



Enfield County School

Complaints Policy

January 2018

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Purpose

This policy aims to reassure parents and others with an interest in the school that:

- Any complaint against the school will be dealt with in a fair, open and responsive way, with the aim of achieving a speedy and satisfactory resolution in line with Section 29 of the Education Act 2002
- The school recognises that a willingness to listen to questions and criticism and to respond positively, can lead to improvements in school practices and provision for pupils.

Scope of the Policy

- A complaint is defined as a clear statement of dissatisfaction about any specified aspect of the school's work
- This procedure deals with specified day-to-day complaints against the management and/or operation of the school which fall outside the scope of the following procedures:
 - Complaints which have an alternative statutory avenue of appeal or complaint, i.e. admissions, exclusions, SEN assessments, and those covered by the Education (School Records) Regulations 1989
 - Serious complaints that must be dealt with by specific employment procedures, e.g. allegations of professional misconduct, criminal offences or those that are potentially staff disciplinary issues
 - Allegations relating to abuse of children or vulnerable adults
- Complainants may be anyone, e.g. parents, carers, grandparents, neighbours of the school or anyone with an interest in the work of the school. However, it is expected that it will be mainly parents or carers who will make use of this procedure. The term 'parent' is therefore used throughout the procedure as a generic term but the procedure also applies in relation to any other type of complainant
- Complaints may be made by telephone, e-mail, in person or be written

General

- The school and/or parent may request advice or guidance from Enfield Council's Schools and Children's Services Department at any stage in the procedure. In particular, the Council offers advice on the application of the procedure in practice at each stage and advice on ensuring that the matter is being dealt with appropriately. The Council is not responsible, however, for investigating the complaint or for making decisions on the outcomes.



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- Records of all conversations and meetings with parents to resolve complaints will be kept. To help prevent recurring complaints, copies of correspondence and notes will be kept on file in the school's records, separately from individual pupil records
- If at any stage in the complaints procedure it becomes apparent that for any reason the complaint falls outside of this general complaints policy, parents will be informed
- There may be rare occasions when, despite all the stages of the procedure having been followed, a parent remains dissatisfied. If the parent seeks to re-open the same issue, the school reserves the right to inform him/her in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter is closed.

Stage 1: Informal Stage

- On occasion, a parent may raise a concern directly with school staff informally. At this stage, it may be unclear whether the parent is making a complaint or seeking information or clarification. In any event, the school aims to resolve the concern at this point in a speedy and effective way
- If the concern is not resolved immediately and the parent confirms a complaint, the complaint will be passed to the Complaints Co-ordinator. The parent will be given the opportunity to discuss the matter with the Head of Year. In the case of complaint about a decision or action by the Headteacher, this stage will usually be heard directly by the Headteacher herself
- The member of staff will discuss the issue with the parent and those involved in school, with the aim of resolving the complaint as soon as possible. The parent will be informed, within 10 school days of the discussion, of the outcome of the investigation and what action, if any, the school proposes to take
- The parent will be advised of their right to request that the complaint is considered formally at stage two of this procedure if they are dissatisfied with the response and resolution offered at Stage 1
- If wishing to proceed with the complaint, the parent will be invited to put the complaint in writing to the Headteacher using the form attached at Appendix 1. The form should be sent to the Headteacher within ten school days of receipt of the Stage 1 response
- The Complaints Co-ordinator will be informed of the outcome.

Stage 2: Referral to the Chair of Governors or Assistant Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher

- Where the complaint has been addressed by the Headteacher at Stage 1, this stage will be heard by the Chair of Governors. Where another staff member, e.g. Head of Year, has addressed the complaint at Stage 1, this stage will be heard by either the Assistant Headteacher or the Deputy Headteacher
- The Chair of Governors or AHT/DHT will acknowledge the written complaint within five school days of receipt and provide an opportunity for the parent to meet with them to discuss the complaint



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- The Chair of Governors or AHT/DHT will investigate the complaint and a written response will normally be made within ten school days of receipt of the complaint. If this is not possible, a letter will be sent explaining the reason for the delay and providing a revised target date.
- The written response will include full reasons for the conclusions reached by the Chair of Governors or AHT/DHT and what action, if any, the school proposes to take to resolve the matter
- The Complaints Co-ordinator will be informed of the outcome

Stage 3: Referral to the Headteacher

- If the parent still remains dissatisfied and the Headteacher has not had involvement in Stages 1 and 2 of the process, (s)he will be advised that, in order to progress the complaint further at Stage 3, (s)he must notify the Headteacher in writing within ten school days of receipt of the Stage 2 response, setting out what issues are outstanding and what outcome (s)he is hoping for
- The Headteacher will then undertake her own investigation and inform the parent of her findings, in writing, within ten working days
- The Complaints Co-ordinator will be informed of the outcome.

