

THE FRIARY SCHOOL

Compliments, Comments and Complaints

Issue No: 3
Date: Autumn 08
Review 2012/13

This policy statement is designed to support School Aim number 5 and Objectives 18 and 19.

Principles

- The school recognises the importance of responding to comments, both positive and negative, which are received from parents and other members of the community.
- In particular we accept the need to attempt to resolve problems before they become formal complaints.
- If a complaint is received it must be treated respectfully.

1 Compliments, Comments and Concerns

The school would like to hear from parents and other members of the community if they:

- are happy with the service it provides and would like to compliment the staff and its pupils;
- have any suggestions about how the school can improve the quality of its provision;
- have a complaint or concern.

All complaints and suggestions will be taken seriously and given full and proper consideration.

2 Expressing Approval

When things go well, it is very helpful if parents express their approval. Maintenance of high levels of staff commitment, morale and motivation are essential to the provision of the best education for children. Positive feedback really helps.

To express approval parents and others can write, telephone, e-mail or speak personally to staff concerned or the headteacher. Their words are always appreciated.

3 Expressing Concerns

The Friary School is committed to providing a high quality service for its pupils. Sometimes things may seem to go wrong which may lead to concerns being expressed.

Any concerns should be raised with the member of staff concerned or the headteacher in the first instance. If the headteacher considers it appropriate another member of staff may be asked to respond because they have a particular responsibility or are familiar with the circumstances that have caused the concern. We hope that this would be sufficient to resolve the difficulty.

4 Making a Formal Complaint

If it has not been possible to resolve a difficulty **informally** then it may be appropriate to use the formal complaints procedure.

- **Step 1 – the headteacher**

Having discussed the concerns it may be necessary to inform the headteacher that a formal complaint will be made. This can be done by telephoning, writing a letter, completing the attached pro-forma (Appendix A), or arranging an appointment to meet the headteacher. A written response will be given, except where the matter can be resolved verbally and immediately to the satisfaction of the complainant.

- **Step 2 – the governing body**

If the response is felt to be unsatisfactory a formal complaint can be made to the governing body.

A letter (or the attached pro-forma) will need to be sent to the Chair of Governors including full details; for example, the date or period of time to which the complaint relates and confirmation whether the concerns have already been expressed – if so, to whom and when.

The Chair of Governors may elect to refer the matter to the Governors' Complaints Committee, particularly if the situation is a complex one – in which case parents will be notified to this effect.

In all cases, where a formal complaint has been investigated the complainant will be given a written response covering:

- the complaint
- the scope of the investigation
- the conclusion of the investigation
- any action which has resulted

The Governors may wish to offer the complainant the opportunity to discuss the response.

When considering the complaint the Chair of Governors may seek advice from officers of the Local Authority. However, the complainant should not contact the Authority or the Secretary of State direct until Step 2 is complete.

- **Step 3 – the Local Authority**

If the complainant thinks that the governors have failed to consider the complaint properly and reasonably, the matter can be raised with the Local Authority or the Secretary of State. **However, it is important to understand that this is not a general right of appeal for any parent who disagrees with the governors' decision.** If the governors have followed a proper procedure and considered the complaint reasonably, neither the Local Authority nor the Secretary of State can reverse their decision.

If the complainant wishes to raise the matter with the Local Authority a letter should be sent to:

Director of Children, Education and Lifelong Learning
Education Offices
Tipping Street
Stafford ST16 2DH

The letter must state:

- a) what the complaint to the governors was,
- b) what response they have made to it,
- c) why it is believed that the governors have not followed a proper procedure in considering the complaint, and/or,
- d) why it is felt that their consideration of it was unreasonable.

The District Education Officer may wish to meet with the complainant but will, any case, write to him/her to explain any further enquiries into the complaint.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with how the complaint has been dealt with the complaint may be referred to the Secretary of State for Education and Employment. A letter should be sent to:

The Secretary of State
Department for Children, Schools and Families
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

Please complete this form and return it to the school. Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

- 1 Name**.....
- 2 Address**.....
- 3 Telephone number (Home)**..... **(Work)**.....
- 4 Name of Child**.....
- 5 Details of the Complaint/Compliment** (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**.....