



# SUNDON PARK JUNIOR SCHOOL

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Headteacher: **Mrs J Wightman**

## Complaints Procedure Statement

### 1. Introduction

We believe that our school provides a good education for all our children, and that the Head Teacher and other staff 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. The following sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases.

### 2. Aims and objectives

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

### 3. Scope of this document

**This document sets out the procedure for dealing with comments, grievances and complaints**

This policy should be used for:

- Complaints relating to the schooling of your child
- Complaints about the education and care provided to pupils at the school
- Complaints about the school's operational arrangements

This policy is limited to matters which can reasonably be investigated and therefore complaints should relate to matters which have occurred within the last 12 months.

This policy should not be used for:

- Complaints by staff relating to grievances about their employment
- Complaints about the actions of a governor
- Complaints about the actions of another parent
- Allegations of abuse
- Issues between the school and community groups/PTA

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These matters will be dealt with by:

- Complaints by staff relating to grievances about their employment (There is a separate staff grievance procedure )
- Complaints about the actions of a governor (This should be reported to Chairman of the Governing Body in the first instance, **and considered with reference to the Local Authority Governors Code of Conduct**)
- Complaints about the actions of another parent (This should be reported to the Headteacher who will investigate whether action can be taken by the school)
- Allegations of abuse (Any allegations of abuse should be discussed with the Headteacher or a senior staff member in the first instance. **For a definition of abuse, refer to the school's Child Protection/ Safeguarding policy(s).**)
- Issues between the school and community groups/PTA (These will be resolved informally by discussion)

## 4. Status

Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 states the need to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school and to any community facilities or services the school provides. The law also requires the complaints procedure to be publicised.

## 5. Purpose

The school's values are concerned with meeting the needs of pupils, parents and other stakeholders. The governing body believes that feedback is an important ingredient in self-evaluation and raising standards. All stakeholders should feel that their concerns or complaints can be voiced and will be considered seriously.

The school takes informal concerns seriously and aims to resolve them at the earliest stage in order to reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints.

The underlying principle is that concerns will be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures. The requirement to have a complaints procedure will not in any way undermine efforts to resolve the concern informally. Staff will endeavour to resolve issues on the spot.

Formal procedures will be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

## 6. Applicability

The policy shall apply to all employees and governors of the school. It is the shared responsibility of the Head Teacher and the Chairman of the Governing Body to ensure that these groups are made aware of the policy and procedure.

The Complaints Procedure will:

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- be easily accessible and publicised;
- be simple to understand and use;
- be impartial;
- be non-adversarial;

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- allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress;
- ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent panel where necessary;
- respect people's desire for confidentiality;
- address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary;
- provide information to the school's senior management team so that services can be improved.

## 7. The complaints process

### How to share a concern

#### 7.1 Stage One: Complaint/concern heard by staff members (informal)

If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education and care that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the child's progress.

#### 7.2 Stage Two: Complaint/Concern heard by a Senior Member of Staff (informal)

Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, they should make an appointment with a Senior Member of Staff. They consider any such complaint very seriously and investigate each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage. Your complaint will be acknowledged and a meeting held within 5 school days with a full written response within 15 school days.

#### 7.3 Stage Three: Complaint/Concern heard by the Head Teacher (formal)

Where a concern is of a sufficiently serious nature or if a parent feels that the situation has not been resolved through contact with the senior member of staff, a parent should make an appointment to discuss it with the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher considers any such complaint very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage. Your complaint will be acknowledged and a meeting held within 5 school days with a full written response within 15 school days.

#### 7.4 Stage Four: Complaint/Concern heard by the Chair of Governors (informal)

If you are not satisfied with the Head Teacher's response or if you have a complaint about the Head Teacher, s/he should first make an informal approach in writing to The Chair of Governors, who is obliged to investigate it. The governors will do all s/he can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, and your complaint will be acknowledged within 7 school days with a full response within 20 school days.

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## 7.5 Stage Five: Complaint/Concern heard by the Governing Body (formal)

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 addressed to the Clerk of the Governing Body, stating the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far.

The governing body will meet within 10 school days from receipt of your complaint. The committee's decision is final and you will be told of its findings within 5 school days of the hearing.

## 7.6 Stage Six: Complaint/Concern heard by the Local Authority

If the complaint is not resolved, a parent may make representation to the Council Life Long Learning Department's complaints officer, giving evidence that the school did not follow its complaints procedure. The complaints officer will acknowledge your letter within 3 working days and tell you what will be done. The department can only investigate inappropriate procedure, not re-visit the complaint itself. A response will be made within 10 working days.

## 7.7 Stage Seven: Complaint/Concern heard by National Government

If any parent 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.

7.8 If, at any stage of the process, the complainant starts legal action in relation to the matters under considerations, the complaints process will automatically cease, and all further correspondence will be with the Schools' legal representatives

## **8. Monitoring and evaluating the Complaints Procedure Statement**

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 examine this log on an annual basis.

All documentation regarding complaints (including notes of any related meetings and telephone calls), the action taken and the final outcome will be recorded and a summary included in the Head Teacher's next report to governors.

The governing body will monitor the level and nature of complaints and review the outcomes on a regular basis to ensure the effectiveness of the procedure and make changes where necessary. Complaints information shared with the whole governing body will not name individuals.

The monitoring and review of complaints by the school and the governing body is a useful tool in evaluating the school's performance, and will contribute to school improvement. Any underlying issues identified will be addressed.

## **9. Record Keeping**

At Stages 2 - 5 there should be clear communication in writing throughout the handling of the complaint. A copy of all written communication should be retained for reference.

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Only complaints relating to the schooling of a specific child would be kept within the child's files. Other issues will be filed separately in a secure location and will be retained for a period of 7 years.

**Date of next review: March 2016**

