

## **St Leonard's CE Primary School Complaints Policy**

### **1 Introduction**

St Leonard's CE Primary School aims to work in partnership with parents in the best interests of the children. Any complaint will be given careful consideration and will be dealt with fairly and honestly.

We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and aim to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding.

### **2.0 Actions before making any complaint**

This complaints procedure is not intended to replace the normal informal discussions that take place between parents/guardians, staff and the Head Teacher about problems and concerns as they arise. Most issues can and should be resolved through this dialogue. These concerns might include such matters as your child's work or progress, relations with staff, relations with other pupils including bullying, or your child's personal welfare.

The first point of contact regarding concerns should always be the class teacher. Appointments to see the class teacher are available after school and may be made via the school office.

When meeting with the teacher to raise your concerns, please be patient, the teacher may need time to perform an investigation or put corrective measures in place and then determine their effectiveness. This informal stage may require several discussions to reach a conclusion satisfactory to all parties. Desired actions for the school and parent/guardian, timescales, and the need for further meetings, if necessary, should be discussed.

If you feel that a concern has not been solved through discussions with the teacher, or that it is of a sufficiently serious nature, then an appointment to discuss it formally with the Head Teacher should be made. You should indicate that the appointment is regarding a complaint.

### **3.1 Referral of complaints**

The majority of formal complaints against the school(s) will fall within the remit of the Head or the Governing Body to consider. However, there are five categories of complaint which the Local Authority has responsibility for, not the Governing Body:

- Admission to the school
- Statutory Assessment of special educational needs
- Exclusion of pupils from the school
- Child protection related issues or allegations of child abuse
- Any complaint about the action of the Governing Body

In any of these five categories, your complaint must be sent directly to the Local Authority.

#### 4.1 General principles regarding any complaint

The following principles will apply to any complaint:

- The complaint will be handled with care and sensitivity.
- All stages of the complaints procedure will be investigatory rather than adversarial
- Confidentiality will be respected at all times
- Responses to any complaint will be prompt (timescale guidelines are detailed below)
- We will remain in communication with you during the investigation and you will be kept informed of timescales
- The handling of the complaint will be thorough and fair and address all the points at issue

Individual Governors cannot act unilaterally by investigating a complaint or making any prior judgement about it. The Governor can only refer the parent to the class teacher, the Head Teacher or the Chair of Governors as appropriate and in accordance with this policy

It is important that the steps are followed in the complaints procedure. The Local Authority is unable to deal with complaints under the remit of this procedure and if there is escalation to the Secretary of State before the formal school procedures have been exhausted it will result in you being referred back to the school's procedure.

#### 5.0 Timescale Guidelines

Where it is not possible to respond to a complaint immediately you will be informed in writing of the reason for the delay and given an anticipated response date.

#### 6.1 Complaints Procedure Stages

##### 6.2 Stage 1 (Informal) – Teacher

Your complaint should be directed to the class teacher unless they or the Head Teacher are the subject of the complaint.

##### 6.3 Stage 2 (Formal)

If your complaint has not been solved through informal discussion, or is considered to be a sufficiently serious nature, then it will be investigated through the formal stage of the policy (Stage 2). This will either involve:

- (a) Investigation by the Head Teacher (where the Head Teacher is not part of or subject of the complaint). The Head Teacher may delegate the investigation to another member of staff but not the decision or the action taken. **Or**
- (b) Investigation by Governors (where the Head Teacher is part or subject of the complaint). Where the complaint involves the Head Teacher then the complaint can be referred to the Chair of Governors who will make the decision whether it should be investigated by two governors at this stage. Where the complaint is about the Chair of Governors you should submit your complaint to the Clerk to the Governors.

You should set out your complaint in writing explaining:-

- a) The precise nature of the complaint;

b) What he/she considers could be done to resolve the matter.

When we receive your complaint a letter of acknowledgement will be sent to you within 5 school days. We will arrange to meet with you to explore your complaint and what can be done to resolve your issues. You can be accompanied by a friend at this meeting. Notes will be taken of our discussion and you will receive a copy of these.

If you require any specific assistance in putting your complaint in writing or when asked to attend any meeting then please inform us so appropriate support can be put in place.

