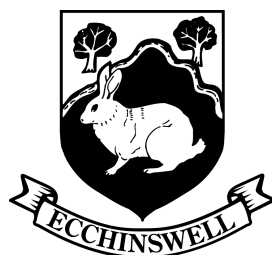


Version	Amendments	Date
1.0	Initial Version	
1.1	No changes	3/7/12
1.2	No changes	7/7/15
1.3	No changes	3/2/18
1.4	No changes	16/3/21
1.5	No changes	15/3/22
1.6	No changes	23/1/24



Ecchinswell and Sydmonton C.E Primary School

Complaints Policy

Aims of the Policy

- to resolve concerns through informal discussions at the earliest stage;
- to be speedy, with well-defined timescales and named contacts;
- to focus on resolution and service review rather than blame;
- to be accessible to people with disabilities, special needs or language barriers;
- to promote confidentiality and discretion;
- to include fair and transparent investigation processes for staff as well as complainants.

Appendix

The Procedure for Dealing with Complaints

A. The preliminary stage

1. We place great emphasis on trying to resolve complaints initially, and wherever possible in an informal manner.

2. As soon as a parent has a concern, he/she should speak informally with the appropriate member of staff. In most cases the appropriate member of staff will be the class teacher.
3. If a parent has a complaint about the head teacher then the parent should discuss the complaint with the head teacher. If the parent feels that this is not possible then he/she can raise the complaint with the chair of governors.
4. If the above process deals with the complaint to the satisfaction of the parent – the matter can be left at this stage.
5. Should the parent wish to take the complaint further, the next stage in the procedure should be followed.

B. Stage 1 - Head teacher

1. Parents are advised to write to the head teacher should they wish to take the complaint further. The letter should contain details of the concern and enclose any appropriate paperwork.
2. A complaint form should also be completed at this stage.
3. The head teacher will respond to the parent in writing as soon as possible. An acknowledgment of the complaint will be sent to the parent within five school days of receipt of the complaint.
4. Should the complaint require an in depth investigation the head teacher will acknowledge this in the letter confirming receipt of the complaint. The head teacher will then investigate the complaint and prepare a response within 20 school days.
5. This will involve meeting the parent and may involve meeting the teacher, should one be involved in the complaint.
6. The head teacher's response shall include a summary of the main points of any meeting that has taken place. This may prevent any misunderstandings and ensure that all parties have a clear record of progress or agreements reached.
7. If the parent remains dissatisfied, the head teacher shall give a final written response and Stage 2 of the complaints process shall commence.

C. Stage 2 – Chair of Governors

1. The parent should indicate in writing to the clerk that he/she remains dissatisfied. At this stage the clerk must log the complaint in his/her records.
2. If the parent has difficulty in communicating his/her complaint in writing he/she should be advised that help in formulating a letter will be provided by a member of staff uninvolved in the complaint.
3. The chair of governors will respond to the complaint within 20 days.
4. The head teacher and the chair of governors will meet to discuss the best way of resolving the complaint and agreeing a way forward.
5. If the complaint relates to a matter falling within the governing body's remit or a matter delegated to the head teacher by the governing body the chair shall look at

the complaint afresh as though it had not been looked at already by the head teacher.

6. Should the complaint relate to the head teacher's conduct, the chair of governors shall decide whether the matter should be dealt with through the complaints procedure or staff disciplinary procedure. Advice, in this respect, should be sought from the LEA complaints adviser or education personnel services.
7. If the complaint relates to an area of head teacher's responsibility the chair of governors shall only look at whether the head teacher's decision or action was reasonable in the light of the information available at the time.
8. Should the parent continue to be unhappy with the outcome of Stage 2, the chair of governors shall offer a right of appeal to the governing body's complaint panel.

D. Stage 3 – Governing Body's Complaints Panel – reconsideration or review.

1. Any parent who wishes to appeal should advise the clerk to the governing body of this fact, in writing. Parents should describe the issues in detail and say why they are dissatisfied with the outcomes of the previous stages.
2. There are two forms of appeal reconsideration or a review.
 - i) Reconsideration (considering afresh)
 - a) When the complaint relates to a matter of delegated responsibility or a matter that falls within the governing body's remit the complaints panel shall reconsider the matter afresh, with any new information that the head teacher may not have been aware of at the time of the original response or action. In the light of additional information, the panel may decide to write and ask the head teacher to give the matter further consideration.
 - b) Complaints about a governor should also be subject to a reconsideration of the issues.
 - ii) Review
 - a) If the matter falls within the head teacher's decision-making remit by virtue of his or her terms and conditions of employment, then the panel will only have the power to review the decision not to consider the matter afresh. It may look at whether the decision or action was reasonable. An unreasonable decision might be one that is irrational: a decision that no reasonable head teacher, properly aware of his/her duties and properly taking into account the facts of the case before him or her, would make.
 - b) The panel will need to consider the facts as they were known to the head teacher at the time and then consider whether the head teacher:
 - failed to take a account of a relevant consideration and/or;
 - took into account an irrelevant consideration; an/or
 - made a perverse decision in the light of the evidence available at the time.

- c) If new evidence does come to light, the panel should refer it back to the head teacher, who may consider amending the decision in the light of that new information.
3. The Clerk shall arrange and facilitate the meeting of the panel.
 4. The panel shall consist of three governors with no prior involvement in the matter and the chair should be designated before the meeting.
 5. The panel shall be appointed at the beginning of the autumn term at the first full governing body meeting. The chair shall also be appointed at this point. The full governing body must have 2/3 of governors present when establishing the panel.
 6. The names of the governors appointed should be recorded in the main body of the minutes, The list of governors should consist of a pool of governors and when a panel meeting is requested the clerk should select three panel members in the order they appear on the list in the minutes i.e. the first three names. If any of these are unavailable the next should be contacted.
 7. There should be no discussion of the matter between members of the panel before the meeting of the panel.
 8. The meeting should be held in an informal atmosphere but should follow a formal agenda.
 9. The clerk should inform the complainant in writing of the panel's decision, within two school days following the meeting. The letter shall include: -
 - A summary of the issues
 - An outline of the main points of discussion
 - The reasons for the decision
 - Proposed actions or outcomes.
 10. The letter shall suggest that the parents meet the head teacher again to agree a way forward.
 11. Should the complaint relate to the national curriculum or the provision of religious education, parents shall be told that they can appeal further to the LA.
 12. For general complaints, if a parent believes that the head teacher's and governor's actions have been unreasonable or the correct process has not been adhered to the only recourse is the Secretary of State. The parents can seek advice from the LA's complaints adviser at this point.

E. Stage 4 – The Local Authority

1. The Local Education Authority offers as detailed above, a further right of appeal, if the complaint is about the national curriculum or the provision of religious education.

Anonymous Complaints

The school does not generally respond to anonymous complaints, but the head teacher or chair will consider whether the fear of identification is genuine and whether the issue is one of child protection.

Complaints Form

When we receive a complaint, we aim to acknowledge its receipt within 5 school days and send a full or interim response within 20 school days.

Name of Complainant
Pupil's Name (If Applicable)
Address:
Postcode:
Telephone day:
Telephone evening:
Email:
Please outline your complaint