

KESTON CE PRIMARY

Complaints Policy

Review Body: Headteacher
Date: September 2017
Review: September 2019

Introduction

This policy applies to most complaints made to the school where a complaint is defined as a general concern over any subject relating to the education or welfare of a pupil. The resolution of a complaint should be seen as a potential opportunity for development. Principles of justice help us to recognise that the individual has a right to state a point of view and those against whom a complaint is made have the right to know as soon as possible. Separate policies exist for specific concerns covered by statutory requirements which include staff discipline and grievance, admissions, SEN provision, whistleblowing and child protection issues.

This policy complies with the Complaints Policy of the Aquinas Church of England Education Trust (the Trust).

Principles

- Complaints procedure is readily accessible to parents so that they know how to raise concerns.
- Complainants will be kept informed of the handling of a complaint.
- Procedures are as speedy as possible to ensure fairness to all.
- Confidentiality is important and communication will be treated with discretion. However information must be shared to carry out a thorough investigation.
- All complaints will be recorded and monitored to identify issues.
- If it becomes apparent that a complaint has the potential to lead to a disciplinary issue then advice will be sought.

Aims

- Encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible.
- To ensure openness with regard to procedures for dealing with a complaint.
- To inspire trust and confidence of parents and guardians in the procedures adopted by the school.
- To protect the rights and professional integrity of staff members and other employees of the school.
- To ensure that the process is fair and impartial

Procedure

The Headteacher has responsibility for this policy and its implementation. Certain operational aspects of the policy may be delegated to a member of the senior leadership team. The nature of complaints which fall within the remit of this policy include curriculum/ educational, behavioural or relate to staff conduct, but they are not limited to these areas.

The complaints procedure has three stages in school:

- Stage 1 Informal resolution of a complaint
- Stage 2 Formal complaint
- Stage 3 Appeal to a panel of Aquinas Advisory Council

At each stage, we will be mindful of ways the complaint can be resolved and one or more of the following may be appropriate:

- An apology.
- An explanation.
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better.
- An assurance that the event complained of will not occur again.
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again.

- An agreement to review school policies or procedures as a result of the complaint.

Stage 1: Informal resolution of a complaint

The initial contact can be made by telephone or in writing to the class teacher or line manager depending on who or what is the subject of the complaint.

This member of staff will discuss the nature of the concern, establish what outcome the parent is seeking and ensure the complainant that the school is interested. Name, date and contact details will be recorded. If the member of staff is unable to deal with this then he/she must ensure that the parent is clear who will deal with the issue and when this will happen.

If an interview is arranged then members of staff may request the presence of a third party (companion). Details of the interview will be recorded during the interview and agreed by all parties at the end of the interview.

The complainant must be clearly informed about what will happen (including if no action is to be taken) and the next steps or outcome should be communicated as soon as possible.

If no satisfactory resolution is obtained at this stage then details of the complaint should be passed to the Headteacher.

(In the case of a complaint against the Headteacher parents have the opportunity to refer the matter directly to the Chief Executive of the Trust.)

Stage 2: Formal complaint

If a complaint progresses to this stage parents will be asked to put the complaint and their desired outcome in writing to the Headteacher. In the case of a complaint against the Headteacher the complaint must be made in writing to include the desired outcome to the chief executive of the Trust.

There will be a written response within 10 school days outlining the procedure and setting a target date for response

The Headteacher may choose to meet with the complainant and obtain further details of the complaint. The Headteacher will investigate the circumstances of the complaint and in doing so may request statements from member of staff and pupils and all relevant documentation. Evidence and written records of all meetings and telephone calls will be collected. If the complaint concerns a member of staff, that member of staff has a right to be given details of the complaint and the opportunity to make representations in relation to the complaint.

Allegations regarding a member of staff should be reported to the Headteacher immediately and the Trust's Allegations of Abuse against Staff Policy must be followed.

The Headteacher will then either write to the complainant or arrange a meeting to resolve the matter. The meeting will be followed by a letter summarising the outcome. The letter will also inform the complainant that s/he has the right to appeal against the outcome to appeal to a panel of the Aquinas Advisory Council. The complainant should notify the Chair of Aquinas Advisory Council of an appeal within 10 school days of receiving the outcome letter.

Stage 3: Appeal to a panel of Aquinas Advisory Council

It is unusual for a complaint to reach the appeals stage but the Aquinas Advisory Council will establish an appeals panel of three members to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and complainant. Panel members will have had no prior involvement with the case.

The written appeal will be sent to the appeal panel.

The clerk to the appeal panel will send a written response to the complainant informing them that the complaint will be heard within 10 school days from receipt of the complaint.

The appeal panel will convene at a time suited to both complainant and school. All parties, including witnesses, must have at least 10 school days' notice of the time and date of the meeting. The complainant will be invited to submit additional written evidence and allowed to bring a friend, relative or advocate with him/her. Interpretation facilities will be made available if required.

All documents should be sent to all parties five working days before the meeting.

The chair of the appeal panel should ensure that full minutes are taken and that the meeting is kept as informal as possible to keep everyone at their ease. When all evidence and issues have been raised the Chair of the panel will inform all parties that they will receive the decision in writing within 10 school days.

When everyone has left the panel will remain to judge:

- The validity of the complaint and uphold or dismiss it in whole or in part.
- Appropriate action to be taken by the school and/or parent.
- Recommendations on changes to school systems or procedures to ensure similar problems do not arise in the future.

There is no further right of appeal at the school. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome and wishes to take the matter further the must complete the form available at:

www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/schoolperformance/school-complaints-form

Recording Complaints

A written record must be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with the school's formal complaint's procedure (stage 2). The record must include details of whether the complaint was resolved following a formal procedure (stage 2), or proceed to an appeal panel hearing (stage 3) and the action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). Details of the number of formal complaints must also be recorded on the school's website

Monitoring, Evaluation

The Headteacher will monitor the level and nature of complaints and the policy will be evaluated in the light of complaints made and their resolution and the necessary changes will be made to this policy.