

## COMPLAINTS CODE OF PRACTICE

Albert Pritchard Infants and Wood Green Junior Federated schools endeavour to provide the best education possible for all its pupils in an open and transparent environment.

Where concerns are raised the school intends for these to be dealt with:

Fairly  
Openly  
Promptly  
Without Prejudice

- 1 This is a Complaints Procedure agreed by the Governing Body of the school. It describes how anyone with a concern/complaint can set about having it dealt with.
- 2 The procedure covers concerns/complaints made by parents, staff and others in respect of the performance of duties or exercise of powers by the Governing Body either directly or through delegation.
- 3 Concerns/Complaints should relate to any of the following:
  - a. The provision made for or the treatment of, an individual pupil or group of pupils.
  - b. Particular incidents that have happened at the school.
  - c. A policy or provision of the school.
  - d. Where the complainant considers the school has acted unreasonably in performing any duties or exercising any power relating to the curriculum.
- 4 A copy of this policy is available upon request, to anyone wishing to express a concern or make a complaint under these arrangements.
- 5 All concerns/complaints will be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible. Each stage of the procedure should be completed within twenty (20) school days. The procedure will not cover complaints and concerns about incidents that happened more than one month before the complaint is made.
- 6 All concerns/complaints will be investigated fully, sensitively and confidentially. The main aim at all stages will be to secure that the complaint/concern is settled to everyone's satisfaction.
- 7 The person raising the concern/complaint will receive a reasoned reply. At Stage 2 Formal and at Stage 3 Appeal, this will be in writing and will set out the result of the consideration of the concern/complaint.
- 8 Anyone who is the subject of a concern/complaint has the right to know and will be informed at an early stage of the allegations made and have an opportunity to respond.
- 9 Throughout the procedure, at all stages, Complainants and the Governors or Executive Head Teacher may be accompanied by a friend, supporter, representative or interpreter.

## Stages relating to a complaint

This procedure defines three stages:

- **Stage 1** Informal-any complaints/concerns should be raised informally with an appropriate member of staff who will then inform the SLT
- **Stage 2** Formal-a written complaint should be made formally to the Executive Head Teacher
- **Stage 3** Appeal-the complaint/concern should be referred to the governing body's complaints panel.
  - a. All concerns/complaints will be dealt with sensitively, impartially and confidentially.
  - b. Written records of concerns/complaints and the outcome will be made.
  - c. Where the complainant is a child, careful consideration of the atmosphere and location of proceedings will be taken to ensure the child does not feel intimidated.
  - d. Full consideration will be given to the child's views.

### Stage 1 - Informal

- 1 Most concerns/complaints should be resolved internally in discussion with the Executive Head Teacher or other staff of the school in the first instance. An informal discussion with the Chair of Governors may also be an alternative method at this point.
- 2 Parents/carers can raise concerns at any time not just at parent's evenings or any other scheduled meetings. Any concerns should be raised with the classroom teacher. Where it is felt that this is not appropriate (e.g. because the complaint is about the child's classroom teacher) the complaint should be discussed with a member of the senior leadership team.
- 3 The person receiving the concern/complaint is advised to keep a written note of it and what solution has been offered. (School staff dealing with a concern/complaint should inform a member of SLT at the earliest opportunity).
- 4 It is expected that once a member of staff has notified a senior leader that leader will engage the complainant in full discussion with perhaps more than one meeting in an effort to fully resolve the situation to the satisfaction of all. Meetings will need to be arranged with those complained against. If satisfaction cannot be reached or the issue remains unresolved then the complainant will be advised of the Formal Procedures.
- 5 Where the complainant's matter needs to be further investigated, a note should be reported to the next meeting of the Governing Board, following agreed procedures for confidentiality.

### Stage 2 Formal

- 1 Where the attempts to settle the complaint under Stage 1 the have failed, the complainant will be made aware of Stage 2 Formal.
- 2 The complaint should be set out in writing by the complainant and submitted to the Executive Head Teacher and Chair of Governors. A form for this purpose will be part of this Code of Practice. (See page at the back of the policy for the form to be used).
- 3 Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged and followed up with advice about the investigation which will include at least five (5) school days' notice of any interview.

