



South Avenue Primary School Complaint Policy and Procedures

Policy

This policy is based on 'Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016'; published by the Department for Education and 'Creating an Academy Complaints Procedure'; published by the Education Funding Agency, last updated January 2015. Whilst this policy covers the procedures for all complaints, it also has regard to Paragraph 7(2) of Schedule 6 to the Education Act 1993 and Article 14 of the school's Articles of Government that require the Governing body to have procedures for the consideration and disposal of complaints relating to matters concerning the curriculum followed within the school.

From time to time any member of staff, child, parent or other individual or organisation in any way connected with the school might have cause for concern or grounds to complain about the decisions or actions of the school or one of its staff, Governors or children during the performance of their responsibilities to the school. It is the policy of the school that such causes of concern or complaints should be dealt with promptly and effectively.

This policy and procedure is for the benefit of children, and parents of children, at South Avenue Primary school. This policy and procedure will be relied upon in respect of all complaints except in respect of:

1. **Safeguarding allegations**, where a separate policy and procedure applies; and
2. **Exclusions** where a separate policy and procedure applies.

The School expects that most concerns can be resolved informally and will use their best endeavours to resolve any concerns or complaints that are made informally.

Initially a concern or complaint should be raised at the lowest level in the management hierarchy, subject to the individual with whom it is raised having sufficient authority to resolve the problem and being totally unconnected with the cause of the problem. Usually, this will be the class teacher.

An initial complaint may be verbal or in writing. Initial verbal complaints shall be handled as follows:

- Most verbal complaints can be dealt with immediately with a verbal response which satisfies the complainant. In these cases no record of the complaint need be kept.
- A verbal complaint may be received by an individual who considers that he/she might be implicated in the complaint or that he/she does not have the authority to resolve the complaint. In this case the complainant will be advised to approach another, named, individual. If the complainant accepts this reply, no further action shall be taken by the recipient of the initial complaint.
- In all other cases of verbal complaints, and in the case of all written complaints, the complaint shall be registered as defined later in this document.

Unless it appears to the complainant that the person listed is associated with the cause for concern or complaint, the initial person contacted should be as follows:

- If the concern or complaint is about a member of staff, or child, the Headteacher should be approached.
- If the concern or complaint is about the Headteacher the Chair of Governors should be approached by a confidential letter, sent via the school.

In all cases of written complaints:

- If the recipient of the complaint considers that he/she has insufficient authority to resolve the concern or complaint the matter should be referred to a more senior individual. This person should have both the authority and independence to resolve the concern or complaint. The initial recipient should contact the complainant advising that the complaint has been passed on, and to whom it has been passed.
- If the recipient considers that he/she might not have total independence of the subject matter, he/she should write immediately to the complainant advising that the complaint should be made to a more senior person, whom he/she shall name. A copy of this letter should be passed to the Clerk of Governors.
- The school requires all complaints to be dealt with promptly. A member of staff dealing with a complaint, either written or verbal, that cannot be dealt with at the time of receipt shall write to the complainant within three days, advising the result of the investigation. If it is found to be essential to take more than three days for the investigation, the letter shall explain the reason for the extended evaluation and give as much information as possible at that stage. It shall also indicate how soon the complainant can expect to see a follow up letter dealing with the outstanding matters.

Next Steps:

- If the complainant is not satisfied by the response, an interview should be requested with the school Headteacher. This should be granted as quickly as possible. The Headteacher should follow up the interview with a letter detailing the conclusions reached.
- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Headteacher's response, The Chair of Governors may be contacted by sending a confidential letter via the school office. The chair of Governors will either deal with the matter or pass it to another Governor for action. In either case a letter shall be sent by the relevant Governor to the complainant within a week of the complaint being received.
- If the complainant is not satisfied by the Governor's response then a meeting of a committee can be requested in writing. This committee shall be made up of two members of the Governing body and a further independent person. The Governors involved in the committee meeting should not have been involved in responding to the complaint previously or directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.

The meeting shall be convened within twelve school days of receipt of the letter asking that the matter be referred to governors (a school day being a day on which the school is normally in session). If the complaint is not urgent, the Chair shall convene the meeting within twenty school days. The Chair shall give the complainant at least five school days' notice of the date, time and place of the meeting. Any reasonable request made by the complainant for an alternative date should result in the earliest mutually convenient alternative date being set.

The complainant may be accompanied to the meeting by a friend or representative. If the complainant does not wish to attend the meeting he/she may submit the complaint in writing to the committee. The complainant must submit any such material to the Chair at least two school days before the meeting.

The Headteacher may be present at the meeting of the committee which is convened to consider a complaint. The Headteacher may be accompanied by a representative or a friend if he/she wishes.

When a complainant chooses to attend in person, the usual order of proceedings shall be:

- The Chair of the committee shall introduce all of those present.
- The complainant may, if he/she so chooses, restate the nature of the complaint
- The complainant may be asked questions by the committee and by the Headteacher
- The Headteacher shall make a statement to the committee, regarding the matter complained of and results of the investigation
- The Headteacher may be asked questions by the committee and by the complainant
- The complainant may, if he/she so chooses, summarise the complaint
- The complainant, the Headteacher and any representative or friend they have brought with them, shall be asked to leave

The committee shall consider the complaint and any relevant information or factors. They shall reach a decision only after the Headteacher, the complainant and any representative, friend or any other individual have withdrawn. The committee shall decide one of the following:

- To reject the complaint
- To uphold the complaint
- To investigate further

The Chair of the committee shall inform the complainant and the Headteacher in writing within five school days:

- Of the decision reached by the committee and the reasons for the decision
- If the complaint was upheld, or any action taken or proposed, including details of any request to take particular actions to resolve the complaint. The Complainant shall be advised that if he/she is dissatisfied with the action taken or proposed to remedy the complaint he/she may pursue the

matter further with the Headteacher, the committee or the Governing Body as appropriate

- If the committee decides to investigate further, any subsequent meeting of the committee to consider the matter shall be subject to the provisions described above as far as they are appropriate.
 - If the complaint is related to the curriculum, that he or she may make a further complaint to the Secretary of State for Education if the Governors' response is not satisfactory. The complaint to the Secretary of State may be made under Section 68 or Section 99 of the Education Act 1944.
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- The Clerk to the Governors shall maintain a register of all complaints that are not dealt with immediately to the satisfaction of the complainant. The register shall record the date and nature of the complaint, who received it and who dealt with it. Copies of all correspondence between the complainant and the school shall also be included.