

SHALFLEET C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL
GENERAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

As a Church of England school, rooted in the Christian message of God's love for all, we believe that our aim is to be a "safe haven" that challenges all our pupils through a wide range of learning experiences to enable them to realise their potential and share these values with the wider community.

Philosophy

Having an open relationship prevents minor incidents from becoming potential problems. So, in line with the principles of our Home-School Agreement, parents and pupils are encouraged to make staff aware of any concerns they may have. We believe in a happy, welcoming and inclusive environment and will seek at all times to find solutions to such concerns.

Principles

- All staff should be committed to the philosophy, principles and procedures of this policy and should be familiar with the procedures so that they can advise parents about their operation.
- All staff should have a clear understanding about staff roles and responsibilities so that they are able to put parents in touch with the appropriate member of staff to deal with their complaint.
- Once made aware of any concerns or issues that a parent/carer might have, staff should ensure that they are available to discuss and seek to resolve the concerns informally as soon as possible.
- Where concerns cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the parent/carer they are entitled to make use of the LA General Complaints Procedure where they can raise concerns or lodge a formal complaint. This document is kept in the School Office and is on the school website.
- This procedure should be easily accessible and brought to parent/carers' attention at regular intervals.
- Internal school procedures should be followed before a parent takes the matter further e.g. contacts the LA.
- Staff who may be questioned as part of a complaints procedure investigation should feel that they are being treated in a fair way with the opportunity to put their case. They should be told about the procedure and be kept informed of progress.
- Conversations and correspondence should be treated with discretion; parents should feel confident that their complaint will not penalise their child.
- Fear of litigation should not prevent a school from admitting to parents when mistakes have been made but advice should be taken from the Council's Insurance and Legal Services Manager if litigation could be possible.

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- The Headteacher should always be notified of all complaints.

Procedures

1. PUBLICITY

- A summary of how the school deals with complaints is included in the School Brochure and on the website also in information given to the children.
- Procedures can be made available in languages other than English and also through tape cassette, Braille, large print version or as appropriate, to ensure that all parents have access to them.
- In the case that a parent does contact the LA before following internal school procedures they will usually be referred back to the school.

2. SPEED OF PROCEDURES

- Each stage of the procedure will have known time limits with complainants aware of any possible delays [see Stages for Handling Complaints: sections 1.1 - 5.2 of the LA General Complaint Procedure Jan 05]

3. SUPPORT FOR COMPLAINANT

- It is important that parents know where they can go for information, advice and advocacy if they require it, e.g. the Parent Partnership.
- Parents raising concerns or complaints are invited to be accompanied to a meeting by a friend, a relative or a representative at any stage of the procedure.

4. SUPPORT FOR A PERSON COMPLAINED AGAINST

- The complaints procedure is distinct from formal disciplinary proceedings although on occasions it may lead to these proceedings, in which case the complainant will be informed of this and kept regularly updated if any aspects of the complaints procedure have to be put on hold.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY

- From the outset all parties to a complaint are made aware that some information may have to be shared with others involved in the operation of the complaints procedure.
- In the case of anonymous complaints, although it is usually proper to disregard these unless someone is prepared to substantiate them, it may be prudent for the Headteacher in consultation with the Chair of Governors to decide whether they are of sufficient gravity to warrant an investigation.

6. REDRESS

- If the outcome of the complaint procedure shows that the school is at fault there will be an acknowledgement that the complaint is valid. This may also be accompanied by an apology, explanation, a promise that the event complained of will not recur, an undertaking to review school policies or practice or, in appropriate circumstances, financial compensation.

7. STAFF AWARENESS AND TRAINING

- All staff are made aware on an annual basis of the practical interpersonal skills needed in dealing with people who are upset or angry [see also Annex B LA General Complaints Procedure]

8. RECORD KEEPING

- Complaints are recorded and monitored termly by senior staff and governors so that they are able to contribute to raising the quality of education.
- Recording begins at the point when a concern or initial complaint has become the kind of complaint that cannot be resolved on the spot but:
 - needs investigation and/or consultation with others in the school
 - will later require a report back (either orally or in writing) to the parent.
- Recording at the earliest stages is a very basic record of the complaint, giving the date, name of parent and general nature of the complaint, with details of any follow-up action taken [see Appendix] and is kept in a Complaints File, held centrally.

Ratified by the Governors

Responsibility.....

Review Date.....

This policy should be read in conjunction with the LA General Complaints procedure for Schools

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**Appendix
Record of Complaint**

Name of parent/carer	
Date complaint made	
General nature of complaint	
Follow-up action taken	

Signed.....Date.....