



Complaints Procedure

Date: Dec 2015

Review: Dec 2017

Signed: Chair of Governors

Headteacher

Introduction

The Headteacher, staff and governors at Trinity C.E. Primary School work hard to build positive relationships with all parents. Under **Section 29 of the Education Act 2002**, the governing body is required to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides. The law also requires that the procedure be publicised. The requirement to have a complaints procedure in place does not in any way undermine efforts to resolve concerns informally. Taking informal concerns seriously will reduce the number of concerns that develop into formal complaints. This document follows guidance published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and sets out the staged procedures that the school follows if a complaint is made by a parent.

Investigating Complaints

The following formal procedures will be invoked when attempts to resolve an issue informally are unsuccessful, and the person raising the concern wishes to take the matter further. The Headteacher will have responsibility for the operation and the management of the school complaints procedure. Where the complaint concerns the Headteacher or a governor, the chair of governors will carry out this role.

At each stage of the complaints procedure, the person investigating the complaint will make sure they:

- ✦ establish what has happened so far, and **who** has been involved;
- ✦ clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- ✦ meet with the complainant or contact them
- ✦ 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;
- ✦ respect confidentiality;
- ✦ conduct any interview with an open mind;
- ✦ keep notes of the interview.

Individual complaints will not be heard by the whole governing body at any stage, as this could compromise the impartiality of any panel set up for a disciplinary hearing against the member of staff following a serious complaint.

Stage One: Complaint heard by a member of staff

If a parent is concerned about anything they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with the child's teacher immediately. Most matters can be dealt with in this way. Teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress. They will always want to know if there is a problem so that they can take action before a child's progress is affected. Where possible, the school will respect the views of a complainant who feels unable to discuss a complaint with a particular member of staff and, in such cases, will refer to the Headteacher. In circumstances where the complaint concerns the Headteacher, the complainant will be referred to the chair of governors.

Stage Two: Complaint heard by the Assistant Headteacher

Where a complainant is dissatisfied with the way the complaint has been dealt with at Stage One, the complainant will be referred to the Assistant Headteacher. The Assistant Headteacher will try to resolve the complaint by meeting with parents and the child's class teacher.

Stage Three: Complaint heard by the Headteacher

Where a complainant is dissatisfied with the way the complaint has been dealt with at Stage One, the complainant will be referred to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will carry out a thorough investigation of all complaints referred at this stage.

Complaints at this stage will be heard within five (5) working days.

Stage Three: Complaint heard by the Governing Body Complaints Appeal Panel

Where a complainant is dissatisfied with the way the complaint has been dealt with at Stages One, Two and Three, they must write, giving details of the complaint, to the chair of the governing body. The chair of governors will then convene a governing body complaints appeal panel hearing to which the complainant will be invited. The governors' appeal panel is the final stage of the school-based process.

Complaints at this stage of the procedure will be heard within ten (10) working days. Complainants will be given three (3) days notice of the date of

the appeal hearing and advised , in writing, of the outcome of the panel hearing within five(5) working days.

The Governing Body Complaints Appeal Panel

The governing body will nominate three or five members with delegated powers to hear complaints at Stage Three of the Complaints Procedure. The governing body will also appoint a clerk to the Complaints Appeal Panel. The panel will choose their own chair. The appeal panel's terms of reference are to:

- ⤴ hear individual appeals;
- ⤴ follow the procedures set out in this document
- ⤴ make recommendations on school policy and/or practice as a result of complaints

The governors will do all that they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the complainant's satisfaction. The panel can:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- Decide the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- Recommend changes to the school procedures/practices to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not occur.

If the governing body complaints appeal panel is unable to resolve the complaint, it may be referred to the Local Authority (LA) for investigation of how the complaint was handled.

Complaints can be referred to the Department for Education once all other routes have been followed.

An online schools complaint form is available on the Department for Education for parents to use if the schools procedure has not provided a fair outcome.

Managing and Recording Complaints

The headteacher will have responsibility for the operation and management of the school complaints procedure and will hold records centrally. A complaint can be made in person or in writing. The Headteacher will log all complaints received by the school and record how they are resolved. Staff will keep brief notes of meetings and telephone calls.

Monitoring and Review

The governing body will monitor the level and nature of complaints and review the outcomes on an annual basis to ensure the effectiveness of the procedure and make changes where necessary.

Publication of the Complaints Procedure

A link to this complaints procedure is included in:

- ✦ the school prospectus;
- ✦ on the school website