

# **St. Paul's CE VA Primary School, Chipperfield**

## **Policy on Complaints**

### **Introduction**

We strive to provide a good education for all our children. We work hard to build positive relationships with all parents and carers. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents or guardians. The following policy sets out the procedures that the school follows in such cases.

We need to be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint. A concern can be defined as a cause of worry, whilst a complaint can be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that need to develop into formal complaints.

### **Aims and objectives**

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

### **The complaints process**

If a parent 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. In our experience, most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and making good progress; they naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before it seriously affects the child's progress.

Where parents or carers feel 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 Headteacher. The Headteacher investigates each case thoroughly. Most concerns or complaints are normally resolved by this stage usually through:

- an explanation;
- an apology;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

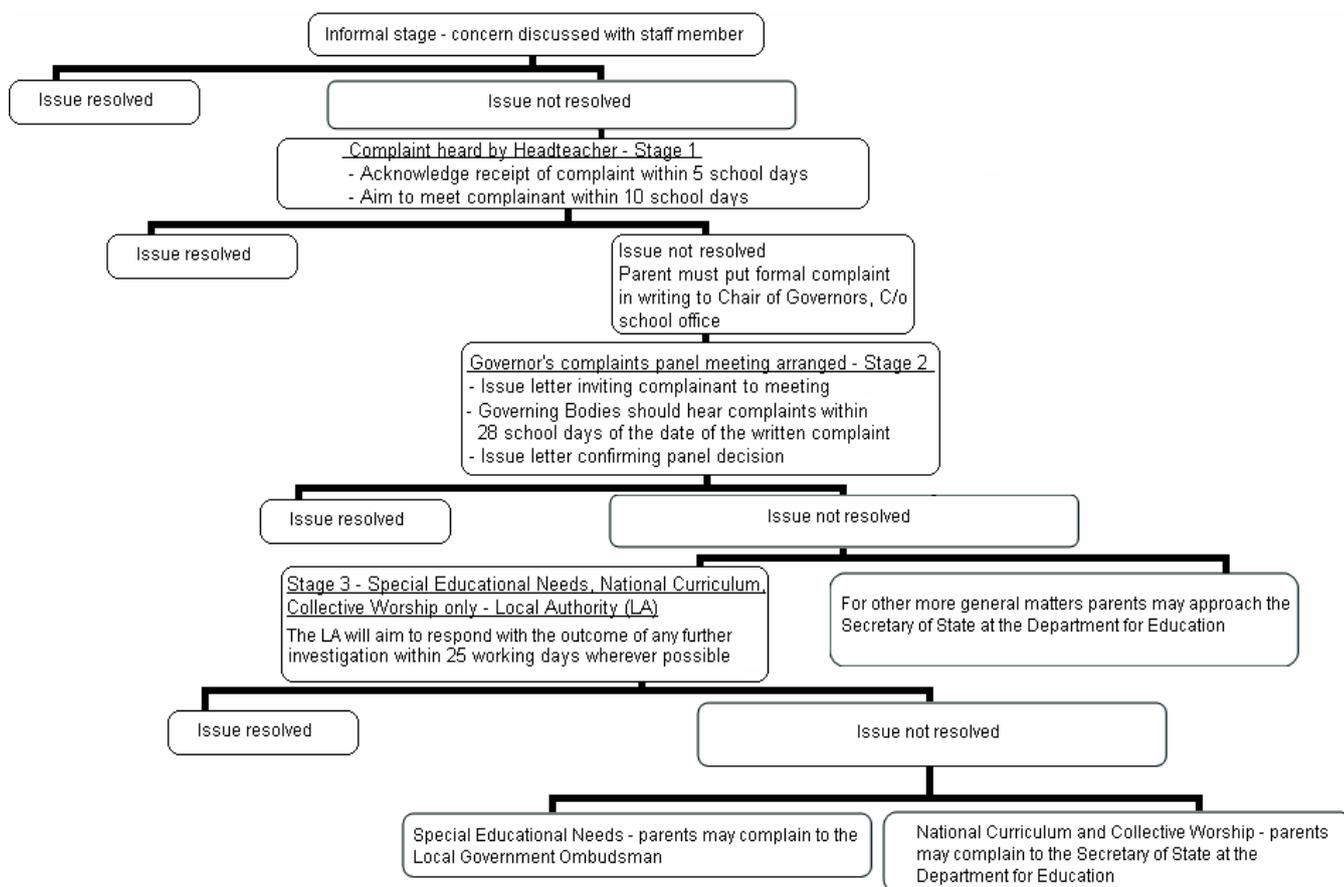
It would be useful if complainants were encouraged to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage. An admission that the school could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of liability. Where resolution is not agreed at this stage, a written complaint can be made to the Governing Body (see flow chart below).

Should any parents or carers have a complaint about the Headteacher, they should first make an informal approach to the Chair of Governors. Only if an informal complaint fails to resolve the matter should a formal complaint be made to the Governing Body.

All formal complaints to the Governing Body should be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint, and how the school has handled it so far. The parent should send this written complaint to the Chair of Governors c/o the School Office.

The Governing Body must consider all written complaints within twenty eight school days of receipt. It will arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint, and will invite the person making it to attend the meeting, so that s/he can explain the complaint in more detail. The school gives the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting.

After hearing all the evidence, the Governing Body will consider their decision and inform the parent about it in writing. If the complaint is not resolved, a parent may make representation to the LA or to the Secretary of State. This flow chart summarises the procedure:



### Monitoring and review

The Governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. Formal complaints are recorded in a log.

Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the 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 complaints process. Further details on procedures for parents and governors are contained in the appendices to this document which are available through the school office.

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