

# HAYES MEADOW PRIMARY SCHOOL

Be the Best We Can Be



## Complaints Policy

Policy adopted on .....1.10.2020.....

Review Date .....1.10.2021.....

Signed: Headteacher .....Sarah Sivieri.....

Chair of Governors .....Margaret Wainwright.....

## **Complaints Policy**

In accordance with Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, all local authority (LA) maintained schools must have and make available a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides.

A 'concern' may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'. A complaint may be generally defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'. It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to invoke formal procedures. Hayes Meadow Primary School take informal concerns seriously and makes every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

There are occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. In those cases, the school's formal procedure will be invoked through the stages outlined within this policy.

We deal with all complaints in accordance with procedures set out by the LA

If it is felt that the Governors have failed to consider a formal complaint appropriately, all complainants have the right, as a last resort, to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education.

## **Aims and Objectives**

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and the resolved.

## **The Complaints Process**

If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, they should in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the child's progress.

Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Headteacher.

A formal complaint can be made to the Headteacher by telephone, letter or verbally. The complaint will be considered very seriously and investigated thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage.

Should a complainant have a complaint about the Headteacher, the way in which they have handled a complaint against a member of staff, or the outcome of a complaint, s/he can make a formal complaint to the Governing Body, as outlined below.

A formal complaint should be made to the Governing Body (see Form 1). This complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far. The complainant should send this written complaint to the Chair of Governors via the School Office. Complaints against the Chair of Governors or any individual governor should be made in writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body.

The Governing Body must consider all written complaints within three weeks of receipt. It will arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint and invite the person making it to attend the meeting, so that s/he can explain their complaint in more detail. The school gives the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting (see Form 2).

Membership of the Complaints Committee will include three or five governors. Members should be independent and impartial; the Headteacher should not be a member. No Governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or the circumstances surrounding it.

The aim of the investigation will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant.

An effective panel will acknowledge that the complainant may feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. Parents often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child. The Panel Chair will ensure that the proceedings are as welcome as possible.

The complainant must be given the opportunity to make representation and the school the right of reply.

After hearing all the evidence, the Governors consider their decision and inform the complainant about it in writing (see Form 3).

If the investigation upholds the complaint it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An apology;
- An explanation;
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- An assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- An undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.
- An admission that the school could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of guilt.

However, it has to be recognised the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the governors do not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that her/ his complaint has been taken seriously.

Complainants do not have a general right of appeal should they disagree with the governors' decision. They may, however, raise the matter with the secretary of State if they consider the complaint was not considered properly and reasonably. If the Governors have followed a proper

procedure and considered the complaint reasonable the Secretary of State will not reverse their decision.

### Unreasonable Complaints

If properly followed, our Complaints Procedure will limit the number of complaints that become protracted. However, there will be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedure having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied.

Please see Hayes Meadow Primary School Policy for Unreasonable Complaints to address ‘those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people’s complaints’.

### Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Headteacher logs all written complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis.

Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

### Complaints not in scope of this procedure

The complaints procedure will cover all complaints about any provision of facilities or services that the school provides with the exceptions listed below, for which there are separate (statutory) procedures.

Exceptions	Who to contact
Admissions to schools Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN) School re-organisation proposals Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Concerns should be raised direct with local authorities (LA). Complaints about admission appeals for maintained schools are dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman.
Exclusion of children from school	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions">www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions</a> .
Whistleblowing	Hayes Meadow Primary school has an internal whistleblowing procedure for their employees and voluntary staff. Other concerns can be raised direct with OFSTED by telephone on: 03001233155, via email at: <a href="mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk">whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk</a> or by writing to: WBHL, Ofsted Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD. The Department for Education is also a prescribed body for whistleblowing in education.
Staff grievances and discipline procedures	These matters will invoke the school’s internal

	grievance procedures. Complainants will not be informed of the outcome of any investigation.
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities.	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about the service. They should be contacted direct.

## COMPLAINTS FORM (1)

Please complete this form and return it to the school who will then forward it to the Chair of the Governing Body. Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

1. Name

2. Address

3. Tel No.

Home

Work

4. Name of Child:

5. Details of the Complaint:

(Please include the date or period of time to which your complaint relates and confirm whether you have already expressed your concerns informally, and to whom and when)

6. Do you have a suggestion for change?

Please attach copies of any more information you have to back up your complaint, such as letters or reports.

Signed:

Date:



# HAYES MEADOW PRIMARY SCHOOL

Spode Avenue, Handsacre, Rugeley, Staffs WS15 4EU

'Be the Best We Can Be'

Telephone: 01543 490616

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FORM 2

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

(COMPLAINT REFERENCE)

Thank you for your letter of (date), making a formal complaint against the school in relation to (reference above). I have asked the complaints committee of the Governing Body to investigate your complaint and a meeting has been arranged for (date, time and venue). You are invited to attend the meeting to present your case in person.

Please let me know if you do not wish to attend the meeting or if the date and time is convenient for you. Following the meeting a written report will be sent to you confirming the findings of the committee and, if applicable, the course of action to be taken.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors



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Form 3

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPLAINT REFERENCE

The complaints committee of the school's Governing Body considered your complaint at a meeting held on (date) and which you attended/ did not attend (delete).

I can now inform you that the committee's views on the complaint are as follows:

I trust that you feel that the meeting gave you the opportunity to express your views and that members of the committee gave full and fair consideration to your complaint.

Yours sincerely,

Chair of Governors