

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 A 'Complaint is an expression of significant dissatisfaction, however made, by a person or persons with a legitimate interest in the school, but not employed by the school, about the conduct, actions or omissions of members of staff employed at the school or about the standard of teaching.

1.2 It is important to remember that every expression of concern is not a complaint. Discretion needs to be applied in determining whether action over and above the normal day by day discussions on parental concerns is needed.

1.3 Complaints should be dealt with at the appropriate level. This will be determined by the nature and seriousness of the complaint.

1.4 Complaints need to be resolved as quickly as possible therefore realistic time limits will be set. When further investigations are necessary the complainant will be sent details of any new deadline and an explanation for any delay.

### **2. AIMS OF POLICY**

- To enhance the school mission by giving due consideration to the complaints of parents.
- To ensure that all complaints are considered fully, fairly, carefully and confidentially.
- To resolve complaints to the satisfaction of the complainant or to issue a clear decision which will enable the complainant, the head teacher or the Governing Body to consider how, if at all, the matter should be taken further.

### **3. INFORMAL PROCEDURE FOR PARENTAL CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS**

3.1 Problems and expressions of concern should be dealt with as far as possible by the class teacher. Under no circumstances should teachers become involved in discussions about the professional performance of a colleague.

3.2 When parents express dissatisfaction, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:-  
an apology  
an explanation  
an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better  
an assurance that the event complained of will not recur.

3.3 -Where a teacher receives a complaint (as opposed to a concern) and deals with it, the head teacher should be notified of the complaint and how it was resolved.

3.4 When initial attempts to resolve the complaint are unsuccessful, the issue should then be referred to the head teacher/assistant head teacher.

#### **4. INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS**

The head teacher/assistant head teacher is responsible for investigating complaints in the first instance:-

- \* to clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unsolved
- \* to meet the complainant or contact them if further information is necessary
- \* to interview those involved in the matter, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish.
- \* to conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- \* to keep notes of the interview.

#### **5. RESOLVING COMPLAINTS**

5.1 At each stage the progress of the complaint should be recorded.

5.2 The investigation should identify areas of agreement, clarify misunderstandings and create a positive atmosphere in which to discuss outstanding issues with the head teacher.

5.3 Complainants should be encouraged to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem. An admission that the school could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence.

5.4 It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part and steps will be taken to ensure it will not happen again or that the school's policies will be reviewed in the light of the complaint.

5.5 When informal procedures have been exhausted, complainants should be informed by the head teacher that:-

- the matter about which they have complained has been dealt with appropriately by the staff within the context of school policies and procedures.
- the complaint has been found to be valid and the head teacher will take appropriate action.