



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY

The Complaints Procedure Policy reflects our **vision and values** which are:

“Learn to think, think to learn”

Honesty
Self worth
Resilience
Responsibility
Respect

Craneswater Junior School subscribes to Portsmouth City Council’s Making Complaints about Schools Procedures document.

The school is a complex network of relationships, processes, procedures, responsibilities and roles. Disagreements and dissatisfaction will naturally arise from time to time (relating to policies and practices, curriculum, perceived attitudes and actions of school members).

The purpose of this policy is to clarify for parents, staff and governors the procedures for complaints.

Aim:

- To ensure that complaints are dealt with quickly, fairly and efficiently. We aim to resolve concerns and complaints on an informal basis with the class teacher and/or headteacher and through doing so develop respect and mutual understanding.

Procedures:

There are three levels of complaint:

- Informal level
- Formal complaint to the Governing Body
- Formal complaint to the Secretary of State

The Informal Level

- If you have any worries or complaints, you should refer your concerns to your child’s class teacher. They may or may not refer the matter to a member of the management team.

We will work on the assumption that a mutual good is being sought and will expect those making the

complaint to assume the same of staff.

We will listen to each other and try to identify the cause of the complaint and the objectives and intentions of the staff.

We will discuss strategies for resolution and aim for agreement of action to be taken when necessary. This usually enables problems to be sorted out quickly to everyone's satisfaction.

- Teachers are usually available to see parents at the end of school. If the situation is urgent you may be able to see the teacher before school starts or at lunch time. It is helpful if you make an appointment, either by contacting the school office or sending a note in with your child. Teachers are not available to discuss concerns or complaints during class time.
- If you are not satisfied following such discussions, you may wish to bring your concerns to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher's personal attention. Most problems are sorted out to everyone's satisfaction in this way.

Formal complaint to the governing body

If you are still unhappy, you can complain directly to the governing body of the school. The school office will give you a copy of the City Council's Making Complaints about Schools Procedures document.

You will need to make the complaint in writing and send it to the clerk of the governing body. The complaint will then be investigated. Urgent cases will be considered a priority.

The complaint will be heard by a panel of governors, usually three. They will not previously have been involved in any detailed discussion of your complaint. You will be able to call upon evidence in support of your case. You will be informed of the panel's decision in writing.

The Secretary of State

If you are still dissatisfied after the Governing Body has considered your complaint, you may then complain to the Secretary of State.

*Reviewed by the Full Governing Body on the 29th November 2017
Date of next Review: November 2018*

Appendix A

Portsmouth School Complaints Procedures 2016

In order to investigate your complaint as fully as possible the governing board of Craneswater Junior School School have implemented a staged approach.

Stage 1: Informal contact - dealing with concerns

- 1.1. Parents are always welcome to discuss any concerns with the appropriate member of staff, who will clarify with the parent the nature of the concern and reassure them that the school wants to hear about it. The member of staff may explain to the parent how the situation happened. It can be helpful at this point to identify what sort of outcome the parent is looking for.
- 1.2. If the member of staff first contacted cannot immediately deal with the matter, s/he will make a clear note of the date, name and contact address or phone number.
- 1.3. All members of staff will know how to refer, if necessary, to the person with responsibility for the particular issue raised by the parent. S/he will check later to make sure the referral has been dealt with.
- 1.4. If the matter is brought to the attention of the Headteacher s/he may decide to deal with concerns directly at this stage (*applicable in smaller schools or with more serious complaints*); if the complaint is against the Headteacher the parent will be advised to contact the Chair of the Governing Board.
- 1.5. The member of staff dealing with the concern will make sure the parent is clear what action (if any) or monitoring of the situation has been agreed, putting it in writing if appropriate.
- 1.6. Where no satisfactory solution has been found within ten days, parents will be advised that if they wish their concern to be considered further they should write to the Headteacher.

Stage 2: Referral to the Headteacher for investigation

- 2.1 The Headteacher (or designated person) will acknowledge the complaint in writing within three working days of receiving the written complaint. The acknowledgement will give a brief explanation of the school's complaints procedure and a target date for providing a response to the complaint. This should normally be within ten working days. If this proves impossible, a letter will be sent explaining the reason for the delay and giving a revised target date.
- 2.2 The Headteacher will provide an opportunity for the complainant to meet them to supplement any information provided previously. It will be made clear to the complainant that if s/he wishes s/he might be accompanied to any meeting by a friend, relative, representative or advocate who can speak on his/her behalf.

STATUTORY

- 2.3 If necessary the Headteacher will interview witnesses and take statements from those involved. If the complaint centres on a pupil, the pupil should also be interviewed. Pupils should normally be interviewed with parents/guardians present, but if this would seriously delay the investigation of a serious/urgent complaint or if the pupil has specifically said that s/he would prefer that parents/guardians were not involved, another member of staff with whom the pupil feels comfortable should be present. If a member of staff is complained against, they must have the opportunity to present their case (see General Principles).
- 2.4 The Headteacher will keep written records of meetings, telephone conversations and other documentation.
- 2.5 Once all the relevant facts have been established as far as possible, the Headteacher will then produce a written response to the complainant, including a full explanation of the decision and the reasons for it. Where appropriate, this will include what action the school will take to resolve the complaint. The complainant will be advised that should s/he wish to take the complaint further s/he should notify the Chair of Governors within five weeks of receiving the letter.
- 2.6 If the complaint is against the Headteacher, or if the Headteacher has been closely involved at Stage 1, the Chair of the Governing Board will carry out all the Stage 2 procedures.

Stage 3: Review by the Governing Board

- 3.1 The Chair of the Governing Board will write to the complainant to acknowledge receipt of the written request for the governing board to review the complaint. The acknowledgement will inform the complainant that three members of the school's governing board will hear the complaint within twenty days of receiving the complaint. The letter will also explain that the complainant has the right to submit any further documents relevant to the complaint. These must be received in time for the documents to be sent to the three members.
- 3.2 A meeting of the Governors' Complaints Panel will be convened.
No governors with prior involvement must be included on the panel and it may be necessary to use reserves (previously agreed by the governing board) to ensure the Panel can meet within the set time. If s/he has not previously been involved the Chair should chair the Panel; otherwise the Vice-Chair should do so. Governors should bear in mind the advantages of having a parent governor on the panel, and will also want to be sensitive to issues of race and gender. It is not appropriate for the Headteacher to sit on the Panel.
- 3.3 The Chair/Vice-Chair will ensure the Panel hears the complaint within twenty working days of receiving the letter. All relevant correspondence relating to the complaint will be given to each Panel member as soon as the composition of the panel is confirmed. If the correspondence is extensive, the Chair may prepare a thorough summary for sending to Panel members.
- 3.4 The Chair or clerk will write and inform the complainant, Headteacher, any relevant witnesses and members of the Panel at least five working days in advance of the date, time and place of the meeting. The notification will also inform the complainant of his/her right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend/advocate/interpreter and explain how the meeting will be conducted and the complainant's right to submit further written evidence to the Panel.

STATUTORY

3.5 The Headteacher will be invited to attend the Panel meeting and will be asked to prepare a written report for the Panel in response to the complaint. All concerned should receive any relevant documents including the Headteacher's report, including the complainant, at least five working days prior to the meeting.

The Headteacher may also invite members of staff directly involved in matters raised by the complainant to respond in writing or person, subject to the discretion of the Chair.

3.6 The meeting should allow for:

- The complainant to explain their complaint and the Headteacher to explain the school's response
- The Headteacher to question the complainant about the complaint and the complainant to question the Headteacher and/or other members of staff about the school's response
- Panel members to have an opportunity to question both the complainant and the Headteacher
- Any party to have the right to call witnesses (subject to approval of the Chair) and all parties having the right to question all the witnesses
- Final statements by both the complainant and the Headteacher.

It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Panel to ensure that it is properly minuted.

3.7 The Chair of the Panel will explain to the complainant and Headteacher that the Panel will consider its decision and that a written decision will be sent to both parties within 15 working days. The complainant, Headteacher, other members of staff and witnesses will then leave.

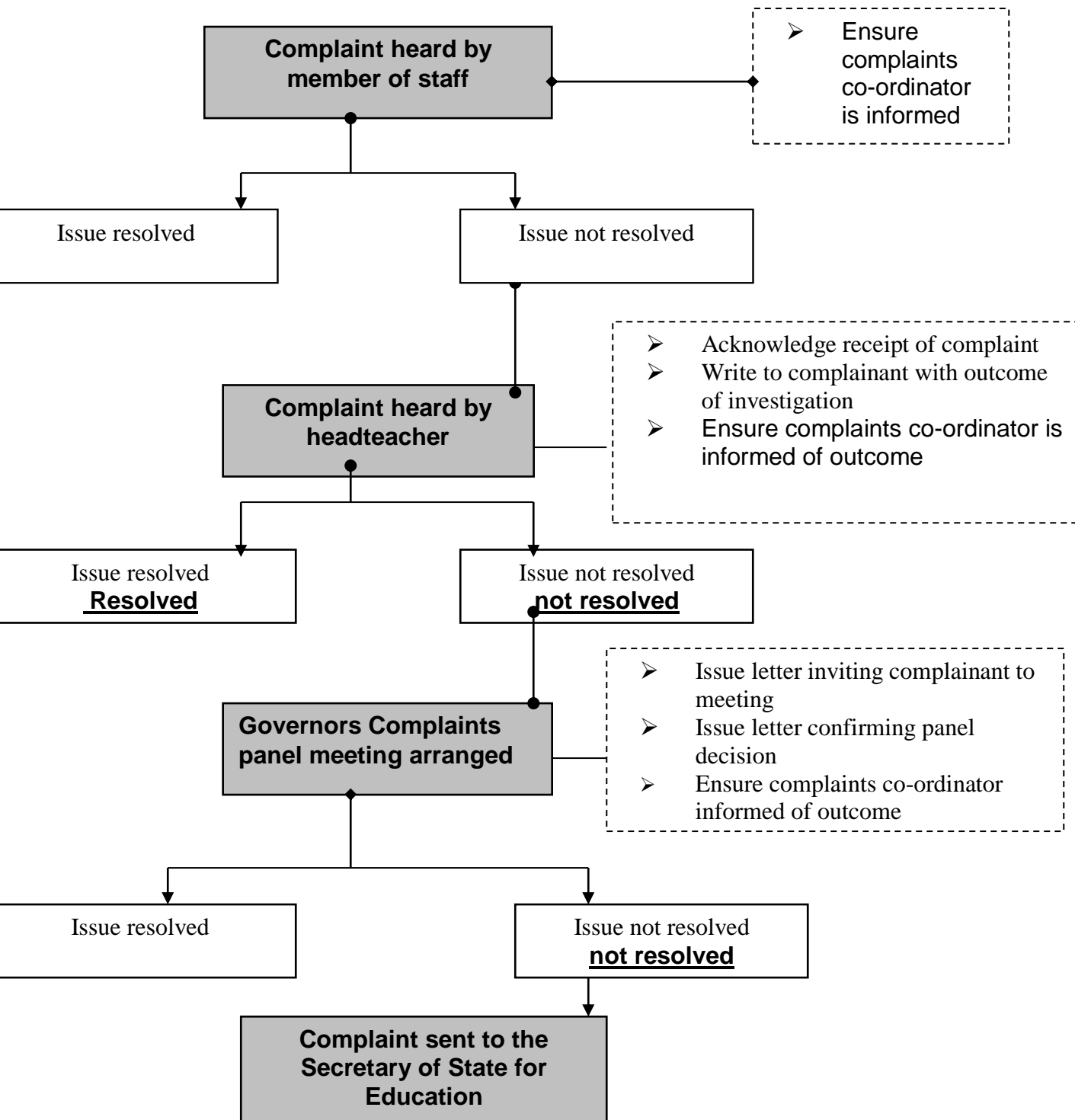
3.8 The Panel will then consider the complaint and all the evidence presented and:

- Reach a unanimous, or at least a majority decision on the complaint;
- Decide upon the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint; and
- Where appropriate, suggest recommended changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not happen again.

3.9 A written statement outlining the decision of the Panel must be sent to the complainant and Headteacher. The letter to the complainant should also explain whether a further appeal can be made, and if so, to whom.

3.10 The school should ensure that a copy of all correspondence and notes are kept on file in the school's records. These records should be kept separately from the pupil's personal records.

Appendix B Flowchart of complaints about school (excluding Headteacher)



Appendix C

Flowchart of complaints about a Headteacher

