

Newton Poppleford Primary School Complaints Procedure.

1. Introduction

Newton Poppleford Primary School (NPPS) believes that feedback is an important aspect of school improvement and raising standards. Open, honest, and supportive communication is valued. The nature of the NPPS as a collaborative community, based on trusts and shared values and purposes, requires an effective mechanism for managing complaints. People, whether they are students or adults, who have concerns or complaints should feel that they can be voiced and will be considered seriously, dealt with comprehensively and as far as possible in confidence.

This policy sets out the way in which this school will deal with complaints.

It is in the interest of everyone that all parties involved in any complaint conduct themselves in a professional, courteous and respectful manner at all times. All communications are to be directed through the School Office and not directly to a School Governor or the Chair of the Governors.

It is in the interest of everyone that complaints and responses are dealt with promptly, at all stages. All references to timescales throughout this procedure refer to working days during term time only.

2. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is an expression of significant dissatisfaction by a person or persons with a legitimate interest in the school about the practices or policies of the school, the conduct, action or omissions of members of staff employed at the school or about the standard of teaching.

For a complaint to merit serious consideration it should meet the following criteria:

- It is first hand
- It is related to recent events (i.e. within the last 10 days)
- The events in question can be dated
- There is independent corroboration of the allegations

If your complaint is regarding the school curriculum please refer to the separate Curriculum Complaints Policy.

3. Principles

- a. A working assumption of the policy is that those nearest to the point of concern are best placed to deal with complaints.
- b. The policy aims to ensure that the person best able to do so, deals with all concerns and complaints as quickly and sensitively as possible.
- c. The person making the complaint should be able to expect to have an acknowledgement within 24 hours and a response, even if not the final response, to their complaint within 5 days of having made the complaint.
- d. This procedure needs to be followed by all parties involved as anything outside the procedure could jeopardise the outcome.

4. Informal complaint

If there is an issue/concern that you feel you would like to discuss with the class teacher about your child's work, progress, or treatment in school, then your first action should be to make an informal approach in order to discuss the issue.

It is hoped that concerns can be resolved quickly by such a discussion a resolution, and appropriate action taken. Such a concern would be dealt with through the normal, day to day, structures at NPPS. (Use the teachers' trays or home/school book to make an appointment)

If you feel that your concern needs to be discussed further with the Head Teacher, having already approached the class teacher, then this is also possible. This should be done within 10 days of your original discussion with the class teacher.

5. Formal complaint

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, most issues and concerns can best be resolved in discussion with the Head Teacher. All concerns will be treated seriously, sympathetically and in confidence. Meetings with the Head Teacher should be noted and acknowledged in writing to ensure an open and transparent process.

Should an approach to the Head Teacher not lead to a satisfactory outcome, you will be advised to approach the Governing Body, by writing to the Clerk of the Governors, c/o the School, outlining your concern within 20 days.

6. Role of Governors

The governor's role in the complaints procedure is to consider any formal complaint that has not been resolved by the Head Teacher to everyone's satisfaction. Initially one nominated Governor, with the assistance of the Clerk to the Governors will carry out an investigation and respond to the complainant with the outcome within 10 days.

In the event that this should not resolve the issue for the complainant they may request, within 20 days, that the complaint is heard by a Governors Complaints Appeal Panel.

6.1 Appeal Panel

The panel will consist of 3 governors (those who have not had any involvement with the issue and will be totally impartial) who will meet within 15 days with the Complainant and the Head Teacher to review the complaint.

The panel will take the following points into account:

- The hearing is as informal as possible, but Minutes will be taken.
- Witnesses (if any) are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.
- After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses.
- The Head Teacher may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The Head Teacher is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses.

- The complainant may question both the Head Teacher and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The panel may ask questions at any point.
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
- The Head Teacher is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
- The Chair of the Appeal Panel explains that both parties will hear from the panel within a set time scale.
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.

