

# Stroud Valley Community Primary School

## Complaints Policy



### Introduction

We believe that our school provides a good education for all our children; an important factor of our success is the positive relationship we have with parents. There is considerable evidence that demonstrates parental commitment to a child's education impacts on both attainment and well-being. It is always our intention to educate in partnership with parents. We welcome discussions with parents about their child's education and their views about school development.

This policy is intended to outline our procedures should a parent be dissatisfied with the school's attempt to resolve a concern. A concern may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'

Complaints to us are taken seriously. A complaint may be seen as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made about actions taken or a lack of action' The school will act politely and empathetically throughout the process and will not be dismissive of any concerns brought to us.

The responsibility for dealing with a complaint lies with the school. Local Authority officers will re-direct the concerned parent / complainant to the school for internal investigation.

This policy has been written consulting the Best Practice Advice for School Complaint procedures 2016 (DFE) and therefore ensures the obligations and duties in relation to Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 are adhered to. The appendix to this document clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of all that may become involved in a complaint and will be referred to when required.

### Our Procedures

#### Informal Stage: Concerns

If a parent has a concern regarding their child's education the first school person to arrange a meeting with is the class teacher. To arrange such a meeting, the parent should call the school office and the appropriate member of staff will call back to arrange a time to meet. Most matters can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is making good progress, is safe and happy. It is important that we know of parental worries so that action can be taken promptly before the problem seriously affects the child's well-being.

During this meeting the class teacher will listen carefully in order to:

- gather all the factual information and ask questions to ensure the nature of the concern is fully understood.
- try to understand the outcome the parent would like and manage expectations by explaining what the school is able to do practically

If a parent is not satisfied with the outcome of this meeting the next step is to arrange a meeting with a member of the senior leadership team. Again, this is done through contacting the school office as above. This person will investigate the concern with an unbiased view point and gather information from all parties involved.

During the meeting information will be recorded on the school's concerns form

The school complies with the Equality Act 2010 and although written communication in common practice alternative methods will be engaged if a disability or learning difficulty requires an alternative communication style.

Following the completion of the informal stage, the school will provide the complainant with a short report, containing a summary of the concern and whether that concern has been resolved.

## **Formal Stage: Complaints**

### **Stage 1**

If a parent's concern is not resolved at the informal stages the complaint must be put in writing and passed to the Headteacher (or to the Chair of Governors, if the complaint is about the Headteacher.) The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will make contact within 5 working days to discuss how the complaint will be investigated further. The school has a complaint form that will be provided on request. At this point the Chair of Governors will be informed, and made aware of the factual nature, of the complaint. This allows the Governing Body to monitor complaints made to the school.

The investigation will be continued with the aim of resolving the complaint to everyone's satisfaction.

### **Stage 2**

If the complaint cannot be resolved with the headteacher, the second stage is to move the complaint to the Chair of Governors who will conduct his / her own investigation into the complaint.

### **Stage 3**

If the complainant believes that the school has followed the complaints procedure correctly they can request that the governing body conducts a review into the process followed by the school in handling the complaint.

In most cases this will be through an investigation by a panel of three governors allocated for the purpose. These individuals will have no previous knowledge of the complaint and will therefore conduct their investigation, again from an unbiased viewpoint. However the complainant does have the right to request an independent panel hear the complaint which the governing body will consider; ultimately this decision lies with the governing body.

Our aim is that this will take place within 10 school days upon receipt of request. The investigation will focus on the process the school has undertaken to resolve the complaint as well as the complaint itself. All evidence from the complainant and the school will be considered and the panel will sympathetically consider further oral representations.

Following an investigation in the formal stage, the complainant will receive, in writing, a report of the investigation which will include:

- a summary of the process undertaken so far.
- a statement of the complaint/concern
- a summary of the findings linked to relevant evidence
- any recommendations for future action.

After this final investigative stage a member of the full Governing Body will explain its findings to the complainant. This is the final stage as far as the school's involvement in investigating a complaint goes.

### **Recording at all Stages**

Notes of meeting and telephone calls will be kept for evidence at a later stage of the complaints procedure or if at a later stage a disagreement over what was said arises. These will be shared with the complainant at all stages and agreed that the content accurately conveys the discussion.

### **The Local Authority Role**

A complainant has no statutory right of appeal to the LA in relation to a non-statutory complaint.

### **The Secretary of State for Education**

A complainant has the right to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education who will investigate complaints where a governing body has acted 'unreasonably' or illegally in coming to their decision.

### **OFSTED**

OFSTED has the powers to investigate complaints from parents about schools. Examples of complaints include:

- the school not providing a good enough education
- the children not achieving as much as they should
- children's needs not being met
- the school not using its resources efficiently.

OFSTED will not normally consider a complaint if the complainant has not firstly followed the schools complaint procedure and will not normally investigate cases to do with individual children.

### **Review**

The process of listening to and resolving complaints can contribute to school improvement. Monitoring complaints can be a useful way to identify underlying issues that need to be addressed.

After a complaint the governing body will use the experience to consider the effectiveness of this policy.

It is the responsibility of the governing body to monitor this policy and any complaints made to the school. This policy has been written using the *GCC* guidance for Handling Complaints in Schools 2011.

### **Policy Review**

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Date Policy Ratified by Governors	16 April 2016
Committee Responsible	Finance, Staffing and General Purposes
Date for next review	Term 5 2017

