

Westfield Primary School

Complaints Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 We strive to provide a good education for all our children. The headteacher and staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents and carers. However, it is important that the school has procedures in place through which parents and carers can exercise their right to complain about aspects of the school's policy or practice, if they have concerns which have not been resolved through the normal channels of communication. This policy sets out the procedures which the school follows in such cases.
- 1.2 If any parents or carers are unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or have any concerns relating to the school, we encourage them to talk to the child's class teacher immediately. We always seek to resolve any concerns as quickly as possible, in the best interests of the child. In the vast majority of such cases, issues can be resolved to the satisfaction of parents and carers without recourse to formal procedures.
- 1.3 We deal with all formal complaints in accordance with procedures laid down by the Local Authority (LA). If the school itself, including the governing body, cannot resolve a complaint, those concerned can refer the matter to the LA.
- 1.4 All parents and carers have the right, as a last resort, to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education, if they still feel that their complaint has not been properly addressed.

2 Aims and objectives

- 2.1 Westfield 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. In all cases, we put the interests of the child above all else. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.
- 2.2 The aims of this policy are to:
 - assure all parents that we will consider all complaints seriously;
 - set out how we will manage the complaints process;
 - make clear the roles and responsibilities of staff in responding to any complaints;
 - provide information to parents and carers if they wish to make a complaint.

3 The complaints process

- 3.1 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. In our experience, most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before it seriously affects the child's progress.
- 3.2 Where parents or carers feel 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. The headteacher considers any such complaint very seriously, and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved by this stage. (This is stage 1 and is the informal stage in the procedure.)

- 3.3 Members of the governing body who are approached informally by a parent or carer with a complaint about the school will always refer the parent back to the headteacher or an appropriate member of the school staff. Only when such steps at stage 1 have been followed and the parent remains dissatisfied should the complaint be taken forward to the governing body. Should any parents or carers have a complaint about the headteacher, which cannot be resolved through discussion with him/her, then it may be appropriate to contact the governing body directly.
- 3.4 Only if an informal complaint at stage 1 fails to resolve the matter should a formal complaint be made to the governing body (stage 2). This must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint, and how the school has handled it so far. The parent should send this written complaint to the Chair of Governors.
- 3.5 The Chair of Governors or another nominated governor will investigate the issue to ensure that stage 1 of the process has been followed and that the school has responded properly to the complaint at the informal stage.
- 3.6 The governing body will consider all written complaints within three weeks of receipt. It will arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint, and will invite the person making it to attend the meeting, so that s/he can explain the complaint in more detail. The school gives the complainant at least five days' notice of the meeting, and the opportunity to submit further information in writing if they so wish.
- The parent or carer may take a friend, representative or interpreter with them to the meeting if they so wish.
- 3.7 After hearing the complaint and all the evidence, the governors' panel may ask questions to clarify any issues. They will also hear from the headteacher who will present the school's position and will question him/her about this. The panel will then consider their decision and inform the parent about it in writing. The governors do all they can at this stage (stage 2) to resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction.
- 3.8 If the complaint is not resolved, a parent may make representation to the LA (stage 3). Further information about how to do this is available from the school or from the LA. A further meeting is chaired by an independent person, who considers all the evidence and makes a further judgement in an attempt to resolve the complaint.
- 3.9 If any parent is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then s/he is entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education (stage 4).

4 Monitoring and review

- 4.1 The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The headteacher logs all complaints received by the school, and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis.
- 4.2 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 and carers, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.
- 4.3 This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if necessary.

Signed:

Date: