

Geddington C of E Primary School



Complaints Procedure Policy

This policy was adopted by the governing body on 15.10.15 and will be reviewed annually.

The policy was updated and accepted on Thursday 19th January 2017 by the governing body.
The policy was updated and accepted on Thursday 22nd February 2018 by the governing body.

The policy was updated and accepted on Thursday 17th January 2019 by the governing body.
The policy was updated and accepted on Thursday 12th November 2020 by the governing body.

Chair of Governors

Mr Ken Hennah

Date 17th January 2019

Headteacher

Mr M Adamson

Date 17th January 2019

GEDDINGTON C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL
COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Education Act 2002 requires all schools to have a Complaints Procedure and this documents incorporates the advice from the Department for Education - *Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016*.

The complaints policy covers issues raised by parents and other stakeholders not employed by the school. Complaints raised by members of staff come under the Grievance Policy.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A 'concern' may be defined as '*an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought*'. A complaint may be generally defined as '*an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action*'.

It is important that **parents contact the school first** with their concerns and talk to a teacher or the headteacher. Most problems can be sorted out in this way easily and informally. Geddington C of E Primary School takes concerns seriously and makes every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible

Our school's underlying principle is that concerns will be handled, when possible, without the need for formal procedures. The requirement to have a complaints procedure need not in any way undermine efforts to resolve the concern informally.

There are occasions when complainants would like to raise a complaint formally. In those cases, the school's formal procedure should be invoked through the stages outlined within this procedure.

There are two main stages in the complaint procedure and they will be followed in order.

PROCEDURE FOR RAISING A FORMAL COMPLAINT

Stage 1 - raise a formal complaint

The first stage is to raise a formal complaint by to:

- the headteacher
- or Chair of the Governing Body if the complaint is against the headteacher.

A complaint may be made in person, by telephone, or in writing.

The headteacher (or nominated member of staff), or the Chair of Governors will investigate your complaint.

After they have looked into the issue, you may be asked to meet with the headteacher or chair of governors or you may get a letter explaining the school's response.

Stage 2 - Appeal to Governors

If you are unhappy after raising the complaint in Stage 1, you would need to inform the Chair of Governors and request a hearing. Your complaint will be heard by a panel of the governing body. You will be asked to meet with the panel and explain your case. The panel will listen to you and the headteacher, and will inform you in writing of their decision.

Complainants have the right to request an independent panel to hear their complaint. The Governing Body will decide whether to grant this request on a case by case basis.

Timescales for dealing with your complaint

Ideally, complaints should be dealt with quickly, but if your complaint is complicated or requires detailed investigation, it may take a longer to sort out.

You will receive a response from the school within five working days. This will either detail the outcome of the investigation, or, in more complex cases will give details of how the investigation is being managed and the timescales involved.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION & WORSHIP

STAGE 1 is followed as before.

STAGE 2

The concern/complaint would be heard by a small committee set up by the Diocesan Board of Education.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE GOVERNING BODY (OR MEMBERS)

Complaints against the Chair of Governors or any individual governor should be made by writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body.

Complaints against the Chair - will be referred to the Vice Chair.

Complaints against the Chair & Vice - will be referred to the Clerk who will inform the Chair of Governors at our Partnership School.

Complaints against other governors or a group of governors - will be referred to the Chair.

Complaints against the whole Governing Body - will be referred to the Clerk who will inform the Chair of Governors at Partnership School.

OTHER TYPES OF COMPLAINT

The following types of complaints about education are dealt with in different ways. There are special arrangements under the Education Acts if you want to appeal or complain about:

Exceptions	Who to contact
Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN) • School re-organisation proposals • Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Concerns should be raised direct with local authorities (LA). Complaints about admission appeals for maintained schools are dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman.
• Exclusion of children from school	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions .
• Whistleblowing	School has an internal whistleblowing procedure for their employees and voluntary staff. Other concerns can be raised direct with Ofsted by telephone on: 0300 123 3155, via email at: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk or by writing to: WBHL, Ofsted Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD. The Department for Education is also a prescribed body for whistleblowing in education.
• Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities.	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. They should be contacted direct.

PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH FORMAL COMPLAINTS RAISED

Recording Complaints

In order to prevent any later challenge or disagreement over what was said, brief notes of meetings and telephone calls will be kept and a copy of any written response added to the record. Where there are communication difficulties, school may wish to use recording devices to ensure the complainant is able to access and review the discussions at a later point.

School will record the progress of the complaint and the final outcome. The headteacher is responsible for these records and they are held centrally. See Appendix 1.

Complainants have a right to copies of these records under the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts.

Governing Body Review

Complaints will not be shared with the whole governing body, except in very general terms, in case an appeal panel needs to be organised.

If the whole governing body is aware of the substance of a complaint before the final stage has been completed, school will arrange for an independent panel to hear the complaint. They may approach a different school to ask for help or the local Governor Services team at the LA, or the Diocese.

Serial or Persistent Complainants

The decision to stop responding should never be taken lightly. School needs to be able to say yes to all of the following:

- School has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's needs;
- The complainant has been given a clear statement of the school's position and their options (if any); and
- They are contacting the school repeatedly but making substantially the same points each time.

The case is stronger if School agrees with one or more of these statements:

- The school has reason to believe the individual is contacting them with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience - have they actually said as much in a letter, email or telephone call?
- Their letters/emails/telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive.
- They make insulting personal comments about or threats towards staff.

Once School has decided that it is appropriate to stop responding, they will let the complainant know; ideally, through a hard copy letter but an email will suffice.

APPENDIX 1

Record of Formal Complaints

Detailed reports should be kept alongside this record

Date Complaint made	Name of complainant	How was complaint made eg letter, phone	Nature of complaint	Final Outcome

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