



Complaints Policy

Rationale

If your child attends Oakleigh School and the Early Years Centre, we hope that s/he is happy. On occasions, however, issues may arise. A 'concern' may be treated as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.

A complaint may be generally recognised as 'an expression or statement of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'. The great majority of concerns can be sorted out informally – in person, by telephone etc. A complaint can be made by anyone regarding the provision or facilities of the school. The complaint process for procedures that have separate statutory procedures, for example admission and exclusions can be found elsewhere.

If you think that we have not taken action over a significant problem or we have made the wrong decision and you now wish to make a complaint the procedure is as follows.

Purposes

To ensure that we have clear guidelines in the process of handling complaints.

Guidelines

In line with DfE recommendations, our complaints procedure consists of two stages. We would prefer it if we are able to reach an informal resolution before a formal complaint is made, where appropriate. If you wish to raise a formal complaint, we will not attempt to prevent this by insisting on informal resolution first.

Stage 1 – informal resolution

- Take up the problem in the first instance with the class teacher
- If a satisfactory solution is not reached then make an appointment with the Deputy Head or relevant Middle Leader.
- If a satisfactory solution is still not reached then make an appointment with the Headteacher
- If a satisfactory solution is not reached you will need to consider whether to make a formal complaint in writing to the Headteacher. Use Complaint Form A, which is available via the school office.
- If the complaint is about the Headteacher or a member of the Governing Body, use Complaint Form B and send this in to the Clerk to the Governors via the school office.
- The complaint will be investigated and responded to within 15 school days

Stage 2 – appeal

- If the problem is still not resolved then a formal complaint in writing can be made to the Chair of the Governing Body. Use Complaint Form B and send this to the Clerk to the Governors via the school office. This will be considered by either the Chair of Governors or a committee of the Governing Body. The complaint will be investigated and responded to within 20 school days



- If you consider that the problem has not been resolved by the Governing Body, or if you believe that the Governing Body is acting “unreasonably” or is failing to carry out its statutory duties properly, you have the right to make a complaint to the Secretary of State for Education at the Department for Education (DfE), using their online form.

Types of complaints:

Headteacher or Governing Body

These will be dealt with by a member of the *Governing Body* at Stage 1 of the complaints process, then by a committee of members of the governing board at Stage 2. Any complaints against the entire Governing Body, or that involve the Chair and Vice Chair, will also be sent to the clerk, who will determine the best course of action depending on the nature of the complaint.

Curriculum

Complaints about the content of the curriculum should be sent to the DfE. If the complaint is regarding the delivery of the curriculum, we will resolve this through this complaints procedure. You can withdraw your child from any aspects of RE – if you are not satisfied with the handling of a request to withdraw their child from RE, please follow the school’s complaints procedure.

Collective worship

Complaints should be directed to the Local Authority. Complaints should be directed to the LA or the local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

Parental Responsibility

Complaints about conflict between estranged parents over the application of parental responsibility should be directed to the Head Teacher.

Duplicate complaints

There may be some cases where at the end of the complaints procedure, the school receives a duplicate complaint from a complainants spouse, partner, grandparent or child. Where the complaint is about the same subject, the new complainant will be informed that the school has already considered that complaint and that the local process has been completed. The new complainant will be advised to contact the DfE if they are dissatisfied with the school’s handling of the original complaint. The school will take care not to overlook any new aspects to the complaint that may not have been previously considered. Any new elements of a complaint will be investigated and dealt with in line with the full complaints procedure.

Managing serial or persistent complaints

This applies to someone who consistently makes the same complaint or who continuously asks the school to reconsider our position. If someone attempts to re-open an issue which has previously fully completed the complaints procedure, the Chair of Governors will inform you in writing that the matter is now closed and that we will no longer respond. The school will not take the decision to stop responding to an individual lightly. We will ensure that:

- We have previously taken every reasonable step to address the problem.
- We have provided you with a statement of our position.

Handling complaints fairly

The school will deal with all concerns and complaints with respect for confidentiality

You will be treated fairly and offered a chance to state your case at each stage of the procedure. If you believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings, and you wish to request an independent

complaints committee, please provide the school with evidence of bias in support of your request. If the appearance of bias is sufficient to taint the decision reached, we will grant such requests.

