



Elm Wood Primary School

Complaints procedure / policy

Elm Wood Primary School: Listening to Parents, Pupils and the Community

Aims:

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

Introduction

1. We believe that our school provides a good education for all our children, and that the Head teacher and other staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents and carers. However, the school is obliged to have a policy and procedures in place in case there are complaints. The following policy sets out the procedures that the school follows in such cases. A leaflet for parents/carers has been prepared called "Listening to You". This sets out the procedure and is available in the parent/carer information boxes at the front of school.
2. If any parent or carer is unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or has any concern relating to the school, we encourage that person to talk to the child's class teacher immediately. If a parent has a concern about a member of staff, please talk to the Head Teacher in the first instance.
3. We deal with all complaints in accordance with the school's policy and procedure.

The complaints process

1. If a parent or carer is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the child's progress.
2. Where a parent or carer feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Head teacher. The Head teacher considers any such complaint very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage.
3. Should a parent or carer have a complaint about the Head teacher, s/he should first make an informal approach to the Governing body's complaint governor. Any correspondence to the Complaints Governor must be marked 'Confidential' and addressed to Elm Wood Primary School. The governor in question will do all s/he can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if a parent or carer is unhappy with the outcome s/he can make a formal complaint, as outlined below.

4. Only if an informal concern fails to resolve the matter should a formal complaint be made to the governing body. This complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far and how they would like the situation resolved. The parent or carer should send this written complaint to the Chair of governors Eric Barber through school.
5. The complaints panel will consider all written complaints within three working weeks of receipt and the school informed that a formal complaint has been received. The panel will arrange a meeting. The school will give the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting. The meeting will be minuted. There will be a focus on clarifying what the complainant feels would put things right and the actions the complainant feels would resolve the problem at any stage.
6. The complaint will be fully investigated by the complaints governor.
7. A meeting of the complaints panel will then be held to consider the evidence collected and witness statements/or hear witnesses as appropriate. The panel will be drawn from nominated members of the Governing body, consisting of 3 or 5 members.
8. No governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it. The aim of the hearing, which is held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant.
9. The school will set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and the venue and proceedings are accessible. All written materials will be collated and sent to all parties at least three days in advance of the hearing. A copy of the procedure at the meeting will also be sent to all parties. All parties will be welcomed to the hearing and the proceedings recorded formally. The school will notify all parties of the decision in writing.
10. The Chair will explain the remit of the panel to the parties and give each party the opportunity to put their case without undue interruption. Their role will be to ensure all issues are addressed and key findings of fact are made. Parents should be put at ease and the Chair will ensure that each party treats the other with respect and courtesy. The panel members will be reminded that they should be open minded, act independently and no member of the panel should have a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure. Each side will be given the opportunity to ask questions and state their case.
11. Where a complaint concerns the whole of the governing body of the school, an independent complaints panel may be drawn from Governors of other schools who have no connection with the complaint.
12. After listening to all parties and all the evidence, the complaints panel will consider their decision and inform the parent or carer about the outcome in writing. The panel will do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent's or carer's satisfaction. However, we recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that his or her complaint has been taken seriously
13. If any parent or carer is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then s/he is entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families.

Monitoring and review

1. The governors monitor the complaints policy and procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly.

2. Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the school's complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents and carers, so that they can be properly informed about the school's complaints process.

Agreed: By Governing Body

Date: September 2013

Name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone number:

Detail of complaint:

Details of action you have already taken to try and resolve your complaint:

What would you like the outcome of the complaint to be?

Please ring:

Apology

Explanation of the incident / why something happened

Admission that the incident could have been handled in a different manner

Confirmation that the incident will not happen again

An undertaking to review school policy in light of the complaint

Other

Please give details below: