



# Western Road Community Primary School

## Complaints Policy

*This policy was **adopted in July 2016**.*

*This policy is **due to be reviewed in July 2017**.*

At Western Road Community Primary School, we try hard to meet the needs of all our pupils. Whilst we appreciate positive feedback, we also want parents and carers to tell us about their concerns or complaints as soon as possible. It is much easier for us to sort out a recent problem than something that happened some time ago.

Where someone has a concern or complaint, the school will endeavour to deal with the issues responsively and reasonably and, if necessary, to put things right as quickly as possible.

If you are unhappy with the treatment of your child or any of our actions or lack of action, please feel able to tell us your concern in the way set out in the stages below.

Our promise to you:

- We will deal with your concern or complaint honestly, politely and in confidence.
- It will be looked in to thoroughly, fairly and as quickly as possible.
- We will keep you up to date with what we are doing.
- We will apologise if we have made a mistake.
- We will tell you what we are going to do to put things right.

### **Stage 1: Dealing with Concerns and Complaints Informally**

If you have a concern, talk to a member of staff. We hope that the majority of issues can be resolved informally in this way. There are many occasions where concerns are resolved straight away through the class teacher, Head of Key Stage, Deputy Headteacher or the Headteacher depending on whom the parent first approached, without the need to resort to a formal complaints procedure.

Although this stage involves dealing with the issue informally, it may prove helpful later, although not essential at this stage, for the person responding to make a basic record of the issue or complaint raised. This may include brief notes of conversations (face to face or over the telephone), and the responses made.

The person who raised the issue should be informed of the action to be taken to resolve the issue. It may be helpful to confirm future actions and how they will be monitored in writing. If the person is dissatisfied with the response they have been given, this policy provides guidance on taking the complaint to Stage 2, by referring it to the Headteacher (see below).

## **Stage 2: Referral to the Headteacher**

If the issue cannot be addressed informally, it is then referred to the Headteacher for investigation, usually by you writing to the Headteacher. At this stage, it has become clear that the concern is a definite complaint. Any complaint received by the Headteacher under this process, whether orally or in writing, should be acknowledged within 5 school days, with a full written response within 15 school days. Complainants should also be given the opportunity to meet with the Headteacher, accompanied by a relative or friend if they so wish, to discuss their complaint. Written records of interviews with complainants and with staff or witnesses carried out in the course of the investigation should be kept by the Headteacher.

If your complaint has still not been resolved to your satisfaction, you may take it to Stage 3. (If your complaint is about the Headteacher, you should direct your complaint to the Chair of Governors (see Stage 3).)

## **Stage 3: Referral to the Chair of Governors**

You can complain in writing to the Chair of Governors care of the School. This should be done by you within 10 school days after receipt of the Headteacher's response. You should make it clear why you are complaining, who you have already spoken to and what you would like to happen as a result of your complaint. The Chair of Governors will let you know that your complaint has been received within 5 school days and will then investigate it. You will be told about the outcome of the Chair of Governors' investigation in writing within 15 school days. The Chair may need to hold interviews with the Headteacher and possibly other members of staff and notes should be kept of those meetings. Chairs may also wish to take advice on particular issues from the relevant officer at the East Sussex Local Authority. At this stage, the Local Authority Governor Support Team should be informed that the Governing Body is dealing with a complaint at this level.

In acknowledging any complaint, the Chair may need to explain the powers of the Governing Body in the matter in question and the extent to which it may or may not be possible to achieve the outcome desired by the complainant. In such instances, it is important that the complainant is made aware at the outset of the scope of the investigation of any limitations that the school has in resolving the issue. However, where it is not within the remit of a Governing Body to change a decision, it may make a recommendation for the Headteacher to consider.

If still not satisfied after receiving the Chair of Governor's response, you can ask to have your complaint referred to a complaints committee of the Governing Body (see Stage 4 below).

## **Stage 4: Referral to a Complaints Committee of the Governing Body**

You can write to the Clerk to Governing Body care of the School. You should say exactly why you are unhappy with the Chair of Governors' finding and ask that a complaints committee be set up to look at the complaint. The complaints committee will meet within 12 to 20 school days from the receipt of your letter to the Clerk. Findings will be sent within 5 school days thereafter.

You may believe that your complaint was not handled fairly according to the School's own complaints procedure. In this case you may appeal to the Secretary of State for Education (care of: The Secretary of State for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT). The Secretary of State could step in if a Governing Body or Local Authority had not carried out its legal duty or had acted unreasonably. The Secretary of State would not do anything until Western Road School had finished looking into the complaint.

For further information, please see '*School Complaints Toolkit 2014*' *Departmental Advice for Maintained Schools, Maintained Nursery Schools and Local Authorities* available on the Department for Education website.