- 4 The Executive Head Teacher at the meeting will hope to resolve the matter.

### Stage 3 Appeal

- 1 Where the complainant is not satisfied with the Stage 2 Formal outcome they may request, in writing, to be heard by the Governors Appeal Panel. This Appeal will be held within twenty (20) school days of receipt of the request for Appeal.
- 2 The Chair of Governors will appoint at least three Governors to hear the Appeal. These Governors will have no prior knowledge of any part of the complaint either at Informal or Formal stages. They should declare any knowledge of or possible interest in the parties or situation concerned before the Appeal is heard.
- 3 The Chair of Governors will appoint an Investigating Officer who will investigate the situation and report to the Chair of Governors within five (5) school days of receipt of the formal complaint.
- 4 The role of the Investigating Officer is to interview (giving at least five (5) days' notice :- the complainant, those complained against and any supporting witnesses each of whom may be accompanied by one friend, supporter, representative or interpreter for the interview. The Investigating Officer will report on only the facts of the matter by the due date.
- 5 The Investigating Officer is advised to: -
  - a. Read all the existing correspondence and secure confidentiality.
  - b. Decide if any written statements are required and from whom, put in place systems, safeguarding against collusion, to obtain them by a due date.
  - c. Set up interviews within five (5) days agreed notice.
  - d. Interview the complainant and take notes,
  - e. Interview those complained against, keeping notes.
  - f. Follow up any further information from the statements.
  - g. Write a report keeping to the facts and accurate reporting of people's views.
- 6 On receipt of the report the Chair of Governors will consider the facts and determine the outcome. When the complainant has been fully investigated and considered, the Chair of Governors will notify the complainant of the outcome in writing (within twenty (20) school days) giving an explanation of the conclusions.

Those complained against will also be entitled to receive details of the outcome of the investigation at the same time as the complainant.
- 7 If the complaint is against the Executive Head Teacher then the Chair of Governors and one other person (agreed by the Executive Head Teacher and Chair of Governors) shall conduct the Formal Stage in a fair and equitable manner.
- 8 The Chair of Governors will forward all correspondence and the Investigating officers Report and notes to the Chair of the Appeal Panel. The Chair of the Appeal Panel will set the date and time for the Appeal giving at least five (5) days' notice of the date, agenda and names of those invited to attend.

## The Panel

The Governors are advised that the agenda and routine for the Appeal should be:

- a. The Chair of the Appeal panel shall take charge of all matters relating to the Appeal hearing, its conduct, sensitivities and confidential nature and the communication of the decision to parties concerned. The Investigating Officer Report, the Form of Complaint and the letters written as part of Stage 2 Formal will be made available to the complainant and those complained against when the Agenda is sent out for the Hearing.
- b. Introductions
- c. The Investigating Officer to outline the report of the facts. Both the complainant and those complained against may question the facts and attempt to have and maintain an appropriate atmosphere.
- d. The complainant may make an oral presentation to supplement the written appeal. The Panel and those complained against may ask questions.
- e. Those complained against may make an oral presentation. The Panel the complainant may ask questions.
- f. The Panel will deliberate and come to a decision. The decision may be communicated to all parties verbally and will be followed up in writing within the twenty (20) school day period. The decision will also be sent to the Executive Head Teacher and Chair of Governors.
- g. The Panel, the complainant, the Investigating officer and those complained against may have professional support, a friend, a representative or an interpreter at the hearing.
- h. The Panel decision will be communicated to you within five (5) school days.

It is expected that the decision of the Appeal Panel will be binding on all parties. However any complainant who is still dissatisfied after the three stages have been exhausted will be able to appeal to the Local Authority.



**FORM OF COMPLAINT- STAGE 2 FORMAL**

*When you have filled in this form, take it or send it to the Executive Head Teacher*

**Please use black ink if possible. Please continue on another separate sheet of paper if necessary.**

1. Name of parent:

2. Name of child:

3. Name of class:

4. Address

Telephone: Home:

Work:

5. Brief details of the concern/complaint:

6. What date or period of time does your complaint relate to?

7. To whom have you already complained to informally and when?

8. Please give details of any more information you have to support your concern/complaint such as letters or reports. Original documents will be copied and returned to you.

9. How do you see your complaint being resolved?

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

