

RAMSEY MANOR LOWER SCHOOL **POLICY FOR RESOLVING COMPLAINTS**

Ramsey Manor Lower School is committed to safeguarding children and providing a safe, secure and healthy environment for all to learn and grow..
Ramsey Manor Lower School is a Values Education School. Our Values underpin everything we do.

STATUS: STATUTORY

DATE ADOPTED: June 2006

Policy agreed by staff: RS date: Dec 2018

Policy agreed by Governors: HA date: Dec 2018

Date of next review: Dec 2023

INTRODUCTION

Parents may have concerns associated with their children at school. Many of these concerns will resolve themselves, but occasionally it may be necessary for the school to be contacted for help and advice.

As partners in children's education, the school wishes to work with parents/carers in the resolution of problems and this policy is designed to show the steps to be taken.

The resolution of a concern can take the three steps, which are described in detail below.

Where a complaint is judged by the Governing Body to be vexatious, the complainant will be informed by the Governing Body, that their complaint will not be accepted and will not be investigated.

If a complainant believes that the Governing Body has acted illegally or arbitrarily in the handling of a complaint, then the complainant may make representation to the Secretary of State for Education.

There may be occasions in the Headteacher's absence, where the Headteacher may delegate the Deputy Head to take responsibility for resolving the complaint. The Chair of Governors may delegate another member of the Governing Body to act in their absence.

(i) AN INFORMAL CONCERN

On most occasions these can be resolved immediately by speaking to the child's class teacher. It may be necessary to make an appointment at a time which is convenient for both parties.

The teacher will need to know the nature of the concern when making an appointment, so that they may investigate further if necessary.

The purpose of the meeting should be to establish a solution or agree a plan of action to resolve the concern. If the meeting fails to do so then an appointment will need to be made to see the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will normally make any further investigations and meet with the parent/carer to suggest a workable solution. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, a further meeting with the Headteacher may be requested or the matter may become the subject of a Formal Complaint.

It is important that the due procedure is followed with a view to seeking a resolution to a concern or complaint. A failure to follow the procedure may result in the procedure being terminated by the Governing Body.

(ii) A FORMAL COMPLAINT

If the concern is not resolved at the informal stage then it must be put in writing and passed to the Headteacher who will either investigate the matter or delegate this responsibility to a senior colleague. The complaint should include details which might assist the investigation such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events and copies of relevant documents. The Headteacher may meet with the complainant to clarify the matter. On the conclusion of the investigation, the Headteacher will write to the complainant with the outcome of the investigation. If the outcome of the investigation results in the implementation of staff disciplinary procedures, such procedures remain strictly confidential.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed or if the complaint is about the Headteacher then a full written complaint should be made to the Chair of Governors at the School's address. The Chair of Governors will write to the complainant to confirm receipt of your letter and will investigate the matter fully and reply within a further 5 working days. In some circumstances the Chair may ask another Governor to carry out the investigation on their behalf.

The Chair will collect such evidence as is deemed necessary and may interview other witnesses. The Headteacher will be provided with a copy of the complaint and any evidence presented by the complainant or collected by the Chair.

Once there has been an opportunity for the Headteacher to consider this he/she will meet separately with the Chair to present a response. A friend or representative may accompany the Headteacher at this meeting. On the conclusion of this meeting the complainant and the Headteacher will be informed in writing of the outcome. The complainant will not be informed of any disciplinary or capability action which might ensue.

This will then bring the Chair's investigation to a close. If the complainant is not satisfied with the way in which the complaint has been investigated, a request may be for the Governing Body to hold a formal review of the process, which will take the form of a hearing. Any such request must be made in writing within two weeks of receiving notice of the outcome of the Chair's investigation and must state the reasons for the implementation of the next stage. Please note, the complainant is not entitled to access to any details of the investigation except for any statements that may have been provided by their child.

Records of all investigation regarding formal complaints will be kept in the school archives for a minimum of seven years.

(iii) A FORMAL REVIEW

On receiving a request for the complaint to be taken to the next stage the Chair of Governors will write to the complainant within five working days to inform them of the date and time of the hearing and the composition of the panel who will hear the complaint.

The hearing may take one of two forms at the discretion of the panel of the Governing Body. The complainant may be invited to attend the meeting, given the opportunity to inform the Governing Body of the details of the concern. The Governors may question the complainant to seek further clarification of the details of the concern. The complainant may bring a friend to the hearing. The governors will then ask the complainant to leave and will then meet with the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors to seek their view of the issue. The Headteacher may be accompanied by a friend or representative. Once the Governors have clarified any issues, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors will be asked to leave whilst they consider their response to the complaint.

Alternatively, the meeting may follow the same course as above but with both parties in attendance for the duration of the hearing. In this case after both parties have stated their case and responded to questions, the complainant and the Headteacher and/or Chair of Governors will be requested to sum up their

positions before being asked to leave. No further questioning will be allowed at this point. The governors will then consider their response.

The Governing Body will write to the complainant and the Head Teacher or Chair, as appropriate, within forty-eight hours of the hearing with their findings. The complainant will not be informed of any disciplinary or capability action which might follow. However, if the investigation does result in a change to the school's policies being implemented, the complainant will be informed in detail of this. This will bring the involvement of the Governing Body to a close and further correspondence cannot be entered into.

Please note that complaints regarding the following are not included in this document: Admissions; National Curriculum; Child Protection; School Excursions; Special Educational Needs and complaints about Governors. For further guidance on these matters, parents are advised to contact the Headteacher who will be able to provide specific information, or they should contact the Local Authority directly.

Links to other policies

Vexatious Complaints Policy

Appendix 1

PROCEDURES FOR GOVERNORS WHEN HANDLING COMPLAINTS

PREFACE

Occasionally parents may make contact with a school governor to resolve a concern.

In receipt of a complaint Governors should remember not to attempt to resolve the complaint. They should remain neutral and follow due process by directing complainants to follow the process set out in this policy and discuss their concerns initially with the class teacher or the Headteacher.

Governors receiving written complaints should share the correspondence with the Headteacher without delay. Parents should be advised that this is the case.

Individual complaints should not be raised at governors meetings unless the meeting is part of the school's complaints procedures.

In the case of a complaint leading to possible disciplinary or legal action against the Headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body must be contacted directly. Under such circumstances the Chair has a responsibility to discuss this immediately with the Headteacher.