



## **The John Fisher School**

### **Complaints Policy**

**Responsible:** Governors' SLAW Committee

**Next Review Date:** January 2019

*Please note: The Governors of The John Fisher School have previously adopted the London Borough of Sutton's Children & Young People's Services 'Policy for Dealing with Complaints 2012'. Following the amalgamation of Sutton & Merton services the policy no longer exists. On the advice of Governor Services, 'Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures' January 2016 replaces the Department for Education (DfE) School Complaints Toolkit, August 2014 and is therefore adopted as the basis for the complaints processes and procedures.*

## **1. Introduction**

It is the aim of The John Fisher School to work closely with all parents in a partnership which benefits all pupils and ensures that their school experience is happy and secure. The school's Home-School Agreement clearly states expectations of pupils, staff and parents.

When dealing with parental complaints the school adheres to Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures January 2016.

## **2. Aims**

- ☐ To reaffirm the partnership between parents, staff and governors as they work together for the good of the pupils in the school.
- ☐ To ensure that it is easy for parents to inform the staff and governors of any concerns they may have and that they will respond quickly and positively to complaints from parents.

## **3. What is a complaint?**

From time to time parents express concerns and these are dealt with as a matter of routine through discussion with teachers or another member of staff. Occasionally, a parental concern may become more serious and develop into a complaint and be a clear statement of dissatisfaction. This may relate to a variety of issues.

Anonymous complaints are discouraged as they are difficult to deal with in a way that will be useful to all parties.

## **4. Arrangements for managing complaints**

- ☐ A copy of this policy is available on the school website: <http://www.johnfisherschool.org/>
- ☐ Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures January 2016 can be downloaded at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/489056/Best\\_Practice\\_Advice\\_for\\_School\\_Complaints\\_2016.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/489056/Best_Practice_Advice_for_School_Complaints_2016.pdf)
- ☐ The Headteacher, or other delegated Senior Leader, will usually respond to a verbal or written complaint within 24 hours of receiving it, but may well need longer to fully investigate the circumstances leading to the complaint. Parents will be kept informed of time scales involved. Timescales need to be flexible to meet particular circumstances however a response will normally be provided within 5 school days.
- ☐ Procedures will then be followed in accordance with Best Practice Advice for School Complaints – Appendix A.
- ☐ All complaints are handled in strict confidence and the school's attitude to a pupil would never be affected by a parental complaint.
- ☐ The school will ensure that all staff have opportunities to discuss, respond and understand the school's response to concerns and complaints made by parents.
- ☐ Any person complained against has equal rights with the person making the complaint.
- ☐ The school would not seek to directly involve pupils in a complaints procedure.

## **5. The role of the Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for the internal organisation and management of the school, and therefore has overall responsibility for considering complaints in the first instance or arranging, if appropriate, for a designated member of staff to deal with them. However, the Headteacher must be kept fully informed of the complaint and the way in which it is being addressed.

When deciding which course of action to take over a response to a complaint the Headteacher may wish to consult with the Chair of Governors, the complaints officer at the local authority (LA) or the LDBS or seek advice from the National Association of Headteachers (NAHT).

The Headteacher will keep a record of complaints received and outcomes.

## **6. The role of the Governing Body**

The Governing Body is responsible for the overall conduct of the school and must ensure that a complaints procedure is in place and reviewed regularly. The Headteacher will normally inform the Chair of the Governing Body of complaints received, unless he/she is going to form part of any committee to hear disciplinary or capability procedures in which case he/she must remain untainted.

If a Governor receives a complaint from a parent it will be referred to the Headteacher to investigate. If the Headteacher is the subject of the complaint then the Chair of the Governing Body will undertake the investigation.

The Governing Body will appoint a Complaints Committee of three Governors to consider any formal written complaint should it reach this stage. A pool of governors from which this committee can be formed will be agreed at the beginning of each school year.

Regard must be given to confidentiality throughout the process to ensure that governors do not become tainted and are therefore not able to serve on such a committee.

After a complaint has been dealt with it may be appropriate for the Headteacher or Chair of the Governing Body to make a brief report to the Governing Body without mentioning names and protecting confidentiality.

## **7. The role of the Local Authority**

The local authority will

- ☐ Provide guidance and advice to schools on good practice.
- ☐ Provide procedures for schools for parental complaints against the curriculum and matters relating to it.
  
- ☐ Provide advice to complainants on how to complain.