



The Ellis CE (VA) Primary School

# Complaints Policy / Procedure

Approved by HT	September 2016
Renewal Date	September 2019
Renewal Frequency	3 Yearly

## The Ellis Church of England Primary School

### Complaints Policy / Procedure

Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 states that governing bodies are required to have in place a procedure for dealing with complaints.

**Policy Coverage** – See Annex A

#### **Definition of a complaint.**

A concern may be defined as ‘an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought’. We take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

A complaint may be generally defined as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about action taken or a lack of action.’

Here at The Ellis school we all 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. The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases.

If any parent is unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or has any concern relating to the school, we encourage that person to make an appointment to talk to the class teacher immediately. This appointment will be made for the earliest convenient time and the teacher may be accompanied by another member of staff, preferably from the SLT.

We deal with all complaints in accordance with procedures set out by the LA. If the school cannot resolve any complaint itself, those concerned can ask the LA to intervene.

All parents have the right, as a last resort, to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education, if they still feel that their complaint has not been properly addressed.

#### **Aims and objectives**

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 and, in all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

#### **The complaints process**

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 their child’s class teacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. 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. The headteacher considers any such complaint very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage.

Should a parent have a complaint about the headteacher, s/he should first make an informal approach to a member of the Governing Body, who is obliged to investigate it. The governor 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.

Only if an informal complaint 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.

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

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.

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

### **Monitoring and review**

The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The headteacher will log all complaints received by the school and record how they were resolved. Governors will examine this log on an annual basis.

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.

### **Associated Documents:**

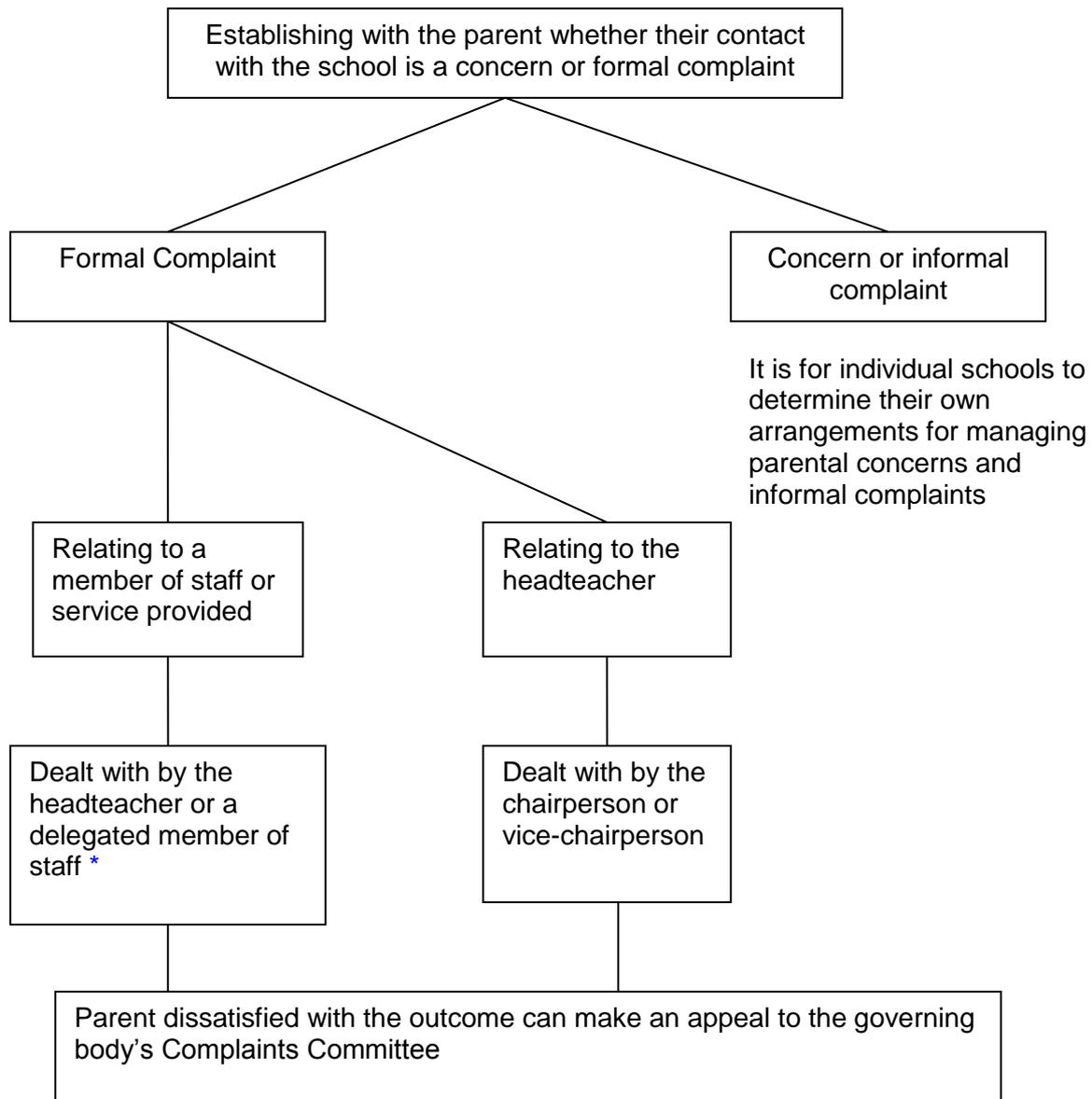
DFE Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016.

