



Complaints Procedure Policy

Date	Review Date	Endorsed by	Approved by	Link Governor
Dec 2015	Dec 2016	Resources Committee	Governing Body	Cordelia Shakleton

We at The Devonshire Hill Nursery and Primary School believe that this school provides an excellent education and that the Headteacher and school personnel work very hard to build positive relationships and have in place clear lines of communication with all parents and others. In so doing complaints are kept to a minimum.

However, we are aware that under section 29 of the Education Act 2002 we must have in place clear procedures to deal with any complaint made against the school or individuals connected with it. We take any complaint seriously and we deal with them professionally following set procedures.

We are aware that under the Education Act 1996 parents have the right to complain directly to the Local Authority about any matter relating to the school's curriculum, any issue relating to the general education that we provide.

We have a duty to publish the complaints policy in the school handbook and on the school website with hard copies available from the school office.

We as a school community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- School Complaints Toolkit 2014 (DfE) – Guidance A
- Haringey Working Together Document – Guidance B

Aims

- To deal with any complaint against the school or any individual connected with it by following the correct procedures;
- To deal with all complaints thoroughly and by being open, honest and fair when dealing with the complainant;
- To work with other schools and the Local Authority to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

Circumstances under which this procedure will not be used:

If your concerns relate to the following areas, you should contact the school office, where you will be advised on the appropriate procedures:

- The National Curriculum
- Collective worship
- Religious education
- Admissions
- Exclusions

- Child protection
- SEN statements
- Student exclusions decisions

How to make a complaint

Complaints may be made in person, by telephone or in writing. A person with a complaint should normally seek to contact the members of staff responsible for the relevant issue. However, all staff will endeavor to seek to help, even when the issue is not that individual's area of responsibility.

Care will be taken to:

- Clarify the nature of the complaint
- Clarify the outcomes sought
- Check whether the person making a complaint requires support of any kind, for example with language difficulties
- Explain the complaints procedure
- The school does not wish to receive anonymous complaints and will not undertake to act on any information received in this way.

If after normal communication channels have been exhausted and the complainant remains dissatisfied with any solutions suggested then the agreed procedure should be followed by both complainant and school. Every complaint is a matter of concern for the school and will be investigated with due urgency and thoroughness, making every effort to ensure a satisfactory solution is found.

No matter what is shared, we will continue to do our best for the child and family concerned. Concerns will be treated as strictly confidential, the only exception being if a Safeguarding issue is raised, in which case the relevant authorities will be notified as per our Safeguarding Policy.

Anonymous complaints will be logged and notified to the Chair of Governors and the Head teacher. They will not normally be considered unless they relate to something serious. The Headteacher or Chair of the Governing Body will decide whether the gravity/substance of the anonymous complaint justifies investigation.

Habitual or Vexatious Complainants

The school will endeavor to serve the community in which it resides to the best of its ability and respond with patience and sympathy to the needs of all complainants. In extremely rare or extreme cases, the school has a policy, outlined in this document (**Appendix A**), for communicating and managing complainants that are considered to be habitual or vexatious. Such complaints can place significant strain on time and resources for School staff and Governors reducing the ability of the School to carry out its services for the community.

The term complaint in this policy may include requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998, and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

The Governing Body has:

- A duty to have in place a complaints procedure;
- Delegated powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel and visitors to the school are aware of and comply with this policy;
- Responsibility of annually discussing the complaints log with the Headteacher;
- In place a self-evaluation process to monitor the way complaints are dealt with;
- Responsibility of taking into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and will make any modifications necessary to this policy;
- Responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all equalities legislation;

- Nominated a designated Equalities governor to ensure that appropriate action will be taken to deal with all prejudice related incidents or incidents which are a breach of this policy;
- Responsibility for ensuring funding is in place to support this policy;
- Responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly;
- Responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to parents;
- The responsibility of involving the House Captains in the development, approval, implementation and review of this policy;
- Make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- Responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

The Headteacher will:

- Log all complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved;
- Discuss the complaints log every year with the Governing Body;
- Ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- Work closely with the link governor and coordinator;
- Provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- Provide guidance, support and training to all staff;
- Make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy;
- Annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy

Complaint Procedures

Initial Discussion

If a parent wishes to raise a concern, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter informally with their child's class teacher. Though some complaints can be discussed straight away, it can be better for an appointment to be arranged within 5 days of the request, so that both parties can sit and talk things through in significant detail.

