

**ARCHIBALD 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. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents or guardians. The following policy sets out the procedures that the school follows in such cases.
- 1.2 This procedure aims to reassure parents and others with an interest in the school that any complaint against the school will be dealt with in a fair, open and responsive way, with the aim of achieving a speedy and satisfactory resolution.
- 1.3 The school recognises that a willingness to listen to questions and criticism and to respond positively, can lead to improvements in school practices and provision for pupils

2 Aims

- 2.1 Our 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.

3 The complaints process

Stage 1 – (informal): Complaint heard by School Mentor

- 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 the school by making an appointment with the school mentor. 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 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 feel that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the first point of contact an appointment will then be made via the school mentors to meet with the class teacher and /or team leader. If the concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment through the school mentor 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.
- 3.3 Should any parents have a complaint about the Headteacher, they should first make an approach to the chair of governors who is obliged to investigate it. The Chair of Governors will do all he can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if parents are unhappy with the outcome, they can make a formal complaint, as outlined below

Stage 2 – (formal) Complaint heard by Head Teacher

- 3.4 If wishing to proceed with the complaint, the parent would be invited to put the complaint in writing to the Headteacher using the form in Appendix 1. The form should be sent to the Headteacher within ten working days. Advice on how to complete the form may be requested from Governor Development Service 01642 201801.

- 3.5 The Headteacher will acknowledge the written complaint within five school days of receipt and provide an opportunity to meet with the parent to discuss the complaint. At this point the Headteacher may seek to resolve the complaint informally.**
- 3.6 The Headteacher will investigate the complaint and a written response will normally be made within ten school days of receipt of the complaint. If this is not possible a letter will be sent explaining the reason for the delay and providing a revised target date.**
- 3.7 The written response will include full reasons for the conclusions reached by the Headteacher and what action, if any, the school proposes to take to resolve the matter.**

Stage 3 – (formal): Complaint Heard by Chair of Governors

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the Head Teacher or the complaint is about the Head Teacher, the complainant should write to the Chair of Governors to request that their complaint is considered further.

Investigating complaints

The person investigating the complaint at each stage would make sure that they

- Establish what has happened so far and who has been involved**
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved**
- Meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information necessary)**
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right**
- Interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of. Allowing them to be accompanied if they wish**
- Conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning**
- Keep notes of the interview**

Stage 4 Complaint heard by the Governing Body's Complaints committee

- 3.8 If the parent still remains dissatisfied, they will be advised that a meeting of the governors' complaints committee will be convened. The Governors' complaints committee is the last school-based stage of the complaints processes and is not convened to merely rubber stamp previous decisions.**
- 3.9 This complaint 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 at the school address.**
- 3.10 The governing body must 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 governors will give the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting.**
- 3.11 The Headteacher would be expected to attend the hearing to give evidence and may also choose to invite staff to attend who have been directly involved in matter raised by the complainant.**
- 3.12 The Complaints committee will consist of three members of the governing body identified by the chair/clerk and is subject to individual availability.**
- 3.13 After hearing all the evidence, the governors will consider their decision and inform the parent about it in writing. The governors do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction.**

4 Unreasonably persistent complaints

There will be occasions when, despite all stages in the procedure being followed that the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the Chair of Governors would inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter is now closed.

5. Further recourse

5.1 Review by the Local Authority

Where the complainant can provide written grounds that demonstrate that the Governing body may have acted unreasonably or failed to follow this procedure, s/he may request that the Local Authority review the situation. This will be an officer of the LA who will conduct the review. It is anticipated that the LA would intervene only in very rare cases where the reviewing officer believed that the Governing body may have acted procedurally incorrectly or arrived at an outcome which appeared in the circumstances to be unreasonable.

5.2 Complaining to the Secretary of State for Education

The decision of the Governors' Complaints Committee is final but under section 496 and 497 of the Education Act 1996, complainants have the right of appeal to the Secretary of State for Education on grounds that:

- A governing body or Local Authority is acting or proposing to act unreasonably
- The governing body or Local authority has failed to discharge its duties under the Act

The Secretary of State for Education would not take action until the school procedures had been completed. Contact details: Public Communications Unit, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1 3BT. Tel 0870 0002288 complaints@dfes.gov.uk

5.3 Complaining to Ofsted

Ofsted has powers to investigate certain types of complaint from parents to help them to decide whether to inspect a school.

Before complaining to the Local Authority, the Secretary of State for Education or Ofsted, it is expected that all stages of this procedure have been exhausted.

6. Monitoring and review

6.1 The Governing body monitor the level and nature of complaints the school receives and review the outcome on a regular basis to ensure that the procedure is operating effectively. Complaints information shared with the governing body does not name individuals

6.2 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, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

6.3 This policy is reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.

Date: September 2015

Appendix 2

ARCHIBALD PRIMARY SCHOOL

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Date form, sent to parent/carer: | Date form received: |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|

| |
|----------------------|
| Parent/Carer's Name: |
|----------------------|

| |
|----------|
| Address: |
| Tel no: |

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Child's name and DOB: | Relationship to child; |
|-----------------------|------------------------|

| |
|--|
| Informal action List action taken to resolve informal complaint |
|--|

| |
|-------------------------------|
| Outcome of informal complaint |
|-------------------------------|

| |
|--|
| Formal complaint forwarded to Chair of Governors/Headteacher(<i>delete as appropriate</i>) |
|--|

| |
|---|
| Date of receipt of complaint (within 5 working days) by HT, Chair of Governors: |
|---|

| |
|---|
| Date of written response sent to parent/carers at end of investigation of complaint By HT/Chair of Governors(within 10 school days of complaint being received): |
|---|

Appendix 3

Considering the evidence

A suggested format for clarifying issues and seeking information

What is the complaint?

What are the facts that are being disputed?

What facts do we need to establish?

How ?(documenatation from..questioning of.....)

Comments