The panel can:

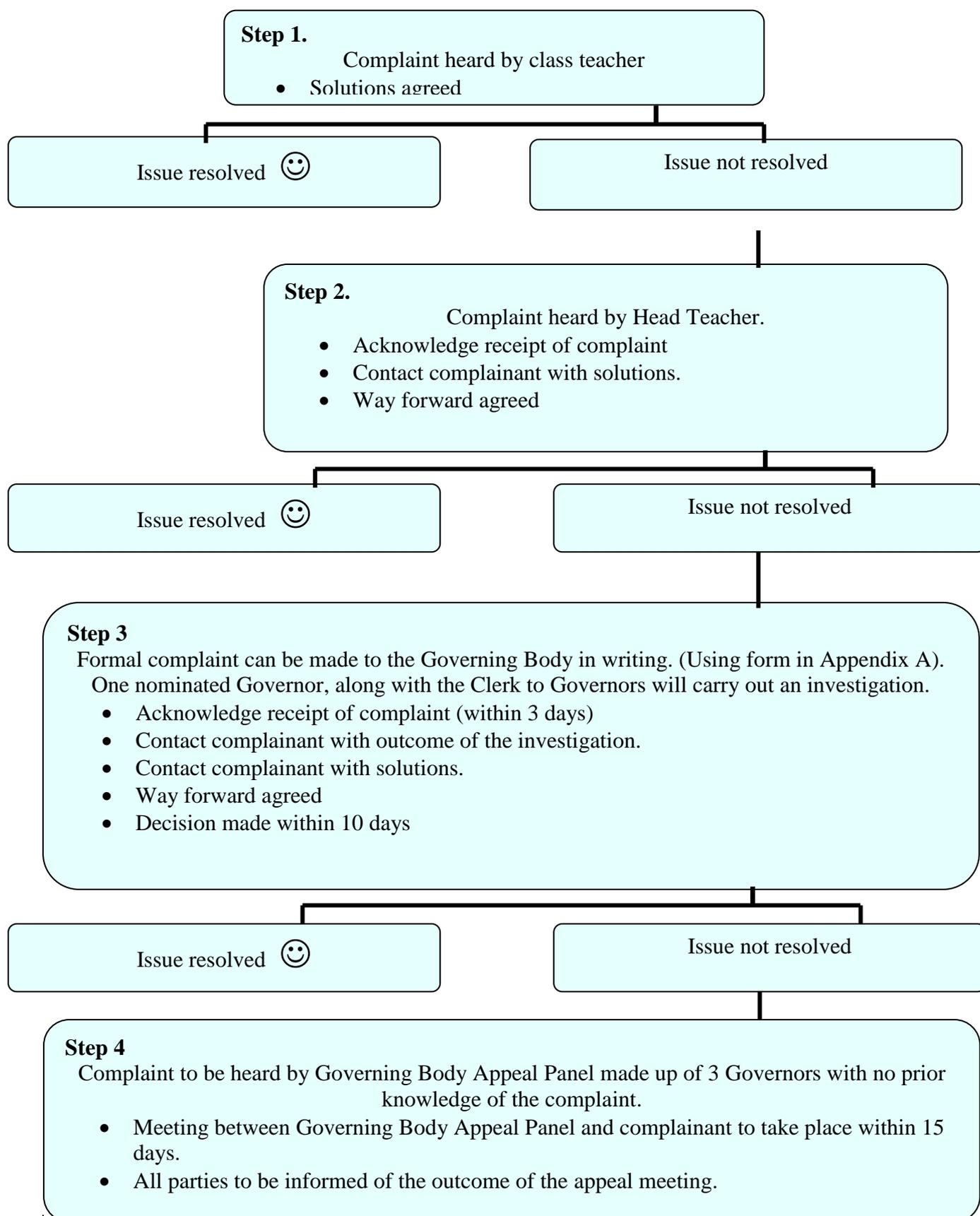
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

You will receive a written response with details of the Governor's decision. Should you wish to appeal against this decision, you will be notified of the appropriate contact name and address at the Local Authority to whom you should write.

In the event that once all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied, if the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the chair of the Governing Body is able to inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

7. Procedure for Parents

If you have an issue/concern you wish to raise with the school there are a series of steps that you need to follow to ensure that they are addressed and resolved properly, these are outlined in the diagram below. Please see timescales in the preceding sections



Appendix A

**Newton Poppleford Primary School
Formal Complaint Form**

Please complete and return to the Clerk of the Governors (c/o the School Office) 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:

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)?**

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: