

Olveston CEVC Primary School **Concerns and Complaints Policy**

What do we mean by complaint?

If you feel there has been a failure to deliver the service you expect, you are entitled to complain. The governors and staff encourage you to discuss any anxieties or concerns that you may have, related to our school, with the Head or class teachers. Often concerns may arise simply from misinformation or misunderstanding and we would prefer you to talk to us directly so that we can iron out any problems before they expand unnecessarily.

Who do I complain to?

In the first instance you should direct your complaint towards the school. The large majority of school-related concerns and complaints are dealt with in this way. Few people want a long drawn out process, so the aim is to ensure that complaints are addressed promptly and resolved informally wherever possible.

Scope & exceptions

All matters relating to the actions of staff and application of school procedures where they affect the individual pupils concerned, except matters (relating to the curriculum, exclusion, admissions etc.) which are subject to separate procedures.

If the complaint involves an allegation of a potentially serious criminal nature, then the Headteacher will inform the Schools Section at South Gloucestershire, Bowling Hill.

However, if a matter cannot be resolved informally then we have a complaints procedure to deal with it fairly and effectively in a formal manner.

Complaints procedure

All complaints will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

Stage 1: Informal concerns and complaints -

Ask for an appointment with your child's class teacher who will usually be able to sort out the problem. You will receive an appointment as soon as possible but within 5 working days.

Stage 2: Informal -

Arrange to speak with the Headteacher, if speaking to the class teacher has not resolved the matter.

At this stage it may be that your complaint falls into a category for which there are specific and set procedures that cannot be taken by the school or governors. These categories are listed below but the Headteacher will know if your complaint falls within these categories and pass it on to South Gloucestershire Education Service.

If your complaint does not fall within these categories but cannot be resolved informally by the Headteacher proceed to:

Stage 3: Formal Complaint -

- a. Write a letter to the Chair of Governors via the school office (marked confidential) describing your complaint and the steps that you have already taken to resolve it. At this stage it is important that you have already taken stage 2. This letter will be acknowledged within two working days.
- b. The Chair of Governors refers the letter to the Governors' complaints panel to investigate. This panel will consist of three governors who have no involvement in the complaint. The complaints panel will aim to sit within 14 days of receiving your complaint.
- c. The Complaints Panel prepares a written summary that includes an outline of the complaints made, action taken to investigate the complaint and the recommended actions. The full governing body, at its next meeting, considers the report and determines whether it endorses the recommended actions. The Chair of Governors will then write to you informing you of the action that is to be taken. You will receive this letter within 5 working days of the meeting of the full governing body.

Categories of complaint for which there are specific and set procedures that will be dealt with by the Education Service (South Gloucestershire Education Service, Bowling Hill, Chipping Sodbury, Bristol. BS37 6JX) are:

- Complaints about the curriculum, under section 23 of the Education Reform Act 1988, as consolidated in the 1996 Education Act;
- Complaints about admission to school (unless the Governing Body is the Admission Authority, ie. Voluntary Aided and Special Agreement Schools);
- Complaints about failure to assess a child's special educational needs;
- The exclusion of pupils from school
- Child protection.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor this policy. Informal concerns or complaints are logged by the Headteacher and discussed with the Chair of Governors on a termly basis.

The number and nature of formal complaints are reported to the Governing Body by the Chair of Governors on a termly basis.

General Principles

If at any stage in the investigation it becomes apparent that financial compensation is being sought; the investigation will be suspended while advice is sought from the LEA's Risk and Insurance Manager.

All complaints, whether formal or informal, will be recorded, and notes kept of any investigations, together with actions agreed on. These notes will be kept for a period of six years. **It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all times.**

An anonymous complaint will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances.

To allow for a proper investigation, complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. Any matter raised more than 3 months after the event being complained of will not be considered, save in exceptional circumstances.

Complainants have a further right of appeal to the LA against the Governing Body. If an amicable solution cannot be arrived at with the governing body an investigation will need to take place by the LA.

Complainants have a further right of appeal to the Secretary of State that the LA has acted unreasonably.

The test of adjudication will be whether the issue has been taken seriously, properly investigated, and appropriate steps taken to resolve it. Please note, the LA can only act in this way if the complainant refers the matter to the LA after the internal mechanisms of the school are fully exhausted.

This policy shall be reviewed at two yearly intervals or sooner as the need arises.

Review Date: May 2012

Adopted by Governors: May 2010

Signature of Chair of Governors.....

Date