

Complaints Procedure

Introduction

We strive to provide an excellent education for all our children. The Principal, Headteachers and staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents and carers. However, the School is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents, carers or guardians. The following policy sets out the procedures that the school follows in such cases.

Aims and objectives

Our School aims to be honest, fair and open 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.

The complaints process

Informal Stage 1

If any parents or carers are unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or have any concerns relating to the School, they should in the first instance talk with their child's class teacher / subject teacher / form tutor. 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 or carers feel that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher / subject teacher / form tutor, they should make an appointment with the Year Group Leader / Head of Year / Head of Key Stage or Head of Department.

All complaints will be responded to within 14 working days (i.e. not school holidays or weekends) of the initial contact.

Informal Stage 2

If time has been given and in the unlikely event that the situation still hasn't been resolved, the parent or carer should make an appointment through the Receptionist to discuss the situation with the appropriate (Junior / Senior) Headteacher. The Headteacher considers any such complaint very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly. The Headteacher will respond to the complaint within 14 working days of the initial contact with him/her. She and will report back to the complainant about the outcome of the complaint and where relevant also report back

either verbally or in writing to the person who is the subject of the complaint regarding the outcome. Most complaints are resolved by this stage.

Should any parents or carers have a complaint about the Headteacher, they should make an appointment with the Principal. The Principal considers any such complaint very seriously and will investigate the concern thoroughly. The Principal will also respond within 14 working days of the initial contact to the complainant and the Headteacher about the outcome. If a parent should have a complaint against the Principal, they should first make an informal approach to the Chairman of the Governing Body, who is obliged to select 3 members of the Governing Body to investigate it. This panel will meet with the Principal to conduct an investigation and then respond to the parents which will be sent in writing within 14 working days of the initial contact.

The Governing Body members should always ascertain that the above procedure has been adhered to before undertaking any formal investigation.

All informal complaints will be investigated and a response given within 14 working days of the original contact with the relevant member of staff.

Formal Stage

Only if an informal complaint fails to be resolved, should a formal complaint be made to the Governing Body. This complaint must be made in writing to the Secretary of the Board using the attached form in Appendix 1 at the following email address board_mzarkos@thejuniorschool.com , within 5 working days of receipt of the decision of the school at the informal stage 2, stating the nature of the complaint, and how the School has handled it so far. The secretary will then inform the Chair of the complaint but no other Board members at this stage.

The Governing Body must respond to all formal written complaints within 30 working days of receipt (excluding school holidays and weekends). If a complaint is received in the school holidays the response will be made within 30 working days in the next term. The Governing Body will form a three-person panel to hear the complaint consisting of two Board members and also an independent, external panel member who is not a member of the Board or associated with the management or running of the school.

Notice of hearing: Every effort will be made to enable the Panel hearing to take place within ten working days of the receipt of your request. As soon as reasonably practical and in any event at least five working days before the hearing, the Secretary will send you written notification of the date, time and place of the hearing, together with brief details of the Panel members who will be present.

Attendance: The complainant will be asked to attend the hearing and may be accompanied by one other person such as a relative, teacher, or friend. Your child aged 13+ may attend part or all

of the hearing at the discretion of the Chair. The Secretary or nominated deputy will also attend the hearing in order to keep a record of the proceedings. Copies of additional documents the complainant wishes the Panel to consider should be sent to the Secretary at least three clear days prior to the hearing. The school will be represented by the Principal and the complainant will be sent any documents that the school wants the panel to consider before the hearing.

The Hearing: The Chair of the Review Panel will conduct the hearing in such a way as to ensure that all those present have the opportunity of asking questions and making comments in an appropriate manner, the hearing will be conducted in an investigative manner. The hearing is not a legal proceeding and the Panel shall be under no obligation to hear oral evidence from witnesses but may do so and/or may take written statements into account.

Adjournment: The Chair may at his/her discretion adjourn the hearing for further investigation of any relevant issue. This may include an adjournment to take legal advice.

Decision: After due consideration of the matters discussed at the hearing, the Panel shall reach a decision unless there is an agreed position. The Panel's decision, findings and any recommendations may be notified orally at the hearing or subsequently and shall be confirmed in writing to the complainant by electronic mail where appropriate within fourteen working days. If you do not wish to receive the decision by electronic mail, a copy will be given or posted to you. The decisions, findings and any recommendations will be made available for inspection on the School premises by the Governing Body. A copy of this decision will also be kept on file on the school premises by the Principal.

Note: The complainant may ask for his/her complaint to be withdrawn at any stage and this will be acknowledged in writing by the Chair of Governors or Chair of the complaint panel, whichever is appropriate.

The Governors do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction. However, their decision will be final.

If the complaint is not resolved, a parent may make representation to the Ministry of Education.

Records

Written records should be kept of all written complaints indicating the nature of the complaint and any action taken, plus any statements taken. The record should note if the complaint was resolved at the informal stage or if it went to a formal panel hearing. These records should remain confidential and be kept in a location with the school's management in the complaints log (one is kept at each of the two sites). These records may only be shared where legal requirements permit access.

Other matters

It is of paramount importance that every child feels safe and secure in the School environment. Under no circumstance should a parent or carer take matters into their own hands and speak to the child of another parent about an issue whilst on the School property or under the care of the School. Should this occur, the matter will be taken very seriously and various actions may be taken including but not limited to, a letter of warning or a ban from entering the School premises for a period determined by the School.

Any aggressive behaviour, including but not limited to verbal abuse towards members of the staff of the School will be viewed and handled in the same light as outlined above.

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

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Mutual Respect Policy.

* Number of Formal complaints during 2019: 1

DOCUMENT CONTROL:

Lead Person: Deborah Duncan

Updated on June 2019

APPENDIX 1

Name of School: _____

Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the ?? who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Email address:

Please give details of your complaint.

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.
(Who did you speak to and what was the response)?

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

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

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: