

## Howard Street Nursery School COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Howard Street Nursery School wants their pupils to be happy, healthy and safe, and to achieve to their best potential. We recognise that parents, guardians and carers play a very important part in making this happen. The school will always try to work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure all children are well provided for in every respect. When parents or carers have a concern or complaint we ask that parents talk to us right away so we can quickly put things right. The school has in place this complaint policy and procedure. This policy sets out the process parents and or carer's should follow if they do wish to discuss a concern or progress to a formal complaint with the school.

If there is a complaint about a school issue, it is the responsibility of the school, and not the local authority, to investigate most complaints.

### **How to share a concern?**

#### **Informal Stage**

In the first instance any concerns should be raised as soon as possible either by letter, telephone conversation or in person with the teacher or key worker. Most concerns are resolved in this way without the need to engage the formal process.

The complaint will then be investigated and a response will be given to the complainant, making clear any action or monitoring of a situation that may be necessary. At this stage, misunderstandings can usually be cleared up. Everyone benefits from the speedy resolution of difficulties and from suggestions for improvement. (If the concern or complaint is about the Head Teacher then it should be taken to the Chair of the School Governing Body who will deal with the concern or complaint.) It is in everybody's interest, particularly the child or children, for concerns and complaints to be sorted out quickly and smoothly.

If the concern or complaint cannot be resolved informally by the teacher or key worker then it can be progressed through the formal complaints procedure. As identified below:

#### **Stage One: Formal (if unresolved at informal stage) Complaint Heard by the Head Teacher**

- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response from the member of staff at the informal stage, they should be advised to put their complaint in writing to the Head Teacher. The letter should set out clearly the issues which have previously been discussed and why the parent, carer or guardian, consider the issues to be unresolved and what they feel may resolve the complaint. They may also attach evidence to support their concerns. If the complaint is about the Head Teacher, the complaint should be put in writing, to the Chair of Governors.

- An investigation into the complaint will be carried out by the appropriate person, Head teacher or Chair of Governors.
- The complaint will be dealt with, within 20 working school days. If an extension is required the Head Teacher will contact the complainant to explain the delay with the response.
- When all the relevant facts have been established, a written response will be given to the complainant. Including the conclusion to the investigation and any actions that will be taken as a result. The decision may be communicated by the Head teacher to the complainant in writing, or if they feel appropriate, meet with them first to communicate their findings and then communicate with them in writing afterwards.  
NB: In some circumstances, a parent may feel that an interim step is more appropriate, and may wish to discuss the complaint with the Head teacher and discuss a resolution. The Head teacher will make notes regarding the discussion had.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome and wishes to take the matter further they should write to the Chair of the Governing Body. A further investigation will be carried out: By the Chair of Governors if they have not had any previous involvement; or by the governing body's Complaints Committee.

### **Stage Two: Formal (if not resolved at stage 1) Complaint Heard by Chair of Governors**

- The complainant will need to write to the Chair of Governors giving details of their complaint, why they are dissatisfied with the decision, the recommendations and actions of the stage 1 complaint and what they require to resolve the matter. Also enclosing where possible a copy of the response to their complaint received from the Head teacher.
- The Chair of Governors will acknowledge receipt of the complaint usually in writing in 20 working days, and will arrange to meet, further discuss the complaint and try to find a satisfactory resolution. Where appropriate the Chair of Governors may make further enquires and will write to confirm details of the outcome.
- The complainant is also informed if they are still not satisfied they can write to the Governing Body directly via the school outlining why they feel the complaint is unresolved.
- If the complaint is still not resolved then the complainant may request that the Chair of Governors arranges for a Governing Body Complaint Appeal Panel to hear their complaint.

### **Stage Three: Formal (if not resolved at stage 2) Review by the Governing Body Complaints Committee**

- The complaint is heard by the Governing Body. This is the final stage of the process.
- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response from the Chair of Governors (or Vice chair) at stage 2.
- The complainant must ensure that they include details of why they are still dissatisfied with the decision of the Chair, recommendations and actions of the stage 2 complaint and what they feel would resolve the matter. They can also provide evidence to support their concerns in addition to that submitted at stages 1 and 2.
- The complaint will be acknowledged within 10 school days.
- The complaint committee will be made up of Governing Body members who have had no prior involvement in the complaint, and will be at least 3 governors.
- The complaints committee can decide to:
  - Convene a meeting with the complainant. If a meeting is convened, the person chairing the meeting either the chair or vice chair (whomever did not deal with stage 2), will write to the complainant to acknowledge the complaint within 10 school days. Their letter will include the date, time and venue of the convened meeting.
  - Decide appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.
- For non-complex complaints, not to meet with the complainant, but to use all the information available to them and make a decision on the complaint as there is enough information to allow for a decision to be made.
- It is the Chair's responsibility to ensure that the meeting is properly conducted and where required minuted.
- It may be possible for the panel to enable a resolution to be found that all parties can agree, or if a resolution cannot be reached it may only be possible for the committee to identify a constructive way forward.
- Following the committee meeting the complainant will be informed in writing of the panel's decision and detailing any recommendations made by the committee members in respect of the complaint.

The Governing Body Complaint Committee is the final stage of the school based complaint procedure. Should parents/carers remain dissatisfied with the way the school has responded to their complaint then they have the right to write to the Secretary of State for Education.

We hope very much that our complaints procedure will resolve all complaints in the school but a parent who is not satisfied may refer certain complaints to Ofsted. More information is available for parents wishing to make a complaint about the school from the Department of Education and from Ofsted. You are strongly recommended to follow the school complaints policy and procedure before taking your complaint further. However if you are not satisfied that your complaint about the nursery school has been addressed, you can contact Ofsted directly on 0300 123 1231 (lines are open between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday).

- The local authority cannot investigate a complaint; it can only investigate the process followed by the governing body.

### **Further information**

The outcome letter from the School Complaints Panel exhausts the 4 stage procedure. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the process, they are able to contact:

The Secretary of State Education.  
The School Complaints Unit (SCU)  
Department for Education  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Piccadilly Gate  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

Enquires/contact: 0370 000 2288 or [www/education.gov.uk/help/contact us](http://www/education.gov.uk/help/contact-us)

The SCU will examine if the school complaints policy and any other relevant processes were followed. The SCU will also examine policies to determine if they adhere to education legislation. However, the SCU will not re-investigate the substance of the complaint.

### **Nursery will keep a written record of all complaints and their outcomes.**

*Most concerns or complaints are of a general nature and are dealt with by the school and its own complaints procedure. However, concerns or complaints about any of the following issues should be made in writing to the local authority.*

*These are specifically concerns about areas where the authority has a statutory duty:*

*The provision of the national curriculum (contact the School Improvement Service);*

*The provision of religious education and collective worship (with the exception of Church Aided Schools) (contact the School Improvement Service);*

*School admission appeals (contact the legal and democratic service)  
Exclusions (contact Pupil Welfare and Inclusion Team, Learners and Young People Service);  
Special educational needs assessments (contact Special Education Needs team, Learners and Young People Service); and  
Child protection issues and allegations of child abuse (contact the Education Welfare Team, Learners and Young People Service).*

Date: September 2017 Date of Review September 2020

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair of Governors

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher

## Appendix 1: model form to use when making a complaint

Please complete and return to the school office who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupils name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address:  Postcode:  Email address:  Daytime telephone number:  Evening telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint:

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.  
(Who did you speak to and what was the response)?

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

**OFFICIAL USE**

Date acknowledgement sent:

By Who:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

Signature of staff member:

