

# HOLY TRINITY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL SUNNINGDALE

## COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The Governing Body of Holy Trinity Primary School recognises the statutory requirement under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 to have in place and implement when necessary a policy and procedure to deal with complaints relating to the School and to any community facilities or services provided by the School. The requirement to publicise this policy and procedure is met by reference to it in the School Prospectus, occasional reference in the regular newsletters and in other appropriate ways including being published on the school website along with the other school policies.

### Dealing with Complaints - Initial concerns

- There is a need to be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints.
- The underlying principle is that concerns ought to be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures. The existence of a formal complaints procedure should not in any way undermine efforts to resolve the concern informally. In most cases the class teacher or member of staff will receive the first approach. It is hoped that staff are able to resolve issues on the spot, including apologizing if appropriate and where necessary.

### Dealing with Complaints - Formal procedures

- The formal procedures will be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.
- The headteacher has responsibility for the operation and management of the school complaints procedure.

### Framework of Principles

Holy Trinity School's Complaints Procedure will:

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- be easily accessible and publicised;
- be simple to understand and use;
- be impartial;
- be non-adversarial;
- allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress;
- ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary;
- respect people's desire for confidentiality;
- address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary;

### Summary of the various stages:

<u>Stage</u>		<u>Status</u>	<u>Primary Responsibility</u>
1	Informal discussion and resolution	informal	School staff
2	Investigation by Headteacher	formal	Headteacher
3	Complaints Panel	formal	Chairman/ Governing Body
4	RBWM investigation formal		RBWM
5	Further recourse	formal	Other, incl. DfES

If the complaint is against the Headteacher the procedures will commence at Stage 3

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **Recording of the complaint**

- A complaint may be made in person, by telephone or in writing
- The member of staff receiving a complaint in person or by telephone should make brief notes of what is said and try to verify with the complainant that there is a mutually agreed understanding of the nature of the complaint and what was discussed.
- The complainant should be made aware of the School's Complaint Form and invited to complete and submit one accordingly.
- The Headteacher and Chairman of Governors should be informed even if the member of staff believes the complaint has been resolved immediately.

### **Investigating Complaints**

Irrespective of the stage at which the investigation is the Headteacher or the Complaints Panel will apply the following procedures:

- establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved;
- clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- consider if there is any possibility that the complaint may lead to staff disciplinary procedures; if so, the Headteacher is to contact RBWM's HR department immediately and inform the Chairman of the Governing Body;
- If so decided change to staff disciplinary procedures. If not then proceed under this policy;
- meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information is 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 all interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- keep notes of all the interviews.

### **Resolving Complaints**

At each stage in the procedure the Headteacher or the Complaints Panel keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part or it might 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 may be invited to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage.

### **Vexatious Complaints**

There might be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the Governing Body may inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

### **Complaints Panel**

The Panel will consist of three appointed Governors who are members of the Governing Body's Discipline and Grievance Committee.

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## SCHOOL COMPLAINT FORM

Please complete and return to the Headteacher, who will acknowledge receipt of this form and explain what action will be taken. If, however, the complaint is about the Headteacher then please return the form to the School Secretary in a sealed envelope marked 'Personal for the Chairman of Governors', who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your Name:

Address:

Pupil's name:

Pupil's year:

Postcode

Your relation to the pupil:

Telephone: Day:

Evening:

*If there is insufficient space in any of these boxes please attach an additional sheet*

Please give details of your complaint.

What, if any, action have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint?  
Who did you speak with and what was the response?

What action do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Have you enclosed any additional sheets or documents? Yes / No

Signature..... Date.....

**Official School use**

Date acknowledgement sent..... By.....

Complaint referred to: ..... Date: .....