

# The Friary School

## COMPLAINTS POLICY



### Introduction

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.

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.

### Expressing Approval

To express approval parents and others are welcome to write, telephone, e-mail or speak personally to staff concerned or the Headteacher.

### Expressing Concerns

Any concerns should in the first instance be raised with the member of staff involved or the Headteacher. This can be by telephone, email or letter. If the concern is about a specific incident then the date, time, location and persons involved should be identified wherever possible.

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 should be sufficient to resolve the difficulty.

### 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 concern it may be necessary to inform the Headteacher that a formal complaint will be made.

This can be done by letter or email, or arranging an appointment to meet the Headteacher.

It is important that the complaint is as specific as possible, including times, dates and names as far as is possible.

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 will need to be sent to the Chair of Governors (care of the school) 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 address the matter themselves or elect to refer the matter to the Governors' Complaints Committee, particularly if the situation is a complex one - in which case complainants 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 complainant 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:

The Commissioner for Education and Wellbeing  
Staffordshire County Council  
Wedgwood Building  
Tipping Street  
Stafford  
ST16 2DH

The letter must state:

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

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

### **Step 4 - The Department for Education**

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

The Secretary of State  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street

London SW1P 3BT

<b>Reviewed By</b>	Policies & Procedures Committee	<b>Implementation Date</b>	Sept 2017	<b>Review Date</b>	March 2020
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