

# QUEENS INCLOSURE SCHOOL

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

### 1. AIM OF THE POLICY

This document sets out the policy of Queen's Inclosure School on complaints and the action to be taken by staff and Governors on receipt of a complaint. For the purpose of this policy a complaint is defined as "any expression of dissatisfaction that needs a response". If a person contacting the school believes that they have a complaint then it must be treated as such.

### 2 POLICY

Queen's Inclosure School believes that complaints are important for the following reasons:

- They provide feedback from the school community
- They provide an opportunity for the school to show how important relationships are to us
- They help to ensure that we listen to parents
- They enable the school to learn from its mistakes
- They form part of our culture of continuous improvement

Formal complaints should be made to the school and recorded on a complaint form

Remedies to complaints could include:

- An apology
- An explanation
- An assurance that the same thing will not happen again
- Action that will be taken to put things right.

### 3 PROCEDURE

#### 3.1 GENERAL COMPLAINTS

##### **Informal Stage (step 1)**

Initially complainants should approach the person responsible for the area of their complaint and where possible should be dealt with at this stage. This includes any member of staff.

##### **Formal Stage (step 2)**

If as a result, due to non-satisfaction via the informal route, a formal complaint is received the complainant will be told that the matter will be investigated and a response will be made within 5 working days. The member of staff will refer the complaint to the Headteacher who will contact the complainant and seek their preferred method of review- telephone, letter, or personal meeting. The Headteacher collects the evidence, makes any additional enquiries as necessary and responds to the complainant within 5 working days. The Headteacher in the letter of response asks the complainant if (s)he is satisfied with the response and if not then they should write to the Clerk to the Governing Body setting out their continuing reasons for their dissatisfaction and wish to move to stage 3. The response letter must aim to answer all the points of concern, be factually correct, avoid jargon and be signed by the Headteacher.

During investigating the complaint the Headteacher may involve the Chair of Governors either to assist in the investigation or in an advisory capacity.

### **Formal Stage (step 3)**

If not resolved by stage 2 the complaint will then be reviewed formally through an impartial panel of three Governors.

The panel will collect the evidence, makes any additional enquiries as necessary and arrange a review hearing to the complainant no later than 20 working days after receipt of the stage 3 letter

There is no further review procedure within the school for complaints after this stage.

### **3.2 COMPLAINTS ABOUT TEACHERS AND OTHER STAFF**

If the complaint is about an individual teacher or other member of staff then the complaint should be made directly to the Headteacher. The process is then the same as for general complaints.

### **3.3 COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE HEADTEACHER**

If the complaint is about the Headteacher then it should be made to the Clerk of the Governing Body and will be dealt with by the Chair of the Governing Body. The process is then the same as for general complaints at the Stage of the involvement of the Chair.

### **3.4 COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE GOVERNING BODY**

If the complaint is about the Governing Body then it should be made to the Local Education Authority. The Education Authority's Complaints Procedure will be the enforcing Policy at this stage.

### **3.5 COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND RELATED MATTERS**

Under The Education (School Government) Terms of Reference Regulations (2000), the governing body is responsible for maintaining, reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the school's curriculum policy. The school's policy will include the principles underlying the curriculum and should reflect the school's commitment to developing all aspects of their pupils' lives. It will also include statements about:

- Sex education (as well as a separate policy on sex education)
- Religious education, including additional regulations for aided schools with a religious character
- The circumstances under which the national curriculum can vary
- Any other general principles about learning and how the school plans to meet their pupils' individual needs.

The complaint process is then the same as for general complaints.

### **3.6 ALL COMPLAINTS**

The investigator may want to telephone the complainant with the response, or meet them in person. However this must always be followed by a written confirmation of the outcome of the investigation.

The complainant must receive a response within the stated time frame or else receive a letter stating why this will not be possible and setting a new time-scale for a response. The letter stating the outcome of the complaint must inform the complainant of their right to seek a review of the response and set out the procedure for doing so.

### **3.7 PROCEDURE FOR THE PANEL OF GOVERNORS**

The Governing Body, through the Clerk, convenes a Complaints Panel within 20 working days of the review being requested.

Membership of the Panel will be 3 Governors, one of which must be a Parent Governor. A Staff Governor may not be a member of the Panel. The Clerk to the Governing Body will minute any meetings of the Panel.

Governors collect relevant evidence prior to the meeting and make it available to all parties at the meeting.

At the meeting the complainant presents his/her case in writing followed by questions from the Panel to the complainant. The Headteacher may then present his/her case and questions can be answered. There must be an opportunity for the complainant to question the Panel on evidence collection and procedure.

At the end of the meeting the complainant is informed that the Panel will consider the evidence and make their decision in private and communicate it in writing within 5 days of the meeting.

A Letter from the Clerk informs both parties of the outcomes of the Complaints Panel and actions it intends to take and the reasons for this. If the complainant wishes to appeal the decision they can be directed to the Customer Relations and Complaints Adviser at the LEA for advice on how to proceed.

### **3.8 THE LEA**

If a parent is not satisfied with the decision of the governors' complaints panel they may appeal to the LEA. The letter of complaint should include copies of information submitted to the governors' complaints panel and the panel's decision letter and should explain the reason for appealing to the LEA. This should be sent to:

Assistant County Education Officer  
Standards and Improvement Branch  
County Education Office  
The Castle, Winchester  
SO23 8UG

The LEA will acknowledge the request within five days and arrange for a panel of elected Members of the Schools' Monitoring Panel to consider written submissions within 20 days of the date of request. Members of the panel will have had no recent involvement or connection with the school. The LEA panel may request relevant information from the education department. Parents will also have the opportunity to submit additional information in support of their complaint. The LEA will inform parents of its decision in writing within 7 days of the panel meeting.

### **3.9 GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR DEALING WITH THE INITIAL CONTACT /ENQUIRY PRIOR TO MAKING A FORMAL COMPLAINT.**

- Give your name
- Let the person decide if they wish to pursue their "complaint" as a complaint.
- Find out straight away what the complainant wants you to do about the problem.
- Tell the person what will happen next and the stages of the procedure.
- Give them a copy of the Complaints Procedure and Complaints Form.
- Act quickly once the complaint has been made.
- Ensure that you have the complainants details such as name, address and relevant dates
- Establish the facts about the complaint and make notes.
- Accept complaints even if the issue is not your responsibility

- Don't avoid the complaint by passing it to another member of staff.
- Don't deter people from making a complaint.
- Don't ask them to complain in writing, in person or to come back later.
- Stay calm even if the person gets angry
- Don't get angry or get into a blame conversation
- Don't consider the complaint as a personal criticism
- Don't accept abuse from a complainant such as swearing.
- Be sympathetic.
- Take the person seriously
- Be honest
- Don't undermine the school or colleagues
- Let the person have their say.
- Don't argue with the complainant.
- Don't use jargon when writing back to the complainant

### **Review History**

Reviewed and approved by the Full Governing Body on 14.12.2009

Queens Inclosure Primary School  
Complaint Form  
**CONFIDENTIAL**

Your name:  
Relationship with the school (eg parent of a pupil on the school roll):  
Pupils name (if relevant to your complaint):  
Your address:

Telephone number: Daytime: Evening:

Please give concise details of your complaint (including dates, names of any witnesses etc) to allow the matter to be 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)

What was the outcome/what action has been taken?

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

Signature:

Date:

**School use only**

Form received by:  
Date:

Complaint referred to:  
Date:

Action to be taken:

Date acknowledgement and  
plan of action sent: