

## 1. Introduction

1.1 Governing Bodies of maintained schools are responsible for establishing procedures for dealing with complaints relating to the school. Governing Bodies are required by law to adopt and publicise a complaints procedure

## 2. Aims

2.1 The aims of these guidelines are:

- to ensure that all complaints are considered fully, fairly, carefully and confidentially.
- that complaints are resolved to the satisfaction of complainants or that a clear decision is issued such as will enable the complainant, the Headteacher and the Governing Body to consider, how, if at all the matter should be dealt with.

## 3. Responsibility of the School

3.1 The Articles of Government for all County Schools state that 'the conduct of the school shall be under the discretion of the Governing Body' and that 'the Headteacher is responsible for the internal organisation and management of the school'. Therefore, the Headteacher has the overall responsibility for considering complaints in the first instance and, if appropriate, referring complainants to the appropriate staff to deal with them.

3.2 The Governing Body may ultimately be called upon to consider, resolve, or adjudicate, if the matter is referred to them either by the Headteacher or by the complainant but the importance is attached to the informal resolution of complaints wherever possible.

## 4. Definition of a Complaint

4.1 A complaint may be defined as an expression of significant dissatisfaction, by a person or persons with a legitimate interest in the school but not employed at the school or on the governing body except where he/she is a parent governor, about the conduct, actions or omissions of members of teaching or non-teaching staff employed at the school, or about the standard of teaching of members of the teaching staff.

4.2 Sometimes anonymous complaints may be made and such complaints must be left to the Head Teacher's discretion to decide whether the gravity of such a complaint warrants any further action.

4.3 There are certain types of complaints, which should be dealt with under these types of procedure. These are complaints about the curriculum and collective worship under Section 23 of the Education Reform Act and complaints which have child protection implication. There are separate guidelines for those.

## 5. Informal Stage

5.1. Complaints need to be dealt with promptly, thoroughly and on an informal basis.

5.2. There needs to be a degree of discretion in dealing with complaints. Day to day problems and concerns should be dealt with as they arise, as normally happens in schools. Further steps only need to be taken where the complainant remains dissatisfied.

5.3. There is a clear framework within which complaints may be resolved. The following structure, where appropriate, may be used to resolve the situation with problems unresolved at one level being referred to the next.

The Class Teacher

Phase Leader

The Assistant Headteacher/ Lead teachers

Deputy Head

Head Teacher

5.4. It is important that the teachers to whom the Head teacher has referred the complaint feed back to the Head teacher the outcome of any discussion with the complainant and outstanding unresolved issues. Teachers receiving a complaint and dealing with it in the first instance will need to notify the headteacher of the complaint and its outcome. The parent discussion form can be used as a record of any discussion with parents.

5.5. The Head Teacher may decide to deal with a matter personally in some circumstances.

5.6. In the case of non teaching staff, the Headteacher should determine to whom the complainant should be referred.

5.7. If the issue remains unresolved through the process of discussions within the staff complaints structure and the matter is now subject of a discussion by the Headteacher with the complainant, the Headteacher may wish to seek the advice of Local Authority Officers.

5.8. If all the informal channels are exhausted and the issue remains unresolved then the complainant should be advised of the formal channels open to him/her.

5.9. Headteachers are advised to use their best professional judgement in sharing information with staff. If a serious complaint is made about a member of teaching or non-teaching staff, they have the right to be informed. In some cases, this may lead to a disciplinary procedure.

## 6. Complaints made to the Governing Body

6.1. If informal attempts to settle the complaint have failed to satisfy, the complainant should set out the complaint fully in writing and submit this to the Chair of the Governing Body. Where it is not practicable for the complainant to submit a complaint in writing, then this should be made verbally in the first instance. Where appropriate, arrangements for interpreting should be made.

6.2. The written complaint will be immediately acknowledged by the Clerk to Governors or directly by the Chair of the Governing Body or in his/her absence by the Vice Chair and a copy of the complaints procedure sent to the complainant.

6.3 The Governing Body will arrange for the complaint to be investigated by a panel of three Governors who should have had no involvement in the matter at an earlier stage. This panel must be set up at a properly convened meeting of the full governing body (preferably annual governor' meeting as a complaints panel). An Appeals Panel of three members should also be set up at the same time so that all Governors know who is to be involved at what stage. The members of the Appeals Panel can also ensure that they keep well away from the proceedings of the First Panel, where possible, reflects a cross-section of governors who have no direct interest or involvement in the case.

6.4. The Governors First Panel will be provided with copies of the formal written complaint and any other documentation.

6.5. The Panel will arrange to interview separately, and, if appropriate, on more than one occasion, as many parties as may be involved in the complaint as they feel necessary. The Panel may request the attendance of a representative of the LEA to act in an advisory capacity.

6.6. All parties involved in interviews in connection with the complaint may be accompanied, if desired, by a friend, representative and/or interpreter.

6.7. At least 10 working days notice should be given of interviews and where possible all interviews should be conducted on the same day.

6.8. The complaint will be considered as soon as it is reasonably practicable. When the complaint has been fully investigated and considered, the Panel will notify the complainant of the outcome in writing within 5 working days giving an explanation of the conclusion, the reason for it, and any action taken or proposed to be taken, including details of any request made to those complained against to take particular actions in respect of the complaint.

6.9. The matter will be reported to the full Governing Body the next meeting.



## Complaints Policy

6.10. If the complainant is not satisfied by the outcome of the Governing Body Panel investigation, then they have the right of appeal to the Governing Body Appeals Panel. The intention to appeal should be made, in writing, to the Governing Body Appeals Panel within ten days of receiving the decision of the Governing Body Complaints Panel.

Policy agreed by Governors:  
Date of next review:



# Complaints Policy

## Downe Manor Primary School Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it to the head teacher/Clerk to Governing Body, who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name .....

Relationship with school [eg parent of a pupil on the school's roll] .....

Pupil's name [if relevant to your complaint] .....

Your Address:

Daytime telephone number .....

Evening telephone number .....

Please give concise details of your complaint, [including dates, names of witnesses etc .....] to allow the matter to be fully investigated:

You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional paperwork, if you wish

Number of additional pages attached =

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? [ie who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome]

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Signature:

Date:

School use:

Date Form received:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

Complaint referred to:

Date:



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