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## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION AND PRINCIPLES**

This policy is for the parents or guardians of children at Greenfields Primary School. Greenfields Primary School prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. We would encourage parents to discuss any concerns they have with teachers or the school at the earliest opportunity, in the expectation problems can be solved before they develop into serious issues which then become the subject of complaints.

However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school with care and in accordance with this procedure. Greenfields makes its complaints procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the school's website and in the school office during the school day, and Greenfields will ensure that parents of pupils and of prospective pupils who request it, are made aware that this document is published or available and the form in which it is published or available.

In accordance with paragraph 32(1)(b) of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014, Greenfields Primary School will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide, on request, to the Chief Inspector or the Secretary of State, details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

The School has a policy which sets out our procedures in instances where pupils may be disciplined or excluded from school, to which parents are referred. This is the Discipline and Exclusions of Pupils Policy, which is available from the School or from the School's website.

## **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

The overall objective of this policy is to identify the basis and process of filing, investigating and where, possible and appropriate, resolving complaints. The policy therefore identifies:

1. How a complaint is defined and how it is made.
2. The time that will be taken to acknowledge and then investigate a complaint.
3. The records which will be kept.
4. The three stages of the procedure.
5. Complaints lodged.

## **WHAT CONSTITUTES A COMPLAINT?**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the school as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the school is within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the school has done something wrong, or failed to do so something that it should have done, or it has acted unfairly.

To be treated as a formal complaint, the complaint should be put in writing and identify as many specifics of persons, instances and other data as can be furnished, in order to enable the school to properly investigate and resolve the complaint(s) involved.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The school is here for its children and parents can be assured that their child will not be penalised for a complaint that they or their child raise in good faith.

## **TIMEFRAME FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS**

All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged within 5 working days.

It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible. The school's target is to complete the first two stages of the procedure within 20 working days.

Stage 3, the Appeal Panel hearing; which is triggered if there is an appeal, will be completed within a target of a further 25 working days of the appeal.

Please note that for purposes of this procedure "working days" refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) during term time.

## **RECORDING COMPLAINTS**

Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all formal complaints received and whether they are resolved at the formal stage or proceed to a panel hearing and any action taken by the school as a result of the complaint (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld). At the school's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member(s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

## **THE THREE STAGE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

There are three possible stages for a complaint:

### **Stage 1 - Informal Resolution**

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's class teacher. In many cases, the matter may be resolved straightaway to the parents' satisfaction by this means. If the class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Head Teacher.

Complaints relating to Admissions should be directed the School Business Manager in the first instant.

Complaints made directly to the Head Teacher will usually be referred to the relevant class teacher unless the Head Teacher deems it appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally.

The class teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date

on which they were received. In the event that the class teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution within 5 working days then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this procedure.

If, however, the complaint is against the Headteacher, parents should make their complaint directly to the Chair of Directors (Mr Saadat Rasool) of the school. He can be contacted on 0121 448 7933 or by email: s.rasool@greenfieldsprimary.school

## **Stage 2 - Formal Resolution**

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis with the staff member involved then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head Teacher, requesting that the matter be considered to be a formal complaint. The Head Teacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Headteacher will meet or speak to the parents concerned, within 5 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

It may be necessary for the Head Teacher to carry out further investigations. The Head Teacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the Headteacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head Teacher will also give reasons for his/her decision.

Where the written complaint is against the Headteacher the Chair of Directors of the school will call for a full report from the Head Teacher and for all the relevant documents. He may also call for a briefing from members of staff. He will, in most cases, speak to or meet with the parents to discuss the matter further. Once the Chair of Directors is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Chair of Directors will give reasons for his decision.

If parents are still not satisfied with the decision received either from the Head Teacher or in the case of a written complaint against the Headteacher, the decision from the Chair of Directors, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

### **Stage3 - Panel Hearing**

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) under which they must lodge an appeal within 10 working days of the conclusion of Stage 2 outlining the basis on which they wish to make their appeal. They will be referred to a member of the Greenfields Primary Board of Directors Advisory Board who will be appointed by the Directors (the Proprietor) to call hearings of the Complaints Panel and hold a hearing if appropriate.

The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The panel chairman, on behalf of the Panel, will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place within a target of 15 working days.

If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 5 working days prior to the hearing.

The parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied by one other person if they wish. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. It is not the intention that the parties should be legally represented at the hearing.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.

After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and make recommendations.

The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it within 5 working days (although additional time maybe required if it is necessary to carry out further investigations following the hearing). The decision of the Panel will be final. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the parents, and, where relevant, to the person(s) complained about, as well as to the Proprietor and the Headteacher.

A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the Proprietor and the Head Teacher.

## **VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS**

There may be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant seeks to reopen the same issues that have already been considered, the Chair of Directors will inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed. If the complainant writes again on the same issue, then the correspondence may be recognised as vexatious and there will be no obligation on the part of the school to respond.

Should, however, a complainant raise an entirely new, separate complaint, it will be responded to in accordance with the complaints procedure.

## **RECORD OF COMPLAINTS**

Over the course of the last academic year (2017/18) there were no complaints requiring formal resolution.

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P. Saeed Alam - October 2018

*This policy will be reviewed in September 2019*