do well and feel happy at school. However, we do recognise that, on occasions, concerns or difficulties do arise. In this event, parents/carers are encouraged to contact the school to have any difficulties or concerns resolved at the earliest possible stage. By taking such matters seriously the school aims to develop a working relationship with parents/carers and to reduce the number of formal complaints. **(Article 1: Everyone under 18 has rights listed in the UNCRC).**

Parents/carers are reminded that the school will do its utmost to guarantee the confidentiality of any complainant and the substance of their complaints. The school will respect the views of a person who indicates that he/she would have difficulty discussing a matter with a particular member of staff. Similarly, if a member of staff directly involved feels compromised then the matter may be referred to another member of staff to deal with.

Concerns should be raised with the school as soon as possible to allow for a proper investigation. Generally, if concerns are more than 6 months old, the school or the Governing Body, may consider this too late to take any action.

If any concerns or complaints are raised with the school, the following procedure applies:

Stage 1

Any member of the teaching staff may be contacted by a parent/carer and asked to deal with a particular concern, incident or complaint. In most cases the class teacher will receive the first approach. If the complaint is about an action of the class teacher this will be dealt with by the Headteacher.

If the complaint is about an action of the Headteacher, then the Governing Body should deal it with at stage 3.

The member of staff contacted must liaise with parent(s)/carer(s) and must seek to resolve the matter in accordance with school guidelines. This may involve the member of staff asking a colleague to deal or assist with the matter. All staff are encouraged to resolve problems, by informal means wherever possible.

It is important that the parent/carer is informed of any delay in dealing with their concern or complaint. Once this stage has been concluded the parent/carer should be notified of the outcome in writing. If the problem has not been resolved then the letter should explain the next stage of the process.

If the problem is resolved no further action is taken and the matter is closed.

Stage 2

If a parent/carer indicates that they are unhappy with the above response and that the matter remains unresolved, it must be referred to the Headteacher or to a member of staff nominated as the "complaints co-ordinator". As soon as a complaint is received, the

school must keep a record of all actions and decisions taken in response to the complaint. This should be recorded in a complaints book/file and be used to review practice and consider any emerging patterns or trends that need attention.

The Headteacher will decide who should investigate the complaint and manage the investigation. The Headteacher must then send out a letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint stating who is to be the investigating officer and estimating how long it will be before a response can be given. A copy of the complaints procedure should be enclosed with the letter.

Once the investigation is complete, the Headteacher must send a letter to the complainant together with (A) a copy of the Investigating Officers' Report. (A report format is at Appendix 3) **OR** (B) ensure that the letter includes the following:

- (i) details of any investigation conducted;
- (ii) details of any action taken;
- (iii) details of any recommendations made as a result of the investigation; and
- (iv) details of the Headteacher's decision upon the complaint – the Headteacher may delegate the task of investigating to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken.

The letter must also specify that if the complainants are unhappy with the Headteacher's decision they can:

- (i) meet informally with the Chairman of the Governing Body (or nominated governor) to discuss the matter with the option of further complaining to the Governing Body in a formal capacity, if they so choose.
- (ii) further complain in a formal capacity to the Governing Body.

If the complaint is resolved no further action is taken and the matter is closed.

Stage 3 Informal meeting with The Chairman of The Governing Body or Nominee to discuss the matter

If a parent/carer indicates that they want to go down this route, the school must organise for The Chairman or Nominee to meet with them as soon as is practicable. The purpose of the meeting or meetings is for the parent/carer to air their grievances with the school.

N.B. The Nominee must not be a staff/teacher governor.

The role of the Chairman or Nominee is to review the Headteacher's decision, carrying out any additional investigation if necessary, and make recommendations on the handling of the complaint. The Chairman or Nominee will not, however, make any decision as to whether or not the complaint is justified or whether any redress should be given to the complainant. That is the remit of the Governing Body Complaint Panel. If a parent/carer meets informally with a governor, they are still entitled to be heard by a Governing Body Complaint Panel.

The Chairman or Nominee should ensure (if possible) that the complaint remains confidential and should avoid discussing the complaint with other members of the

Governing Body. This will avoid any conflicts of interest should be parent/carer decide to proceed to Stage 4.

If the complaint is resolved no further action is taken and matter is closed.

Stage 4 The Governing Body Complaint Panel and Procedure

The Governing Body Complaint Panel Hearing is the last school based stage of the complaints process and is not convened just to rubber stamp decisions previously made.

The remit of the Complaints Panel

The panel can:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- make recommendations or decide where it has appropriate remit to 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.

Procedure before the hearing

On receipt of a complaint the Clerk to the Governing Body, must send a letter to the complainant requesting them to send in any documentation they wish to be considered by the Complaint Panel.

The Clerk to the Governing Body must set a date for the hearing within 15 school days from the date of receipt of the complaint and additional documentation. The date and time of the hearing must be convenient to all parties. The Clerk must notify the complainant, by letter, of the date of the hearing; inviting the complainant to attend the hearing; state that the complainant can bring along a friend or representative to assist them at the hearing; and state who will represent the school.

Any documentation upon which either party intends to rely should be circulated to all parties at least 5 school days before the hearing.

The complaint must be heard by a Panel and convened in the following way:

- (i) A Panel of 3 governors will be convened from an established pool of governors. The Panel then elects its Chairman.
- (ii) The Chairman, Vice Chairman and all governors who are members of the school staff will be excluded from the Panel.
- (iii) No governor may sit on the Panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint (at Stage 3) or the circumstances surrounding it. The governors should try to ensure that the panel represents a cross section of categories of governor and is sensitive to issues of race, gender and religious affiliation.
- (iv) The Panel convened to hear the complaint will comprise the same governors throughout in the unlikely event of more than one session being required.

The procedure of the hearing will be as follows:

- The Chair of the Panel will introduce the Panel, explain the procedure and the remit of the Panel.
- The hearing will be clerked by the Clerk to the Governing Body or with support from an officer from Harrow Legal Services.
- The Panel may invite a Harrow Officer to attend throughout for advisory purposes.
- Those making the complaint will speak first then the Panel may ask questions of them.
- The Headteacher and any employees of the school brought to the hearing by the Headteacher will speak next and the Panel will then ask questions.
- The Panel will ask all relevant questions to elicit detailed information from both parties and any other relevant persons.
- Those making the complaint and the Headteacher may also ask questions (through the Chair).
- Following the Panel's questions, those making the complaint and then the Headteacher will each be given the opportunity to make a short concluding statement.
- All parties will be asked to withdraw and the Panel will make a decision.
- In deciding the complaint, the Panel will apply the following test:
 - (i) Is there a genuine complaint?
 - (ii) In all the circumstances, should the complaint be upheld?
If yes:
 - (iii) What should the Panel do to effectively remedy the complaint and give the complainant redress?
- The decision will be made by a simple majority of the Panel.

Procedure after the Hearing

- The decision together with the reasons for it will be communicated in writing to both parties, and Harrow People First Complaints Section within 5 school days. This decision is binding upon the Governing Body, the Headteacher and the parent(s)/carer(s).



- A brief report on the complaint and decision of the Complaint Panel will be made (as a Part II Confidential Item) to the next meeting of the full Governing Body.
- The Chair of the Governing Body must deal with any recommendations from the Complaint Panel without delay (and in any event within 28 school days of receipt of such recommendations).

There are no further rights of appeal to the School. However further advice and/or assistance is available from the following sources:

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)

(Advice line for parents on all matters concerning schools)

1c Aberdeen Studios
22 Highbury Grove
London, N5 2DQ

Tel: 0808 800 5793
www.ace-ed.org.uk

Citizens' Advice Bureau

Civic Centre
Station Road
Harrow, HA2 6AG

Tel: 0870 126 4460

Harrow Association of Disabled people (HAD)

3rd Floor, Premier House
Canning Road
Wealdstone, Harrow, HA3 7TS

Tel: 020 8861 9920

Harrow Association of Voluntary Services (HAVS)

64 Pinner Road
Harrow, HA1 4HZ

Tel: 020 8863 6707

Harrow Council for Racial Equality (HCRE)

The Lodge
64 Pinner Road
Harrow, HA1 4HZ

Tel: 020 8427 6504



Secretary of State for Education

Department for Education and Skills (DFES)
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
Westminster,
London, SW1P 3BT

Tel: 0870 000 2288
www.dfes.gov.uk

Parents' Gateway

This is also located on the DfES website and provides a range of advice and information on matters of interest to parents, including the DfES Parents' Centre which tells you about your child's education and how you can help.

Parentline Plus (National Helpline for parents)

520 Highgate Studios
53-790 Highgate Road
Kentish Town
London, NW5 1TL

Tel: 0808 800 2222

Kidscape

(Bullying counsellor available 10.00 – 4.00 Monday to Friday)
2 Grosvenor Gardens
London, SW1W 0DH

Tel: 0207 730 3300

Advice and support on dealing with concerns and complaints is also available from the People First, Harrow.

If you require help in understanding this document or completing the form, please ask a friend or relative to contact us on your behalf. The telephone number is 020 8204 8759.

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To be reviewed annually.