

## Somerles Junior School

### Complaints Policy

*To be reviewed and ratified at the FGB Resources & Finance Committee: 15.10.18*

*Review: Autumn 2021*

#### GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Complaints fall into two categories. Those concerning statutory provision, and those related to the delivery of education and everyday occurrences within the school. The initial procedures are the same in both cases but in the case of a complaint about statutory provision the Complainant, if not satisfied with the outcome, has the right of appeal to the Local Education Authority.
2. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, by a parent/carer or person with a legitimate interest in the school, but not employed to work at the school, about school policies or procedures, the conduct, actions or omissions of members of staff employed at the school and the standards of teaching and learning.
3. Initially most complaints will be verbal. There should not be a requirement for the complainant to put their complaint in writing at the informal stages.
4. When an anonymous complaint is received the Head Teacher will use his/her professional discretion as to how to proceed.
5. Any Governor, who is approached by a parent/carer wishing to complain about the school, should direct them to take their complaint to the relevant member of staff. There will be some instances, for example when the complaint is about the Head Teacher, when it would be appropriate for the Complainant to be advised to speak to the Chair of the Governing Body instead of the Head Teacher. Similarly any Complainant who approaches the LA, will be referred back to the Head Teacher or the Chair of the Governing body. If a parent/carer is still dissatisfied after the full complaints procedure has been followed, they have the right to complain to Ofsted directly.
6. It is important that all concerns are taken seriously. Children learn best when there is an effective partnership between the school and the parent/carers. All members of the school community are entitled to have their points of view properly considered.
7. It is very important that all complaints are dealt with as swiftly as possible. Failure to address complaints promptly frequently results in greater dissatisfaction. Complaints and concerns related to issues, which occurred more than three months before, will generally be ruled 'out of time'.
8. All front facing staff are expected to have an acceptable level of spoken English language. Legitimate complaints about the standard of spoken English will be investigated, however, the school are not obliged to respond to complaints that are about accent, dialect, manner or tone of communication, origin or nationality.



## **INFORMAL STAGES**

9. A copy of the school's complaints policy is on the school website. Parent/carers are advised to refer concerns to the class teacher. If the concerns are still not resolved, they will be escalated to the Year Group Leader.
10. If the Complainant is not satisfied with the response from the class teacher/Year Group Leader they should be advised to take their complaint to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
11. There will be instances, depending on the seriousness of the complaint, when the Complainant will directly approach the Head Teacher with their complaint, or the Chair of the Governing body will refer complaints to the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher will investigate the complaint and respond to the Complainant as soon as possible either in writing or by way of a meeting. Hopefully this will resolve the complaint.

## **FORMAL STAGE ONE**

### ***INVOLVEMENT OF THE CHAIR OF THE GOVERNING BODY***

12. If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the response from the Head Teacher they should be advised of their right to write to the Chair of the Governing Body setting out their complaint.
13. The Chair of the Governing Body, or a Governor nominated by the Chair, will meet, as soon as possible, with the Complainant and then the Head Teacher. Having considered the complaint the Chair, or the nominated Governor, will either write to the Complainant with his/her findings or meet with the Complainant and the Head Teacher in an attempt to resolve the matter. The Chair of the Governing Body may wish to seek advice, and or, support from the LA at this stage in the procedure.
14. Should either the Complainant or the Head Teacher be dissatisfied with the outcome of the Governors' investigation they may ask for the matter to be referred to a panel of the Governing Body by writing to the clerk of the Governing Body setting out the reasons for the referral and providing the other party with a copy.

## **FORMAL STAGE TWO**

### ***GOVERNING BODY PANEL HEARING***

15. It is good practice for the Governing Body at their autumn meeting to elect a panel, in accordance with the School Government Regulations, for the resolution of complaints. It is advisable to select three Governors for the panel and two named reserves.
16. The clerk will arrange a suitable date and time for the hearing.
17. Both the Complainant and the Head Teacher will provide the clerk with any documentation to be used at the hearing, and the names of any witnesses to be called, at least five days before the hearing takes place.
18. The clerk will distribute all documentation to both parties and to the members of the panel at least three days before the hearing.
19. The Complainant and the Head Teacher will be advised by the clerk that they may be accompanied by a friend or representative at the hearing.

20. The procedure to be followed at the hearing is as follows:

- The panel will have agreed a chair for the meeting and made arrangements for a note taker to be present.
- The Complainant and the Head Teacher, together with their friend/representative enter the hearing.
- The Chair explains the purpose of the meeting and introduces those present.
- The person calling the hearing presents their case calling on witnesses, if any, to support their case.
- The panel and the respondent have an opportunity to question witnesses and the person calling the hearing.
- The Respondent presents their case calling on witnesses, if any.
- The respondent and witnesses can be questioned by the panel and the other party.
- Both parties sum up their cases.
- Both parties withdraw
- The panel considers the case and writes to both parties within seven days to advise them of their findings.

21. The panel does not have any disciplinary powers. Should they reach a conclusion that there is a possibility that an employee may have behaved unprofessionally the matter should be referred to the Head Teacher or the Chair of the Governing body who will consult with officers of the LA.

22. The Complainant has the right of appeal to the Local Authority **ONLY** in the case of complaints about **statutory provision** and will be advised of their rights. In cases of GENERAL complaints about the school the Complainant may pursue their complaint with the Secretary of State.