



## Complaints Policy

### Introduction

Parents/Carers want their children to be happy and successful at Pooles Park school, and the school community want the children attending to enjoy their time here and to do well.

We recognise that you as a parent/carer play an important part in making this happen. Therefore, we aim to provide as many opportunities to keep you informed and involved in your child's progress as we possibly can. Regular reports, open days and parents evenings all help; and questions, concerns and misunderstandings are usually dealt with quickly and helpfully.

Our school is linked to the wider community and local authority. We are all committed to achieving highly, not only in pupils' academic attainment, but also in the way members of the community deal with each other.

However, it is recognised that there are times when things go wrong, when concerns continue and differences of opinion develop. These can usually be resolved quickly by speaking to the right person at the school, where most concerns can be settled without too much trouble.

Whatever the issue, even where you are seriously concerned about your child's future at Pooles Park school, it's important to try to find a solution. Disruption to your child's education would be the most damaging result of all.

### The Policy

This document is in two parts.

**Part One** sets out the Governing Body's procedure by which parents/carers can make complaints to the school.

**Part Two** sets out the procedure for dealing with complaints about parental conduct.

This policy will apply except where there are already statutory complaints procedures for certain matters e.g. curriculum, special needs etc.

It is the governors' intention, in this document, to establish an efficient procedure for dealing with complaints from parents/carers or about parental conduct. The aim of this policy is that complaints will be kindly received, and will be dealt with speedily, confidentially, efficiently, fully and fairly.

Early intervention is the key to successful procedures. Parents/Carers should be encouraged to feel that their anxiety has been taken seriously and dealt with sensitively.

## PART ONE

Complaints may relate to any number of matters, but broadly will be in one of two categories:

1. **Broad Concerns** - Concerns voiced by many parents e.g. on discipline or bullying or homework, which indicate something that needs a fresh look by the governors at their policies and procedures and
2. **Specific Concerns** - Those which apply to one individual child/event.

### How do I complain?

**Stage One:** Before making a **complaint**, try to collect all the information relating to the incident or issue you are complaining about. You should then make an appointment to see your child's class teacher. The teacher will acknowledge the concern and deal with the matter within a working week.

**Stage Two:** If you are not happy after talking to the teacher you should put your complaint in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing and invite you into school to discuss the matter on conclusion of the investigation. You can take a friend or relative with you to this meeting. It may take time to investigate your **complaint** and you may have to wait for a response. However we will endeavour to address the issue raised within 10 working days. The Headteacher may refer these concerns on to the governing body.

**Stage Three:** After this, if you would still like to take the **complaint** further you can contact the Clerk to the Governors and then the Governing Body in writing. The school will be able to give you these details. The Governors will reply within 10 working days.

**Stage Four:** As this is a serious step to take, it is important that you have thought things through carefully, and that every possible attempt has been made to solve your concerns by other means. A committee of governors will be called together to hear your case, and all sides will be invited to submit a written statement. You will also be asked to attend a hearing to present your side of the story. The decision of the governing body's Complaints Committee will be sent to you in writing, and may include recommendations for action to help resolve matters.

**Stage Five:** If you are still unhappy you will be able to refer your complaint to the Governing Body's Appeal Committee.

## PART TWO

### PARENTAL CONDUCT

Pooles Park school is a place where all the adults, including parents and staff, are called upon to give a good example to the children, in the way in which they relate to children,

and to each other. Parents/Carers are asked **NOT** to speak to other people's children, about disciplinary matters. Parents/Carers are also requested to remember to give a good example in the way they speak to other adults.

The governors have stated that the staff working in the school has a right to work free from abuse, either verbal or otherwise. Rudeness to staff will not be tolerated. The governors will investigate reports of any such behaviour, and will take action if they deem it appropriate. This does not mean that parental complaints will not be dealt with, but it does mean that those complaints should be made in a civil manner.

### **How do I complain about parental conduct?**

Complaints may relate to any number of matters, but broadly will be in one of two categories:

1. **Broad Concerns** - Concerns voiced by other adults e.g speaking to children or adults in an inappropriate manner, physical or verbal abuse of a child or adult.
2. **Specific Concerns** - Those which apply to one individual event.

**Stage One:** Before making a **complaint**, try to collect all the information relating to the incident or issue you are complaining about. You should then make an appointment to see your Deputy Headteacher. The Deputy Headteacher will direct you to the appropriate adult in the school eg: Keystage co-ordinator, Senior midday meals supervisor with whom you can discuss your concern.

**Stage Two:** If you are not happy after talking to the designated adult you should put your complaint in writing to the Deputy Headteacher. The Deputy Headteacher will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing and will endeavour to address the issue raised within 10 working days. This could lead to a meeting with all named parties involved. You can take a friend or relative with you to this meeting. The Deputy Headteacher will inform you in writing with the outcome and provide recommendations for resolving the issue.

**Stage Three:** After this, if you would still like to take the **complaint** further you can contact the Headteacher in writing. The Headteacher will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and will investigate the whole matter whereupon you will be sent the outcome in writing.

### **General Notes**

The procedure is designed so that the complaint can be dealt with fairly, efficiently and economically. You may prejudice your case if you do not adhere to this procedure.

Early referrals to the governing body are not helpful, and individual governors do not have the necessary authority to take direct action. Consequently a governor may not take action on a concern/complaint but must pass it on to the Head.

Governors have agreed not to raise individual complaints at a governor's meeting without prior warning because it is discourteous, and prevents a considered response. Importantly, it would disqualify all governors from sitting on the committee which would

hear the complaint at Stage Four. This is because there is a clear requirement on members of appeals committees not to be “tainted” with prior knowledge of an individual case.

The person you are complaining about will receive a copy of the complaint even if it is marked “private and confidential” to the head or chair. The governing body have a duty to do this because of their responsibilities as an employer.

A complaint against a member of staff may result in the head instigating a disciplinary procedure as set out by the LEA or other document. It is not acceptable for the member of staff concerned to be “interrogated” by the complainant during the investigation. The Headteacher is responsible for the conduct of staff. If the original investigation reveals misconduct, it will be dealt with by the Headteacher under disciplinary procedures. The purpose of this policy is NOT to provide an opportunity for a parent to reprimand a member of staff.

**Non Teaching Staff:**

Where the pattern of working time would make it difficult for a complaint to be made directly to the member of staff concerned, for example, to a lunch-time supervisor, the complaint should be made, in the first instance, to the headteacher, or deputy head, who will refer the concern to the member of staff. In such cases the headteacher, or deputy head may also reply to the complainant.

In investigating a complaint at stages two and three the headteacher (or deputy head) or the chair of governors may interview relevant members of staff to see what actions he/she undertook to resolve the problem in earlier stages. They may interview others as necessary and consider written submissions as appropriate. In both cases they will propose a resolution of the complaint in writing to the complainant.