

IRCHESTER COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Complaints Policy – 2016

This procedure is designed to allow individuals to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school or to the services it provides. Although the policy refers to *parents*, any other person wishing to raise a concern or complaint should follow the same process.

Anonymous concerns or complaints will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

To enable proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, a matter raised more than 3 months after the event being complained of will not be investigated.

In using this policy, we consider the following definitions to be helpful:

Concern: an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important, for which reassurances are sought.

Complaint: an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, over actions which have been taken, or lack of action.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 We believe that our school provides a good education for all our children, and that the head teacher and other staff 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.
- 1.2 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 talk to the child's class teacher immediately.
- 1.3 We deal with all complaints in accordance with the procedures set out below. If the school cannot resolve any complaint itself, those concerned can ask the LEA to intervene.
- 1.4 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.

2. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 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.

3. The Complaints process – [Click here for a step to step guide](#)

- 3.1 **Informal stage:** If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, or a child's wellbeing, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. This may be by letter, telephone, or in person by requesting an appointment through the school office. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the child's progress.
- 3.2 In the case of serious concerns it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Headteacher.
- 3.3 Should a parent have a complaint about the Headteacher, she/he should first make an informal approach to the chair, who will investigate it. The chair will do all she/he can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if a parent is unhappy with the outcome, she/he can make a formal complaint, as outlined below.
- 3.4 If unsure about who to contact, the parent should seek advice from the School Office.
- 3.5 **Formal stage:** 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 submit their complaint in writing to the head teacher. The head teacher is responsible for ensuring that each case is investigated thoroughly.

Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage. The Chair of Governors should not be approached at this stage.

- 3.6 Should a parent have a complaint about the head teacher, the complaint should be addressed to the Chair of Governors.
- 3.7 The written complaint should include details which might assist the investigation, such as dates and times of events, and the names of potential witnesses. It should include information about steps that have been taken informally. It should include a statement of the actions that the parent would like the school to take to resolve the issue. The envelope should be addressed to the Headteacher or Chair (as appropriate) and handed or posted to the School Office.
- 3.8 The parent will be informed in writing, within 5 school days of receiving the written complaint, of how the school intends to proceed. This notification will include an outline of the anticipated timescale.
- 3.9 The Headteacher or Chair may invite the parent to a meeting to clarify their concerns and explore the possibility of an informal solution.
- 3.10 If the complaint is not resolved through a meeting, arrangements will be made for the matter to be fully investigated. The investigation will begin as soon as possible and the parent will be informed in writing of the outcome.
- 3.11 **Review of the Process:** If the parent is not happy with how the process has been followed they may request to take the complaint to a panel of governors. The request must be made in writing to the Clerk to the Governors, within 10 school days of receiving notice of the outcome, and must specify the perceived failures in following the process.
- 3.12 Any review of the process will be carried out by a panel of 3 governors. This will usually take place within 10 school days from receipt of the request. The panel will usually be conducted by considering written submissions. It arranges 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 to the parent's satisfaction.
- 3.13 Should all governors have become aware of the details of a concern at an earlier stage, arrangements will be made to convene an independent panel.
- 3.14 If the complaint is not resolved, a parent may make representation to the LA. Further information about this process is available from the school or from the LA. A further meeting is chaired by an independent person, who considers all the evidence and makes a further judgment in an attempt to resolve the complaint.
- 3.15 If any parent is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then he/she is entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education.
- 3.16 Should a complainant continue to contact the school on the same matter, after all reasonable steps have been taken to resolve the matter and a clear statement of the school's position has been provided, the Chair of Governors can inform them that the process has been completed and therefore the matter is closed.

4. Monitoring and Review

- 4.1 The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The head teacher logs all written complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. A report will be presented on an annual basis to the full Governing Body at the term 2 meeting; individuals will not be named in this report.
- 4.2 Notes will be made of telephone conversations or meetings. Consideration may be given to recording conversations, in which case permission must be sought from parties involved. Any written reports or notes associated with an investigation will be held with the complaints log.
- 4.3 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 aware of the complaints process.

5. Scope of the policy

Certain areas lie outside the scope of school procedures:

Area of concern	Dealt with by
Admissions Statutory assessment of SEN School reorganization Matters likely to require a child protection investigation	Local authority
Exclusion from school	
Whistleblowing	See school policy
Staff grievances & disciplinary procedures	See school policy
Complaints about services provided by external bodies using school premises	Providers should be contacted directly; these organisations should have their own complaints procedures

6. **Sample letters**

Sample letters for use at the various stages of the process may be found in the NAHT document "Advice and Guidance – School Complaints Procedure, February 2016"
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