

Canning Street Primary School

Complaints

Policy

Rationale: An effective complaints procedure supports and facilitates the provision of a quality education service.

When handled positively and constructively an effective complaints procedure can promote good relationships and can inform the identification of areas for improvement. We have close relationships with our pupils and parents and we constantly seek to build mutual respect and understanding.

Position Statement:

Our main purpose and priority is the provision of a high quality education service which meets the needs of our pupils and their parents.

We believe that the school has a key part to play in the local community and we recognise that the school is at the heart of that community.

We place a high priority on listening fairly to pupils, parents and staff in order to minimise the likelihood of complaints arising.

We believe that an effective complaints procedure will promote understanding, knowledge and respect for the school and its work. We try to provide a high quality service but we recognise that, as in all organisations, mistakes can be made and there is always room for improvement.

Aims:

We aim to -

- deal with complaints promptly
- deal with complainants courteously
- seek to resolve complaints informally wherever possible
- keep complainants informed of the progress of their complaint and the eventual outcome
- provide redress where a complaint is found to have substance
- deal with complaints fairly and without bias in terms of gender, race, religion, age or ability
- ensure that parents, staff and Governors are aware of the complaints procedure
- ensure that all persons involved in the complaint are notified of the complaint and have opportunities to respond
- regularly review the pattern of complaints and the application of the complaints procedures
- refer to the recognised more formal mechanisms for dealing with complaints which have been impossible to settle informally

Special procedures are available for dealing with complaints regarding the curriculum of the school, collective worship, for considering complaints about the ways in which pupils' special needs are met, and for complaints regarding racist behaviours/incidents. Children's Services/Education Department has complaints procedures in respect of its services. Details are available from the Civic Centre (Tel: 0191-2787878)

Procedures:

Informal Complaints

Complaints about school issues should be raised initially with the appropriate school staff.

Complaints may be made in person, by telephone or in writing.

All staff should seek to help a complainant or to put them in touch with the relevant member of staff.

Informal complaints (e.g. expressing dissatisfaction) should be resolved quickly and simply and do not usually require detailed investigation.

Should the complaint not be resolved, staff should refer the complainant to the Headteacher who will then convene an interview and undertake the necessary investigations to resolve the issue.

Complainants will be given information about follow-up procedures in the event that they are dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint.

Formal Complaints

A complaint becomes formal when the user remains dissatisfied after making an informal complaint or, alternatively, when, from the outset, a complaint cannot be dealt with simply and quickly and requires investigation.

When a complaint becomes formal, care will be taken to:

- clarify the complaint
- clarify the outcome sought
- check whether the complainant needs support of any kind (for example, if they have poor sight or hearing or a language difficulty) to explain the investigation procedure

Once a complaint has become formal:

- the progress of the complaint will be monitored by the Headteacher
- a full written response will be made within 15 working days or, where this is not possible, a reply should be sent indicating progress to date and estimate of time to make a full response
- the complainant will be given the name and telephone number of the person dealing with the complaint
- the complainant will be advised how to proceed if not satisfied

A complaint of serious maladministration should be progressed immediately as a formal complaint. The Chair of the Governing Body should be the first person to approach where the matter could involve disciplinary or legal action against the Headteacher or a member of staff. Where a complaint involves an allegation of financial irregularity then the City Treasurer will be advised by the Head or Chair as appropriate.

The papers relating to the complaint will be passed to the Chair of Governors who will decide how the complaint is to be progressed.

The Chair will ensure:

- the complaint is quickly referred to the relevant Committee (or to the Head if the complaints procedures at that level have not been exhausted)
- the complaint is not reported to the whole Governing Body until it is resolved, and then not in detail
- all parties to the complaint are given a fair hearing
- the decision of the Committee is given in writing to the complainant
- the complainant is told of any right of appeal if the decision is given against him or her

External Review

If the complainant remains unhappy after the matter has been considered by the Governing Body, then the complainant will be asked to contact the Head of the Administration Department at the Civic Centre.

The Head of the Administration Department will carry out the review of the complaint and advise all parties of the findings.

Ombudsman

Where a complainant indicates they remain dissatisfied with the result of the review carried out by the Head of the Administration Department they will be advised that they may refer the matter to a Local Counsellor and/or to the Commissioner for Local Administration in England (Local Government Ombudsman) and give the relevant details. This will normally be done by the Head of the Administration Department

Remedy

When a complaint is found to be justified a remedy should be provided. A remedy needs to be appropriate to the complaint. In virtually all cases the remedy will be an apology. In some cases the remedy will be the provision of a service desired by the complainant. There may be circumstances where the complainant has sustained loss or suffering. In such cases, financial compensation may be considered, and in all such cases a report to the Governing Body will be required before payments are made.

Annual Review

Annually a brief report will be presented to the Governing Body, which will detail:

- the number of complaints
- the subjects concerned
- the time taken to resolve complaints
- the assessment of complainant satisfaction
- changes brought about as a result of reviewing complaints

Kathryn Herron
Headteacher

Spring 2018
Due to be reviewed Spring 2020

Definitions

Complaints

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, action or lack of action by the school or their staff affecting an individual or group.

A complaint is not:

- a request for a service
- a request for information or explanation of school policy or practice
- a matter for which there is a right of appeal within the LA or to an independent body or a legal remedy

It should be noted that even where an appeal procedure is in place a complaint could still arise regarding the way that procedure is operated.

Informal Complaints

An informal complaint is one which can be resolved locally and quickly, which does not require an in-depth investigation, and which generally does not require to be put in writing.

Formal Complaints

A formal complaint is one which cannot be immediately resolved to service user's satisfaction, and, therefore, requires an investigation and which is generally put in writing.

Anonymous Complaints

The school does not wish to receive anonymous complaints and will not undertake to act on information received in this way.

Curriculum/Collective Worship - Special Procedures

Complaints about the curriculum of a school, collective worship or other related matters are dealt with by a special procedure in accordance with Section 23 of the Education Reform Act 1988. Special procedures are available for considering complaints about the way in which pupils' special needs are met.

A copy of the procedures will be made available to anyone wishing to make such a complaint. The Local Authority (LA) can provide a copy of the procedures in languages other than English.

LA: No power to direct a School

Under the Local Management of Schools arrangements, introduced by the Education Reform Act 1988, the LA has no power to direct a school in relation to a complaint from a parent or pupil, unless there is a statutory basis for doing so. However, it may act as arbiter and advise a school where a complaint has not been resolved by the staff or governors. Any parent who is unsure of the procedures, or who feels that their complaint has not been considered properly by the school, may contact officers of the Education Department for further advice.

Complaints relating to alleged racist incidents/behaviour will be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate policy/guidance.

Complaints relating to alleged abuse must be dealt with according to the relevant policy and Child Protection guidance.

Canning Street Primary School

Record of Complaint Form

CONFIDENTIAL

Name/Address of person making complaint

Telephone Number _____

Is the complainant Pupil Parent Other (please specify)

What is the complaint? (include details, e.g. name(s), dates, times, where relevant)

What should the School do to put things right?

Has the complainant made this complaint before? Yes No

If yes, please give the approximate date: _____

Signature of person making the complaint: _____

Date of this complaint: _____

Name of person dealing with complaint _____

Details and nature of investigation conducted (include dates/times, etc.)

Outcome/Resolution

Means by which complainant notified of 'outcome'
(enclose copy of any correspondence)

Details of Further Action (if appropriate)
