



ROWNHAMS ST JOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

POLICY FOR COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Rationale

Our first priority is the welfare of the children in our care and to enable us to achieve this effectively, we endeavour to establish good relationships between the school, the children and the parents.

Parents need to know how to express concern and the procedure they should follow. In addition any Governor or member of Staff might find themselves in the position of receiving a complaint concerning any aspect of policy, practice or management. Concerns need to be dealt with swiftly and positively in the interests of good home-school liaison. A clear procedure will ensure problems are dealt with effectively.

Aims

- a) To set out a clear Complaints Procedure.
- b) To inform Parents, Staff and Governors of the procedure.
- c) To ensure Parents' concerns are dealt with professionally and in a sensitive manner.

Guidelines

1. Parents should approach the class teacher stating clearly what the problem is and outlining their concern. Teachers will investigate and report back to parents. Some issues will take some time to resolve and parents are requested to respect the need for the teacher to research the problem and collect evidence if necessary. Teachers will make initial contact with parents within 2 working days. The issue should be resolved within 7 days of the original complaint. If this is not the case a letter will be sent explaining why and giving another 7 days to further resolve before being reported to the Head and forwarded to the Vice Chair of Governors.

2. Should parents still be concerned and feel that the matter is not resolved they should contact the office and make an appointment to see the Phase Leader or member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

The Phase Leader or member of SLT will want parents to be very specific about the complaint and will ask questions to ensure the extent of the problem is clear. You will then be asked to make another appointment. During the intervening period the Phase Leader or member of SLT will investigate the matter thoroughly. It may be necessary to meet again more than once.

Should you feel that matters have not been resolved, then you are advised to approach the Headteacher.

3. If at this stage you still feel that the issues raised have not been dealt with satisfactorily, then you should put your concerns in writing to the Headteacher using the Complaints Form, available at the end of this document. A hard copy can be requested from the school office, if required. The complaint will be acknowledged or a full response offered within five working days. If the complaint requires in-depth investigation, this will be acknowledged and a response prepared with 20 working days.

If you consider the Headteacher's response to be unsatisfactory, you have the option to refer the complaint to the Vice Chair of Governors.

4. **Vice Chair of Governors**

The Vice Chair should receive all correspondence and a completed Complaints Form, which should be logged by the Clerk. If a Complaints Form has not been submitted then one must be issued immediately.

An acknowledgement or full response should be made within five school days. Should the required action involve an in-depth investigation, then the complaints must be informed that a full response will take longer.

Informal discussions between the Vice Chair and the Headteacher will try to resolve the complaint and provide forward movement.

The Chair will confirm who is responsible for dealing with the issues involved and therefore, what powers are available to Governors with respect to that particular complaint ie those

- i. delegated to the Headteacher by the Governing Body or,
- ii. within the remit of the Governing Body only or

iii. falling within the Headteacher's terms and conditions of employment and relate to the internal organisation, management and control of the school.

5. If the matter relates to the Headteacher's conduct, the Vice Chair will decide whether it will be dealt with through the complaints procedure of the staff disciplinary procedures.

6. In the event of a parent/carer being unhappy with the outcome, the Vice Chair should offer a right to appeal to the Governing Body's complaints panel. The complaints panel will consist of a previously elected Chair of panel and at least two other members from a pool of governors, to allow impartiality. The minutes must be taken by the Clerk. Procedures as laid down by HCC will be followed.

7. **Governing Body's Complaints Panel**

Complaints concerning the National Curriculum or Religious Education should be considered by the Standards Committee.

All complaints should be directed by the Governors via the Clerk in writing, describing the full nature of the complaint and including any substantiating evidence. Parents should also state why they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the previous stages if these were not previously covered in the completion of the complaints form.

Parents should be reminded that they should not approach or write to individual Governors but may attend any hearing at the invitation of the panel to make any relevant submissions.

8. **Reconsideration**

Any fresh information not available to the Headteacher at the original response or action can be looked at now by the Panel. In the light of this information the Panel may decide to write and ask the Headteacher to give the matter further consideration. Complaints about a Governor should also be subject to a reconsideration of the issues.

9. **Review**

If the matter falls within the Headteacher's decision making remit by virtue of their terms and conditions of employment, then the Panel will only have the power to review the decision not to consider the matter afresh.

The Panel will need to consider the facts as they were known to the Headteacher at the time and then consider whether the Headteacher:

- i. failed to take account of a relevant consideration; and/or
- ii. took into account an irrelevant consideration; and/or
- iii. made a 'perverse' decision in the light of the evidence available at the time.

If new evidence does come to light, the Panel should refer it back to the Headteacher.

The Clerk should inform the complainant in writing of the Panel's decision, preferably within two school days following the meeting. The letter should include:

- A summary of the issues
- An outline of the main points of discussion
- The reasons for the decision
- Proposed actions or outcomes.

The Panel's letter may suggest that the parents meet the Headteacher again to agree a way forward.

For issues related to the National Curriculum or the provision of Religious Education, parents will be advised that they can appeal further to the LA.

Local Authority (LA)/Diocesan Director of Education

The LA offers a further right of appeal for parents who have exhausted the school's procedures if the complaint is about the National Curriculum and related matters. The Diocesan Director of Education may be approached in the case of Collective Worship and Religious Education.

For general complaints about a school, the LA clearly has no remit or powers beyond reminding schools of their legal obligations.

If a complaint cannot be resolved further, the Headteacher, Governors and parents or other complainants may seek advice from the LA's complaints adviser, details of which should be available on the LA's website.

Secretary of State

If a parent wishes to pursue a complaint because they feel the school has acted unreasonably, they can write to the Secretary of State, who will contact the Governing Body and LA for more detailed information.

The Secretary of State has the power to direct the school to revise an action using the same criteria as applied by the Governors.

10. This policy is in accordance with guidance contained on Hampshire County Council's website - www.hants.gov.uk/education.

Conclusion

While the school would hope that parents' complaints could be dealt with quickly, this procedure will ensure that a proper procedure is followed to a satisfactory conclusion.

Next review July 2020

Agreed at Governors' meeting

Signed



Rownhams St Johns CE Primary School

COMPLAINTS FORM

When we receive a complaint, we will acknowledge its receipt and send a full or interim response within five working days. If an in-depth investigation is required then a response will be prepared within 20 days.

Name of complainant:

Pupil's Name:

Address including Post Code:

Telephone (daytime):

Telephone (evening):

What is your concern and how has it affected you?

Have you discussed this matter with a member of staff before filling in this form? If so, who did you speak to and what was the response?

What would you like to happen as a result of making this complaint?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please list this below:

Signature:

Date:

Official use only

Complaints Reference No:

Initial response and
Acknowledgement

Action taken:

By whom:

Date:

Date:

Data Protection Act 1998: We will only process your personal data to respond to your complaint. In general, this data will be used for administrative and statistical purposes.