If we are unable to resolve your complaint at an initial meeting with you then the School may carry out an investigation of your complaint.

Please note that it may be necessary to suspend the complaints procedure in respect of a complaint which indicates that there may be a need for a disciplinary investigation in respect of a member of staff or that child protection procedures need to be followed. Advice from the Local Authority will be sought. In such circumstances you will be notified that the complaints procedure has been suspended and the likely timescale for its reactivation.

On completion of this Stage 2 investigation, when all relevant persons have been given the opportunity to give their response, we will send you a formal written outcome.

#### **6.4 Stage 3 (Formal) – Appeal to Governors**

You should write to the Chair of Governors if you consider your complaint remains unresolved through the earlier stages. You should do so, stating the grounds for your appeal, within 10 school days of receiving the outcome of the investigation at Stage 2.

When a formal complaint is received by the Chair of Governors, a letter of acknowledgement will be sent to you within 5 school days to confirm the appeal process.

Two or three Governors will be identified to consider your appeal and make a decision about it on behalf of the Governing Body. The Governors appointed will have had no previous involvement in the complaint or will have no conflict of interest.

The primary purpose of the appeal is to understand your continuing concerns and to consider the investigative process carried out at Stage 2 of this policy. Consideration will be given to the rigor and fairness of the process i.e.:

- Were you given the time and opportunity to clarify your complaint and explain the outcome you were looking for?
- Was the complaints policy applied appropriately in relation to your specific complaint?
- Did relevant interviews take place of those individuals involved in events to ensure a thorough understanding of all relevant issues?
- Was there a review of relevant school procedures and correspondence?
- Are conclusions and recommendations reasonable and do they flow from the evidence or facts arising from the investigation?

The Governors will be determining one of the following outcomes:

1. Confirmation of the conclusions at Stage 2 on the basis of evidence indicating a full and fair investigation and outcome.
2. Identification of some procedural anomalies but confirmation that the overall conclusion was sound.
3. Identification of significant flaws in the investigation process which might lead to alternative conclusions and proposed remedies.

The appeal process is not a hearing where all parties are present. This process is normally a review by the nominated Governors of the written evidence from the previous stages. There will only be a reinvestigation when the Governors consider there are major flaws in the previous process necessitating this action.

The decision reached by the Governors will be notified in writing to you and other relevant parties. ***The timescale for the appeal process is normally two to three weeks from receipt of the appeal.***

#### **6.5 Stage 4 - Appeal to The Secretary Of State**

If you have followed our complaints policy but still consider your complaint has not been appropriately resolved then you are able to take your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education.

Any appeal to the Secretary of State for Education should be addressed to: The School

Complaints Unit (SCU)  
Department for Education  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Piccadilly Gate Manchester  
M1 2WD

The SCU will not consider an appeal unless the complaint has exhausted the local procedures. SCU will examine if the complaints policy and any other relevant policies were followed in accordance with the provisions set out. SCU also examines policies to determine if they adhere to education legislation. However, the department will not re-investigate the substance of the complaint. This remains the responsibility of the School.

If legislative or policy breaches are found, SCU will report them to us and to you and, where necessary, require remedial action to be taken.

#### **7.0 Monitoring and review**

The Governing Body will review this complaints policy on a regular basis. The Head Teacher will log all formal complaints received by the school and will record how they were resolved.

Governors will examine the complaints log on an annual basis and will consider the need for any changes to the procedure.

**St Leonard's C E Primary School  
Complaint Form**

**Personal Details**

<b>Your Name</b>	
<b>Pupil's Name (if relevant)</b>	
<b>Your Relationship to the Pupil (if Relevant)</b>	
<b>Your Address</b>	
<b>Daytime Contact Number</b>	
<b>Evening Contact Number</b>	

**Details of the Complaint**

**Please Provide details of your complaint:**

**What Action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint?**

**Resolution**

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

**Evidence**

**If you are attaching any supporting paperwork, please give details:**

<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

<b>Date Complaint form received</b>	
<b>Date Acknowledgement sent</b>	
<b>By Who</b>	
<b>Complaint referred to</b>	