Complaints Policy

Policy Originator	Lisa Rawashdeh
Governor Responsible	Tom Spencer
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Policy Origin	**Haringey**
Changes since last version	**No Changes**

Concerns

At Ferry Lane Primary School we believe in fostering an effective partnership with parents and carers to improve the progress of our children and ensure that they are safe and happy. We realise that from time to time parents and carers will have concerns about various aspects of their children's lives at school. A concern is different to a complaint in that it may be the concerned party has some questions they want to explore or suggestions they want to make. We invite parents to discuss these concerns informally as and when they arise. In most cases this will mean a discussion with your child's class teacher. We have found that the vast majority of concerns can be explored successfully by this course of action. We will also seek our parents/carers perspectives through a range of measures including forums, surveys and questionnaires.

Complaints

Sometimes a parent or carer may feel strongly that the school has not dealt with a particular issue effectively and may want to express some dissatisfaction. Issues might include concerns about the school's provision and/or support for children with special educational needs (SEN). They may have an expectation that this issue will be redressed, some definitive action will follow, or that some change to school policy will be effected. This may be because a particular concern has not been resolved or that they feel there has been some injustice perpetrated.

We would like to point out that it is not appropriate for a parent to approach any governor personally to discuss their complaint. Instead all complaints should be handled by following this policy's protocols. The following process outlines what steps should be taken if a parent or carer has a complaint:

Stage One – Informal Resolution

If parents have a complaint (as with concerns) they should normally contact their child's teacher in the first instance. In many cases the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the teacher cannot solve the complaint alone it may be necessary for him or her to consult the Headteacher or the deputy.

Stage Two – Informal Resolution

If the member of staff is unable to resolve the complaint, or it is about a member of staff, parents should contact the Headteacher, who may deal with it themselves or ask another senior member of staff to deal with it.

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parent/carers should put their complaint in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
In most cases, the Headteacher will speak to the parents concerned, normally within five school days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
It may be necessary for the Headteacher to carry out further investigations. The Headteacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
Once the Headteacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents/carers will be informed of this decision in writing within five school days of the meeting. The Headteacher will give reasons for his decision.

Stage 3 - Formal Resolution

If parents are not satisfied with the decision – or if the complaint relates to the Headteacher – they must refer the matter to the Chair of Governors who will try to reach an agreement following the same procedures, within the same elapsed timescales, as outlined for the Headteacher above. In this instance the written complaint can be left with the office staff in an envelope clearly marked for the Chair of Governors.
If the parents are still dissatisfied with the outcome they may then consider proceeding to Stage 4 of this procedure.

Stage 4 – Panel Hearing

If parents/carers feel that stage 3 has not adequately resolved their complaint then they should write to the Chair of Governors with their complaint requesting a Governors' Complaints Panel Meeting. The Chair will convene a panel of three governors that have no knowledge of the details of the complaint to hold a hearing. The Panel Chair will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within ten school days.

If the panel deems it necessary then they may require that particulars of the complaint are provided to them in advance of the hearing. The panel of three will appoint a chair from amongst them for the hearing. Minutes will be taken throughout the hearing.
Parents/carers may be accompanied by one other person for the hearing and this would normally be a relative or friend. It would not normally be legal representation and this is discouraged.

If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried

out. After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within ten school days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The panel may:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- Recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headteacher, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

Stage 5 – Request an LA Review

If exceptional circumstances where parents/carers are not satisfied with the panel's decision they can write to the Director of Children's Services at 48-62 Station Road, Wood Green, London. N22 7TY.