



WARMLEY PARK SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Philosophy

A complaint can be either informal or formal with regard to the feelings of the complainant and the processes which ensue.

It is important that clear lines of communication and explanations are given at an early stage and that all attempts are made early in the process to resolve differences informally.

Where this is not possible the following procedure should be acknowledged and followed, keeping all parties informed at each stage of the process.

Complaint - Types of complaint dealt with by the Education Service

- Curriculum - under section 23 of the Ed Reform Act 96
- Admission
- Complaints about failure to assess a child's special educational need
- Exclusion of pupil from school
- Safeguarding

Overall procedure - Dealing with Complaints

- 1) Complaint received
- 2) Investigation
- 3) Consideration of the case
- 4) Resolution
- 5) Further action

Referral - School Procedure

Complaints can be referred by any member of staff or the governing body. It is the teacher and Headteacher's initial duty to respond to parents' or carers' concerns with due thought and consideration, giving explanations and accounts of why certain things have happened and the reason for certain actions. The reasons may well be due to policies that the school operates or constraints of the LEA, or health and safety. At this point it is important to recognise which stage you have reached in explanation and whether a resolution has been reached.

STAGE 1

Informal- parents and carers have expressed an opinion about an incident that requires a response. A response should be given clearly and sensitively and the Headteacher or member of the leadership team informed.

- Should a parent or carer require further explanation an appointment should be arranged with the teacher keeping everyone informed as to the content of the discussions. Notes of the meeting should be kept. If the nature of the complaint revolves around Health and Safety, an accusation of wrongful behaviour or Safeguarding issues, then it is important that a member of the leadership team is there to chair the meeting.
- (Note: Having two members of staff may be intimidating for parents; therefore they should be offered the chance to bring a friend with them.)

STAGE 2

Formal - At this stage, should there be no resolution between the parties, a copy of these procedures should be given to parents.

- A parent may take the complaint further by asking to contact the governing body. This should be done in writing and addressed to the Chair of Governors or Headteacher. The Chair of Governors will respond by letter agreeing to a selection 'panel' of governors who are unfamiliar with the reasons or the background to the complaint to meet the complainant and friend.
- The panel will meet and listen to the complainant. The resolution to the meeting will be to ask for evidence from school staff and parents and to make recommendations to the Chair of Governors for action.
- The results of this meeting will be given as soon as possible to the complainant and backed up by a confirmation letter stating within 10 working days that the completion of the complaints procedure has taken place.

STAGE 3

Complaint to the Local Authority

Should the complainant still not be resolved to accept the outcome of the governor panel decision they should be notified that they can make representations to the Local Authority.

Guiding Principles

- Where teachers and parents are meeting and it is clear that the extent of the complaint is intense or wide-ranging, a member of the leadership team should always be in attendance. A letter of resolution or recommendation should always be sent to the parent/carer explaining the outcome of the meeting.
- Where parents find themselves meeting more than one member of staff they should be advised to bring a friend.
- Where governors with specific responsibility are asked to meet a parent regarding a complaint a witness should be sought from school staff.
- When the panel meets to hear a complaint, courtesy and tolerance should be exercised at all times.
- Where behaviour of staff or parents is a concern, advice should be sought from the LEA and Headteacher unless the complaint concerns the Headteacher.

Complaints about the Governing Body

Procedure

- If it becomes clear that the complaint is about the governing body a decision needs to be made by the Headteacher or Chair of Governors as to how this can be resolved. Is the complaint formal or informal without discussion about the issues.

- During the informal stage one governor should not deal alone with the complaint. Another governor should be in attendance.
- A copy of the complaints procedure should be sent to the complainant with an invitation to meet a panel of selected governors within 30 working days.
- The lead person of the complaints panel should notify other members of the need to meet and follow procedure. The need to meet will be raised at the governing body meetings without discussion of the issues as this might prejudice the case to be heard.
- The panel should meet to decide what needs to be investigated and information sought.
- The complaints panel should consist of four governors minimum.

Complaints - other issues

These can fall within various categories: curriculum ones, school based policies, staff or pupil behaviour. Where these are covered by existing policies these should be made available to complainants where possible. Safeguarding or staff discipline will take precedent over complaints procedures, if this is the case it is important that parties are kept informed.

Written records should be kept for a minimum of six years.

If at any stage it becomes clear that the complainant is seeking financial compensation the investigation should be suspended and advice sought from the Risk & Insurance Manager.

Equality and Community Cohesion

Warmley Park School is committed to equality for all members of the school community. The school promotes a positive and proactive approach to valuing and respecting diversity and will not tolerate harassment of any kind. Our work and progress in this area is detailed within the Single Community Cohesion and Equality Scheme (SCCES) which is updated annually and informed by pupil and parent questionnaires, and discussion with staff.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

This policy has been assessed with regard to its impact on equalities issues. The equality impact assessment has been conducted by the EWG (Equalities Working Group) and focused on race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion/belief. Community Cohesion has also formed part of the impact assessment work in order to ensure respect for diversity, alongside a commitment to common and shared bonds.

EIA outcomes

- *The EWG found no areas of potential negative impact and actions resulting in positive impact are in place.*

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| Policy review: | Due for review: |
| July 2015 | July 2017 |