

Freethorpe CP School

Complaints Policy Statement and Procedures

Purpose

Freethorpe School's values are concerned with meeting the needs of pupils, parents/carers and others who have a stake in the school. The governing body believes that constant feedback is an important ingredient in self-improvement and raising standards and is an important part of the partnership that exists between all involved with our school. Pupils, parents, carers, or other adults who have concerns or complaints should feel that they can be voiced and will be considered seriously.

All complainants have the right to be accompanied when making the complaint, and pupils may be accompanied by a parent or another adult.

A - There are various principles behind this procedure:

- We will seek to resolve complaints by informal means wherever possible.
- Investigations will be full, fair and swift, and people will be kept informed of progress and the decisions reached.
- Every effort will be made to respect confidentiality.
- Feedback will be actively sought from those voicing complaints in order to minimise complaints and maximise accountability.

B - We believe that most parents/carers, pupils or members of the public who may have concerns wish to resolve these as quickly as possible – therefore we suggest that they should:

- 1 discuss their concerns with the member of staff most directly involved and, if not satisfied, or perhaps they do not want to do this then:-
- 2 discuss their concerns with a senior member of staff, eg Mrs Houghton (Assistant Headteacher) or Mrs Branch (Assistant Headteacher) and, if not satisfied, or again we understand that some parents/children may wish to
- 3 discuss their concerns with the headteacher.

C - At each stage in the procedure we will attempt to resolve the complaint or concern. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the concern or complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, 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.

Complainants will be encouraged to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage. If, following a more thorough enquiry, there is an admission that the school could have handled the situation better, we recognise that this is not the same as an admission of negligence.

Only when there has been a thorough and full investigation by Senior teachers and/or the headteacher and the above steps have been tried and found unsatisfactory, by the complainant, then the complainant should take their concern/complaint to the Chair of Governors or Clerk to the Governing Body.

However, if a complaint is about the behaviour/conduct of the headteacher and the situation has not been resolved through informal discussion, then such a complaint needs to be directed to the Chair of Governors.

Relationship to other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other school policies. Should complaints be referred to the Chair of Governors, a complaint will be directed to a **Discipline and Review Committee**; this can be created from non-involved Governors, eg Associate Governors or members of other school/Academy Governing bodies, who can be co-opted as required – support and advice gained from Norfolk Governor Support Services.

Roles and responsibilities of Headteacher, Staff and Governing Body

The **Headteacher** will ensure that:

- this complaints policy and the procedures are made known to all stakeholders through the school website
- all complaints are dealt with in the order suggested above (B), and all staff including the headteacher will document the concern – if this escalates to a complaint, all staff including the headteacher will document the complaint further - (names, dates, times, events), acknowledge in writing within **three days of receipt**, and consult with all those directly concerned
- the complainant receives a written explanation of the action taken within ten working days following the complaint.

All **staff** are expected to encourage pupils, parents and carers who have concerns to follow the complaint procedures (B)

The **governing body** will ensure the following.

- it has identified members of the governing body who will hear a complaint should it not have been resolved by the headteacher or Chair of the Governing Body – the Governors instructed to take on this role make up the Discipline and Review Committee (unless a complaint directly involves a member of this group)
- at least one of the panel has received training/guidance on how to conduct a hearing – or support sought from Governor Support Services
- where there is evidence that the complaint is justified appropriate action is to taken to prevent a recurrence.

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

All complaints and the action taken will be documented and a summary discussion added to a subsequent Governing Body Agenda, with advice on any implications for policies.

The following policy informs advice to parents/carers on the DfE website:

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school/state-schools>