

Endon Hall Primary School

'Learning together and having fun'



Compliments, Comments, Concerns and Complaints Policy

Policy updated: November 2016

Review date: November 2019

We believe that Endon Hall Primary School provides an excellent education and that the Headteacher and school personnel work very hard to build positive relationships and have in place clear lines of communication with all parents and others. In so doing, complaints are kept to a minimum.

However, we are aware that, under the section 29 of the Education Act 2002, we must have in place clear procedures to deal with any complaint made against the school or individuals connected with it. We take any complaint seriously and we deal with them professionally and impartially following set procedures.

We are aware that under the Education Act 1996 parents have the right to complain directly to the Local Authority about any matter relating to the school's curriculum, and any issue relating to the general education that we provide.

We have a duty to publish this policy on the school's website with hard copies available from the school office.

Endon Hall Primary School would like to hear from you if you:

- are happy with the service it provides and would like to compliment the school staff and its pupils
- have any suggestions about how the school can improve the quality of its provision
- have a concern or complaint

Expressing Approval

When things go well, it is very helpful if parents express their approval. Maintenance of high levels of staff commitment, morale and motivation are essential to the provision of the best education for your child. Positive feedback really helps.

To express your approval you can write, telephone, e-mail or speak personally to staff concerned or the Headteacher, these will be added to the Compliments Book in the school office. Your words will be appreciated. If you wish to note your expressions of thanks or approval in this way, please visit the school office.

Concerns or Complaints

A 'concern' may be defined as '*an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought*'. A 'complaint' may be defined as '*an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken or a lack of action*'.

General Principles:

- This procedure is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school or the services that it provides.
- An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

- To enable a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, any matter raised more than 3 months after the event, being complained of, will not be investigated.
- Endon Hall Primary School will follow the school's 'Complaints Guidance' document which details processes to be followed.

Raising a concern or complaint

Informal Stage

It is normally appropriate to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned. This may be by letter, by telephone, or in person by appointment requested via the school office. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information and it is anticipated that most concerns and complaints will be resolved by this informal stage.

In the case of more serious concerns it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Headteacher (or, if the complaint is about the Headteacher, to the Clerk to the Governing Board, for the attention of the Chair of the Governing Board).

If you are uncertain who to contact, please seek advice from the school office or the Clerk to the Governing Board.

Formal Stage

If a concern or complaint, that has been communicated to a member of staff, is not resolved at the informal stage, you may choose to put the complaint in writing and pass it to the Headteacher, who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately. If the complaint is about the Headteacher, your complaint should be passed to the Clerk of the Governing Board, for the attention of the Chair of the Governing Board.

A Complaint Form is provided to assist you.

You should include details which might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents.

It is very important that you include a clear, detailed statement of what, specifically, the complaint is and the actions that you would like the school to take to resolve your concern. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed.

Please pass the completed form, in a sealed envelope, to the school office. The envelope should be addressed to the Headteacher or to the Clerk of the Governing Board as appropriate, marked CONFIDENTIAL.

The Headteacher (or Chair of the Governing Board) will invite you to a meeting to clarify your concerns and to explore the possibility of an informal resolution. If you accept the invitation, you may be accompanied by a friend, if you wish, to assist you in explaining the nature of your concerns.

It is probable that your complaint will be resolved with the Headteacher (or Chair of the Governing Board). If not, arrangements will be made for the matter to be fully investigated, using the appropriate procedure.

Once a formal written complaint is received from the complainant, via completion of the Complaint Form, the Headteacher (or, if the complaint is about the Headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Board), will acknowledge receipt within 2* days (term time), begin an investigation and update the complainant in writing within 10* days (term time). The correspondence will include an indication of the timescale for the investigation and/or response.

** Where these timescales cannot be met this will be communicated, with an explanation and an indication of when the timescale will be met.*

An investigation will begin as soon as possible. Once concluded, you will be informed in writing of its conclusion. Standard practice* will be for the Investigation Team / Lead Investigating Officer to offer to meet with the complainant(s) at the start of the investigation process in order to clarify the exact nature of the complaint in detail (in writing). Impartiality will be evident in the form of records kept, outlining what factors were taken into account when making the decision as to who should investigate.

** There may be occasions when 'standard practice' does not apply, for example, cases which have already taken a substantial period of protracted debate at informal complaint stage, complaints for which there is evidence that it could progress e.g. via litigation or disciplinary processes, but in such instances, the reason for that decision will be documented in full. All involved with the investigation will remain impartial throughout the complaint / investigation process. All personnel involved with the investigation of a complaint will adhere to confidentiality throughout the process.*

If at any point during the investigation process new complaints are highlighted, or the original complaint changes significantly, a new investigation process will commence. This will be agreed via a discussion between the Chair of the Panel, the Chair of the Governing Board and the Governor appointed as the Independent Investigating Officer. Should the confirmed complaint differ from the original complaint already investigated within the school, the matter will be formally referred back to the school for investigation before the panel considers the complaint.

If at any point during the entire complaints handling process, including the Panel process, information is provided by the complainant that could be considered as a serious allegation to be handled via the Disciplinary Policy or a potential legal matter, the process will be put on hold and external HR or legal advice will be obtained.

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, you may request that the Governing Board reviews the process followed by the school, in handling the complaint. Any such request must be made in writing to the Clerk to the Governing Board, within 10 school days of receiving notice of the outcome, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure. The procedure described below will be followed. A Review Request form is provided for your convenience.

All formal complaints will continue to be reported anonymously to the Governing Board meetings as part of the Headteacher's report. Any further detail necessary to be reported to the Governing Board will be reported within the confidential section of the meeting.

A Complaint's Annual Report will be presented to the Governing Board outlining the number of formal complaints and informal complaints received; including nature of complaint, trends, actions and learning points.

Review Process

Any review of the process followed by the school will be conducted by a panel of three members of the Governing Board who are impartial to the situation. This will usually take place within 10 school days of receipt of your request.

The review will normally be conducted through a consideration of written submissions, but reasonable requests to make oral representations should be considered.

Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

Role of the Board of Governors:

The Board of Governors has:

- a duty to have in place a complaints procedure
- delegated powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel and visitors to the school are aware of and comply with this policy
- responsibility for receiving an update of compliments, comments, concerns and complaints at each meeting of the Governing Board
- to put in place a self-evaluation process to monitor the way complaints are dealt with
- responsibility of taking into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and will make any modifications necessary to this policy
- responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all equalities legislation
- responsibility for reviewing this and relevant policies and procedures to ensure the clear scope of the documents is apparent i.e. whether the policies apply to staff or pupils
- responsibility for ensuring policies are available to parents

- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy
- responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

Role of the Headteacher:

The Headteacher will:

- log complaints received by the school and how they were resolved
- have responsibility for providing an update of compliments, comments, concerns and complaints at each meeting of the Governing Board
- ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware and comply with this policy
- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy
- report to the Board of Governors on the success and development of this policy

Raising Awareness of this Policy

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- the school's website
- Staff induction
- meetings with parents
- meetings with school personnel
- communications with home e.g. Newsletters

At any point in the application of this policy, where the process is compromised by the way in which complaints are addressed, our Vexatious Complaints Policy may be used in conjunction.