Stage 4: Review by the Governing Body

- If the parent feels that the School has been unable to resolve a situation to their satisfaction then they may make a written formal complaint to the Governing Body. This should be done in writing to the Chair of Governors, addressing the letter to the school. Within ten working days the Governors will inform the parent of their recommendations or their intention to set up a Panel, to which the parent would be invited to present their case
- The Complaints Co-ordinator will be informed of the outcome.

Stage 5: Review by the Governors' Complaints Panel

- Complaints only rarely reach this level. However, when the need arises, the Governors' Complaints Panel (GCP) will consider complaints at this stage
- A written acknowledgement of the complaint and the request for it to be heard at Stage 5 of the Procedure will be sent to the parent by the Chair of Governors or Chair of the Complaints Panel within five school days of receipt. The letter will inform the parent that the complaint will be heard by the GCP within twenty school days of receiving the form and that these must be made available to the Chair of the GCP within five school days of receipt of the acknowledgement letter. The right to call witnesses to the meeting, subject to the approval of the Chair of the GCP, and the right of the parent to be



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accompanied by a companion of her/his choice, will also be explained in the letter

- The Chair of the GCP will send a copy of the letter of acknowledgement of the complaint to the Chair of Governors and/or Headteacher and request a written report in response to the complaint to the GCP within five school days of receipt of the letter. The right to call witnesses, subject to the approval of the Chair of the GCP, will also be explained
- The Chair of the GCP will then convene a GCP meeting, having consulted with all parties on convenient times. The date, time and venue for the meeting will then be confirmed at least five school days in advance of the meeting
- The names of all parties and witnesses (if any) to attend the meeting and all relevant documents to be referred to at the meeting will also be provided by the Chair of the GCP to:
 - The parent
 - The Chair of Governors and/or Headteacher
 - Each panel member

This will be provided as soon as possible and, in any event, at least five school days prior to the meeting

- A written decision will be sent to both the parent and the Chair of Governors and/or Headteacher by the Chair of the GCP within ten school days of the hearing
- The Complaints Co-ordinator will be informed of the outcome.

Final Stage

- The letter will explain that the decision of the GCP represents the end of the school's complaint procedure and outline the options open to the parent if they remain dissatisfied. The final stage of appeal is to the Secretary of State for Education
- The parents should write to the School Complaints Unit (SCU) at: Department for Education, 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate, Manchester M1 2WD
- The SCU will examine if the complaints policy and other relevant policies were followed in accordance with the provisions set out. The SCU also examines policies to determine if they adhere to education legislation. **However, the department will not re-investigate the substance of the complaint.** This remains the responsibility of the school.



Appendix 1 Enfield County School Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Complaints Co-ordinator who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Student's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the student (if relevant):
Address: Postcode: Daytime telephone number: Evening telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint:
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak to and what was the response?):



Appendix 2 – Complaints Procedure Summary

Stage 1 – Complaint heard by staff member and/or Head of Year

- Ensure Complaints Co-ordinator is informed of the complaint and the outcome
- Offer escalation to Stage 2 if dissatisfied

Stage 2 – Complaint heard by AHT/DHT

- Acknowledge receipt of complaint
- Write to complainant with outcome of investigation
- Ensure Complaints Co-ordinator is informed of outcome
- Offer escalation to Stage 3 if dissatisfied

If not resolved, then escalate to Stage 3 - Complaint heard by Headteacher

Stage 3 – Complaint referred to the Headteacher

- Acknowledge receipt of complaint
- Write to complainant with outcome of investigation
- Ensure Complaints Co-ordinator is informed of outcome
- Offer escalation to Stage 4 if dissatisfied

Stage 4 – Complaint referred to the Chair of Governors

- Acknowledge receipt of complaint
- Write to complainant with outcome of investigation or recommendation of intention to proceed to Stage 5
- Ensure Complaints Co-ordinator is informed of outcome
- Offer escalation to Stage 5 if dissatisfied

Stage 5 – Complaint reviewed by Governor’s Complaints Panel

- Issue letter inviting complainant to meeting
- Issue letter confirming panel decision
- Ensure Complaints Co-ordinator is informed of outcome
- Advise of options that remain open to parent if they remain dissatisfied