



*Kirkstall St Stephen's
C of E (VA) Primary School*

*Complaints Policy
January 2020*

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all children, and expects our staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Complaints Policy

Every well governed and well managed school will from time to time have to deal with complaints from parents, therefore the governing body must ensure that proper procedures are in place. This policy should not be used to deal with other complaints, e.g. relating to the curriculum, exclusions etc. There are separate statutory procedures for this purpose. A copy of the full procedure document is available from the Governor Support Service.

There are no regulations which prescribe governors' involvement in dealing with complaints. In general, the need to maintain a strategic overview, rather than a day to day operational involvement, should remain paramount. Governors need to avoid prior knowledge of any issues which might later be considered by an appeal panel of governors.

Informal stage

- * Parents / carers should feel free to raise their concerns with the class teacher, or other appropriate member of staff either in person, by telephone or in writing.
- * The school is committed to responding as quickly as possible to any issues raised i.e. staff will listen to parents' concerns and seek to reach a speedy and satisfactory resolution.
- * **Complainants will, where possible, receive a response to their concern within 3 school days.** If it is not possible to meet this deadline they will be informed of when a response will be made.
- * If, after attempting to resolve the issue informally, a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome they will be provided with information about the school's formal complaints procedure (go to Formal Stage 1).
- * **Exceptions** – Any complaint which involves a claim for compensation or an allegation of misconduct about a particular member of staff should be put in writing to the Headteacher.
- * A complaint about the conduct of the Headteacher should be made in writing to the Chair of Governors. The governing body should consider appointing a designated governor (with LEA support if necessary) to investigate the complaint. The investigating Governor should follow Formal Stage 1 procedures.

Formal Stage 1: Head teacher

- * The complaint should be put in writing to the Headteacher.
- * Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged within **3** school days and will specify how the complaint will be investigated, by whom and the timescale within which a full response will be made.

- * The Head teacher will ensure that a full response is made within **15** school days. If the timescale needs to be extended, parents will be informed.
- * The Head teacher should nominate a senior member of staff, who has had no prior involvement with the complaint, to investigate. This allows the Headteacher to retain a degree of detachment and independence from the complaint.
- * During the investigation the Headteacher, or nominated person, may contact the complainant to clarify the details of the complaint and speak to other persons as necessary.
- * A Complainant will be allowed the opportunity to meet with the investigating officer and to be accompanied by a friend or relative to speak on their behalf or help them make their case.
- * The Head teacher, or nominated person investigating the complaint will interview relevant witnesses and take statements from those involved.
- * If the complaint involves a pupil, he/she should also be interviewed, normally with a parent/carer present. In some cases this might not be possible and a member of staff with whom the pupil feels comfortable e.g. learning mentor, should attend the interview.
- * The investigating officer should keep written records of all meetings and telephone conversations undertaken as part of the investigation together with any other relevant documentation.
- * A full written response will be made to the complainant who may be offered a further meeting to explain how the investigation was carried out and how decisions were reached.
- * The complainant will be advised that if they are dissatisfied with the outcome they may refer the matter to the governing body (go to stage 2). This should be done by writing to the Chair of Governors within **10** school days of receipt of the letter from the Headteacher or Investigating officer.

Formal Stage 2: Appeal to Panel of Governors

- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of stage 1 there will be a further and final right of appeal to a specially convened panel of governors.
- Appeals should be lodged with the Chair of Governors within **10** schools days of receipt of the Stage 1 decision.
- The panel will meet within **20** schools days of receiving the complaint and the complainant and the Headteacher will be informed of the date, time and venue of the hearing.
- The panel will comprise at least **3** governors **who have had no previous knowledge of or involvement in the case**. The panel should not include teaching or staff governors.

- The panel will appoint its own chair, normally the Chair or Vice-chair of Governors. The chair of the panel will ensure that the appeal hearing is minuted.
- The panel will consider the way the complaint has been investigated and handled by the school. The panel will carry out a review of the investigation carried out at Formal Stage 1. It will hear the report of the investigating officer at formal Stage 1 and any submissions on that report by the complainant. **The review should not entail a rehearing of the case.**
- It will be open to the governors to uphold the complaint and/ or direct a different remedy to that decided upon by the investigating officer at Formal Stage 1.
- The complainant may be accompanied by a friend or relative to speak on their behalf or help present their case.
- The decision of the panel is final and will be communicated in writing to the complainant and the Head teacher within **3** school days.
- If the complainant believes that the matter has not been dealt with **fairly** they may ask Leeds Children's Services for Education to examine the **process** which has been followed.
- Leeds Children's Services for Education does not have power to set aside the decision of the Governors' Panel. It may only comment on the **fairness of the process**.
- A further stage of appeal can be taken to the Secretary of State for Education & Skills, but only on the grounds that the governing body or Leeds Children's Services for Education is acting or proposing to act unreasonably or illegally.

The Panel may request that an officer from Leeds Children's Services for Education, usually the Personnel Officer, attend the appeal hearing to offer procedural advice. Any such advice will take the form of a recommendation to the Panel.

Governors

The Governors on the Resource Committee will monitor the effectiveness of this policy.

- Staff & Governors will ensure the policy is adhered to and revised as appropriate.
- Governors will ask for updates from School Leadership Team as appropriate.