If a parent or complainant feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or they consider their concern to be sufficiently serious they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Headteacher. This appointment should normally be arranged within 5 days of the request.

The Headteacher will take the complaint seriously and conduct initial investigations, within 10 days of the appointment. They may wish to consult the Chair of the governing body or the Complaints Committee made from members of the governing body. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage.

Should a complainant have a complaint involving the Headteacher s/he should initially make an informal approach to the Chair of the governing body who will investigate it. If the outcome is not satisfactory to the complainant they should then lodge a formal complaint, outlined below.

Formal stage – Stage 1

There is a form attached to this policy (**Appendix B**) that may be used to register a written complaint if the complaint is not resolved informally.

If a written complaint is received by the Headteacher or a member of the governing body, it should be logged and acknowledged within 5 school days and the complainant told that the matter will be investigated and a response given within a certain time, normally 10 school days. Staff will keep notes of any discussions held with parents who are expressing concerns or bringing a complaint. Clear written statements will be taken and every statement will be signed and dated.

On receiving a formal complaint, the Headteacher should inform the Chair of governors.

The Headteacher will write to the complainant with the outcome of the investigation, with the information that if they are not satisfied they can write to the Chair of governors.

Formal Stage – Stage 2

If the Chair of the governing body receives a written complaint from a parent s/he should consult with the Headteacher before taking any action. It is important to ensure that the informal stages of the procedure have all been exhausted.

The Chair should try to acknowledge the written complaint within 5 school days of receipt, stating that the matter is being investigated and that s/he hopes to be able to make a further response within 10 school days.

After completing the investigation, the Chair of the governing body prepares a written summary of his/her findings, writes to the complainant saying the investigation has been completed and includes some of the following points:

- All appropriate steps have already been taken and s/he considers no further action is necessary;
- If the complainant is not happy with this response, s/he may write to the Clerk to the governing body at the school address requesting that the complaint be considered by a Complaints Committee, comprising three governors not previously involved in the complaint.

Formal Stage - Stage 3

If the Complaints Committee of the governing body is to consider the complaint, the Clerk to the governing body should set up the meeting within 20 school days giving at least 10 school days' notice of the meeting to: the members of the committee, complainant, Headteacher and the Chair of the governing body.

The hearing by the Complaints Committee should be as informal as possible. The complainant will be invited to attend the hearing and may be accompanied, if they wish. The Chair of the governing body and the Headteacher may be present. The Clerk to the governing body, or another person appointed by the Chair of the governing body, should be present throughout the hearing and after the parties have withdrawn, in order to take notes.

The Complaints Committee will make findings and recommendations in respect of the complaint and send them to complainant, Headteacher, Chair of Governors and, where relevant, the person complained about. This will normally be done within 10 days of the hearing. **The committee's decision is final.**

Recording and Reporting

Written records will be kept of all complaints and their outcomes noting whether they were resolved informally, after written submission or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing.

All correspondence, statements and records of complaints will be kept confidential. Such records will be available to OFSTED and to the Independent Schools Registration Authority on request.

Raising Awareness of this Policy

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- The school website;
- The Staff Handbook;
- Meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops;
- School events;
- Meetings with school personnel;

- Communications with home such as weekly newsletters and of end of half term newsletters;
- Reports such annual report to parents and Headteacher reports to the Governing Body;
- Information displays in the main school entrance

Training

All school personnel will:

- Have equal chances of training, career development and promotion;
- Receive training on this policy on induction;
- Receive periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information
- Receive equal opportunities training on induction in order to improve their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the coordinator, the Headteacher and the link governor.

A statement of the policy's effectiveness and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be presented to the Governing Body for further discussion and endorsement.

This policy was reviewed and endorsed by the Full Governing Body of The Devonshire Hill Nursery and Primary School on Wednesday 9th December 2015.