All meetings and reviews will be fair – persons who have a conflict of interest will not take part in the complaints process.

We aim to consider and resolve all complaints as quickly, and efficiently, as possible. We will keep you informed of timescales expected for responses at each stage of the process. We will keep records of the progress of the complaint, and the final outcome.

During the Complaints procedure, we ask that you:

- co-operate with us in seeking a solution to the complaint;
- express the complaint in full as early as possible;
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint;
- ask for assistance as needed;
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect. We reserve the right to terminate the meeting if this is not adhered to.

If the school finds it difficult to deal with an individual due to unreasonable behaviour, then the complaint will be directed to the Local Authority. If we have had to make a decision to enforce a bar on an individual complainant due to poor behaviour, you will be notified in writing, explaining how long the bar will be in place and when the decision will be reviewed.

Mediation

Mediation can be useful in helping us to reach an agreement and move forward; however, there may be occasions where this is not an appropriate course of action. Mediation will not be used as a substitute for an investigation during the formal stages of a complaints procedure. If neither you or the school considers that mediation will serve any practical purpose at this point, you have the right to move on to the next investigative stage of the complaints procedure.

Complaint campaigns

If the school becomes the focus of a campaign and, therefore, receive large volumes of complaints – (these can be based on the same subject or come from complainants that are not connected to the school). Our procedure for such complaints may include sending a single response to all complainants, or publishing a single response on the school's website.

Legal representation

Where a complaint progresses to a committee of members of the school governors, it is recommended that neither you nor we bring legal representation. These committees are not a form of legal proceedings and the aim of the governors committee will be reconciliation and to put things right if they have gone wrong. We do, however, recognise that there will be occasions where legal representation may be appropriate.

Complying with the GDPR

Before disclosing information regarding a complaint to a third party, we will obtain written consent from you. Notes of meetings and telephone calls will be kept securely, where possible.

Using recording devices

Conversations or meetings will only be recorded (using audio or video equipment) as part of a reasonable adjustment, all parties will be aware that this is happening, and copies will be given to both you and the school.

The DfE may accept independently notarised transcriptions of recordings and may ask for the written consent of all recorded parties.

Retaining records

See GDPR Policy

Transferring data

When a pupil changes school, their educational record will be transferred to the new school. Records of complaints will be kept separately to pupil records, while a complaint is ongoing, so that access to them can be maintained. Such records will only transfer to the new school if there are any safeguarding aspects. Otherwise, such records will be dealt with as in our Record Retention policy

Communicating the outcome

We will inform you of the conclusion and reasons for any decisions in writing and any further rights of appeal. Copies of minutes will be issued to you.

When responding to a complaint, we will advise you of any escalation options at each stage of the procedure.

Bibliography

DfE 'Best practice guidance for school complaints procedures 2019'

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the School Improvement Committee and as a Statutory Policy will be ratified by the Full Governing Body.

Complaint Form A

If you have tried to sort out your complaint with the class teacher, the Deputy Head and the Headteacher, and have been unsuccessful and you wish to take the matter further, please complete this form and send it to the Headteacher. If you prefer, you may make your complaint in person, by telephone or in writing.

Name _____

Address _____

Tel No (H) _____

Tel No (W) _____

Name of Child _____ Class _____

What is your complaint about? What would you like the Headteacher to do about your complaint?

_____ (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Signed _____ Date _____

Complaint Form B

If you have tried to sort out your complaint with the Headteacher using Complaint Form A, and have been unsuccessful and you wish to take the matter further, please complete this form and send it to the Chair of the Governing Body.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher or a member of the Governing Body, use this form and send this in to the Clerk to the Governors via the school office.

If you prefer, you may make your complaint in person, by telephone or in writing.

Name _____

Address _____

Tel No (H) _____

Tel No (W) _____

Name of Child _____ Class _____

What is your complaint about? What would you like the Governing Body to do about your complaint?

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Signed _____ Date _____