## Complaints not in scope of the procedure

A complaints procedure should cover all complaints about any provision of facilities or services that a school provides with the **exceptions** listed below, for which there are separate (statutory) procedures.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Admissions to schools</li><li>• Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)</li><li>• School re-organisation proposals</li><li>• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation</li></ul>	Concerns should be raised direct with local authorities (LA). For school admissions, it will depend on who is the admission authority (either the school or the LA). Complaints about admission appeals for maintained schools are dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exclusion of children from school</li></ul>	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions">www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions</a> .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Whistleblowing</li></ul>	Schools have an internal whistleblowing procedure for their employees and voluntary staff. Other concerns can be raised direct with Ofsted by telephone on: 0300 123 3155, via email at: <a href="mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk">whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk</a> or by writing to: WBHL, Ofsted Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD. The Department for Education is also a prescribed body for whistleblowing in education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures</li></ul>	These matters will invoke the school's internal grievance procedures. Complainants will not be informed of the outcome of any investigation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities.</li></ul>	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. They should be contacted direct.

## STRUCTURE FOR A COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



\* Most schools undertake this in a single stage. Some schools have a two stage process in which a first investigation is carried out by a member of staff with the option that the Headteacher can carry out a further investigation if necessary.



## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Our school values its relationship with pupils and parents and encourages those with concerns regarding their child's education or the service we provide to contact the school with aim of resolving the issue or concern.

However, where a parent wishes to make a complaint it will be treated seriously and managed in a formal procedure.

- 1 The parent must submit their complaint in writing. Anonymous complaints will not be dealt with.  
The letter/form should contain as much detail as possible
- 2 The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 school days stating which member of staff will be managing the complaint.
- 3 Within a further 20 school days an investigation of the complaint will be undertaken.
- 4 Within 5 school days of completing the investigation the headteacher's decision will be communicated to the parent, with details of the findings of any investigation. If the headteacher decides to undertake a further investigation the parent will be notified of this and be given a date by which it will be completed( normally a further 10/15 school days)
- 5 The parent may be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the outcomes of the investigation, if they wish, at a time convenient to them. There is no time limit to this.
- 6 Irrespective of whether the parent attends a meeting they have the right of appeal to the Governing Body Complaints Committee if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint.
- 7 A Complaints Committee meeting will be held within 15 school days of the parent informing the school they wish to appeal.
- 8 The decision of the Complaints Committee will be sent to the parent, in writing, the school day following the meeting.  
The decision of the Complaints Committee is final.

The parent can submit a complaint to the Local Authority only on the grounds that the school did not follow its published procedure. The Local Authority will not investigate the parent's original complaint against the School, however the Local Authority may check that the school followed its published procedures.

*Where the complaint refers to the headteacher the chairperson of the Governing Body will investigate the complaint.*