

# **Northway Primary School**

## **COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMMENTS POLICY**

Agreed by Staff:

Approved by Governors

Review Date

**'TOGETHER, WE CAN ACHIEVE ANYTHING'**

## **Safeguarding Statement**

“Northway Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and visitors to share this commitment.”

## **Aims of this policy**

- To listen to our pupils and parents
- To receive complaints as a positive means of promoting pupil/parent satisfaction
- To use complaints as a means of identifying opportunities to improve services
- To seek to resolve complaints swiftly and fairly
- To have clear and published procedures for dealing with complaints

## **1 Introduction**

1.1 Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any concern or complaint. We will listen carefully and give careful consideration to all issues that are raised, aiming to resolve them as swiftly as possible.

1.2 Raising a concern or complaint can cause anxiety for some parents or carers. Bringing it to our attention early will reduce your anxiety and we ask that you discuss concerns as soon as possible after they arise.

1.3 We aim to resolve concerns and complaints through dialogue and mutual understanding. In every case, we put the interests of the child above any other issue. We provide sufficient opportunity for any concern or complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

1.4 Concerns and complaints are treated with confidentiality and are only discussed with relevant and appropriate individuals.

1.5 The school values and respects the views of parents as their child's first teacher. Likewise, the Headteacher and Governing Body expect parents and carers to respect the professional judgement of teaching staff who they have entrusted to act in 'loco parentis' at all times while the child is in the care of the school.

## **2 Process for Raising Concerns and Complaints**

2.1 If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the care or education that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, raise their concern with their child's class teacher. Most matters can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they will want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before it seriously affects the child's progress.

2.2 Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. The Headteacher considers any such concern very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly, aiming to respond to parents verbally or in writing within three working days. Concerns are normally resolved at this stage, if not they are considered as an informal complaint.

2.3 Should a parent have a concern about the Headteacher, s/he should first make an informal approach to one of the members of the Governing Body, who is obliged to investigate it. The governor in question will do all s/he can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if a parent is unhappy with the outcome, s/he can make a formal complaint, as outlined below.

2.4 Only if raising an informal concern fails to resolve the matter should a formal complaint be made to the governing body. 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, in a sealed envelope addressed c/o the school and marked confidential using the Form in Appendix 1.

2.5 The Governing Body must consider all written complaints within three weeks of receipt. It will then arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint, and invites the person making it to attend the meeting, so that s/he can explain her complaint in more detail. The school gives the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting.

2.6 After hearing all the evidence, the governors 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.

2.7 If any parent is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then s/he is entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education.

2.8 The school does not have the resources for staff to repeatedly discuss an issue where a concern or complaint has not been upheld and, in the professional judgement of the Headteacher, the child's welfare and education are well catered for at the school. Appointments and meetings are time limited at the discretion of the teacher or Headteacher who may suggest that the complaint be taken formally to Governors for consideration.

2.9 While the school understands that raising concerns or complaints can be emotive for parents, the Governing Body will not tolerate or accept inappropriate or aggressive behaviour, verbal or otherwise, towards any member of staff. If a teacher or the Headteacher judges the behaviour of parents to be unacceptable the meeting will be postponed and carried out with an additional member of staff at a future date. Raising concerns when they first arise is helpful in reducing the levels of anxiety for parents.

2.10 Anonymous complaints are considered by the Headteacher and are investigated carefully. However senders should be aware that anonymous e-mails or letters cannot be treated equally or addressed as thoroughly as those from an acknowledged source.

2.11 The school takes very seriously any anonymous allegation that proves to be malicious and unfounded. The police will be informed and appropriate legal action taken under the Malicious Communications Act 2003.

2.12 If followed, this complaints procedure will limit the number of complaints that become protracted. However there will be occasions when, despite all stages

and procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen this same issue, the Chair of the Governing Body is able to inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

### **3 Compliments**

3.1 The school website will be used as a tool for sharing the views of parents and other agencies.

3.2. School achievements will be shared with parents via the school website, twitter and yearly newsletter to parents, celebrating the success of the school.

3.2 Pupil's individual achievements will be posted on See-saw as a means of celebrating success and sharing information on pupil progress.

Finally, parents/carers are reminded that the school welcomes any views they would like to express which may include approval, thanks and congratulations too.

### **4 Monitoring And Review**

4.1 The governors monitor the complaints procedure every three years. The Headteacher logs all complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis.

4.2 Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. Relevant new legislation supersedes this policy which is made available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

#### **Further Action**

Complaints about school problems are almost always settled within school but in exceptional cases it may be possible to refer the problem to an outside body such as Ofsted, or the Secretary of State for Education and Skills.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

**The Chair of Governors** must investigate and respond to any concern raised by a parent/carer with the Governing Body. Complaints must be acted upon and recorded.

**The Head Teacher** is responsible for handling and documenting any complaints or comments about the school if this cannot be resolved by the member of staff to which the complaint was addressed.

**Members of Staff** who receive complaints from parents/carers must try to resolve these and record any outcomes.

### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

- National Regulations on School Complaints
- Compliments & Complaints Procedure
- Comments & Complaints Recording Form
- DfE guidance

- Code of Conduct Policy for Adults and children.

### **Further References**

Policies:        Health and Safety  
                      Curriculum Policy  
                      Learning and Teaching  
                      Charging and Letting  
                      Special Educational Needs & Disabilities  
                      Safeguarding

Documents:    DfE guidance on Access and Barring from School Premises

Signed (Headteacher):

Date:

Signed (Chair of Governors):

Date:

**Complainant**

*Name:*

*Address:*

*Tel/Mobile:*

**Details of Complaint**

*Please include full details, including dates, times and names of those involved*

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary. Once completed, send this form to the Chair of Governors (Northway Primary School) who will arrange for your complaint to be investigated.*

*For office use*

**Date Received by Clerk \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Response to Complainant \_\_\_\_\_**

Northway Primary School

Appendix B

## **Complaint Appeal Form**

### **Complainant**

*Name:*

*Address:*

*Tel/Mobile:*

Date complaint was submitted in writing:

Date response received from Headteacher /Chair of Governors in writing:

***I am dissatisfied with the response to the above complaint and would like an Appeal Hearing for the following reasons:***

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary. Once completed, send this form to the Chair of Governors who will arrange for your appeal to be heard.*

*For office use*

**Date Received by Governors** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Response to Complainant** \_\_\_\_\_