

Florencecourt Primary School

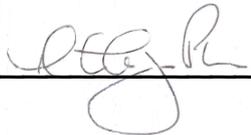


Complaints Procedure

Shining from the inside out
So the World might see....

Date approved by Board of Governors; September 2017

Next policy review date: September 2019 (or if circumstances alter)

Signed  (Chairperson of Board of Governors)

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1. FOREWORD

The Pupils, Staff and Governors at Florencecourt Primary School and Little Bridges Community Nursery seek to be a learning community who encourage one another to be all that they can be. To be individually and collectively a positive people who together radiate a caring, supportive and effective model of education in the communities which the school and nursery serve.

Florencecourt Primary School and Little Bridges Community Nursery aim to:

- Provide a challenging, active and fulfilling learning experience for all children to experience success in learning and to achieve the highest possible standards in academic, sporting, social, cultural, moral and spiritual terms.
- To equip and educate all children in both skills and knowledge to be confident in their abilities, to develop mastery over their own learning and to have the self-confidence to become independent learners who can express their learning in both school, home and the wider community.
- Empower children to understand how being part of our school family, contributes to a strong sense of their own belonging and identity and an understanding of how all children can contribute to our local, national and global community.
- Through the delivery of the Pre-school and Primary curriculum to equip all children with the moral, spiritual and social tools they require as they progress through further education, into adulthood and become lifelong learners.
- To build a firm foundation on which children can grow as individuals, experience success and make responsible choices for themselves. To produce children who make contributions to the society and community they are part of and will become part by their actions, character and contributions in an ever changing world.

As a school we value the opportunity to work in partnership with parents, in providing a safe, secure and happy educational environment for our pupils.

If parents have a concern or complaint, we want to know as soon as possible. Moreover parents can be assured that our support and respect for their children will not be affected in any way.

When parents and teachers treat each other with mutual respect and support, this provides a very good role model for all our children.

What to do first

Most concerns and complaints can be sorted out quickly by speaking with your child's teacher. If you have a complaint which you feel should be considered by the principal, you should contact him as soon as possible. It is usually best to discuss the problem face to face. To do this you may need an appointment which can be arranged by contacting the school office (contact Mae on 028 66348225). The same arrangement applies if you wish to speak with a member of the teaching staff.

The principal or member of staff will make every effort to resolve your problems speedily and efficiently. They will discuss what you feel went wrong, and they will explain what will be done to follow up your complaint. As well as helping to resolve the immediate difficulty it is hoped that speaking with you will help to prevent a similar problem arising again.

2. AIMS

When dealing with complaints the school will;

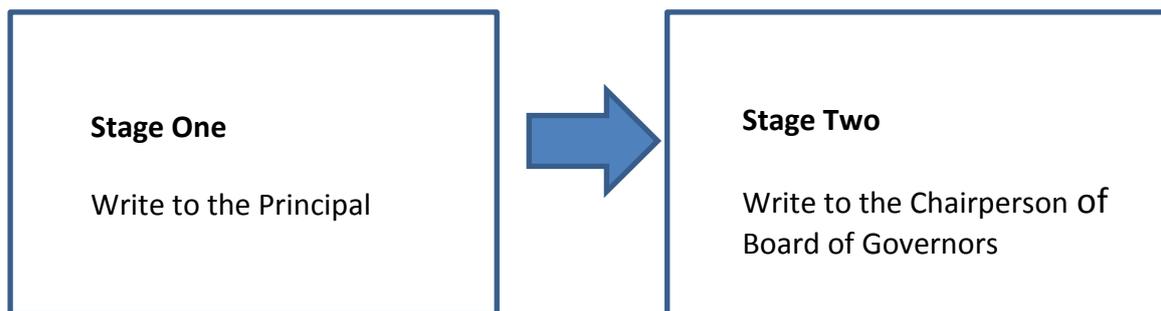
- encourage resolution of all concerns as quickly as possible
- provide timely responses to concerns and complaints
- keep you informed of progress
- ensure a full and fair investigation of your complaint where appropriate
- have due regard for the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved
- respect confidentiality
- fully address complaints and provide an effective response
- take appropriate action to rectify the issue and prevent it happening again where appropriate
- be responsive to learning from outcomes which will inform and improve practice within the school.

A copy of this Procedure is available from the school on request.

3. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE -AT A GLANCE

Time Limit

Please contact the school as soon as possible, unless there are exceptional circumstances, complaints will normally only be considered within 6 months of origin of the complaint to the school.



What to do next - Stage One

If you have addressed your complaint to the teacher and are dissatisfied with the response you can make your concern known to the principal.

If your complaint relates to the principal, then it should be referred to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors. You can write to the Chairperson at the school address.

You may also find it helpful to have a copy of the School's Complaints Procedure as this explains

in detail the procedure to be followed in the event of a complaint against the school. This document is available from the school office.

A full investigation will be conducted as soon as possible. As part of the investigation you or others may be asked for additional information following which you will receive a response to your complaint.

The school requires complaints to be made in writing, where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support you with this process.

Please provide as much information as possible including;

- name and contact details
- what the complaint is about
- what has already been done to try to resolve it and
- what you would like the school to do to resolve the complaint.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 5 school working days and a response normally made within 20 school working days of receipt of the complaint. This response will be issued in writing by the Principal and will indicate with reasons whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods.

If you remain unhappy with the outcome at Stage 1, the complaint may be progressed to Stage 2 which is overseen by the Board of Governors.

Stage Two

If the complaint is unresolved after Stage One, write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors (*care of the school and marked 'private and confidential'*). Where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support the complainant with this process. The Chairperson will convene a committee to review the complaint. Please provide as much detail as possible as indicated above.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 5 school working days and a final response normally made within 20 school working days from date of receipt of the complaint. The response will be issued in writing by the Chairperson of the committee.

These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods.

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO)

If following Stage Two you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you can refer the matter to the Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO).

The Ombudsman provides a free, independent and impartial service for handling complaints about schools in Northern Ireland. You have the right to complain to the Ombudsman if you feel that you have been treated unfairly or have received a poor service from a school and your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction.

A complaint should normally be referred to NIPSO within six months of the final response from the School. The school must advise in its concluding letter that the complaint may be referred to the NIPSO if you remain dissatisfied.

Contact details for NIPSO are:

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman
Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman
Progressive House
33 Wellington Place
Belfast
BT1 6HN

Freepost: FREEPOST NIPSO

Telephone: 02890 233821
Freephone: 0800 34 34 24

Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk
Web: www.nipso.org.uk

4. SCOPE OF COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

4.1 The Complaints Procedure sets out how any expression of dissatisfaction relating to the school will be managed. By taking concerns raised seriously at the earliest possible stage, it is hoped that issues can be resolved quickly and effectively.

Some examples of complaints dealt with;

- not following school policy
- communication delays / lack of communication
- difficulties in staff / pupil relationships.

4.2 Complaints with separate established procedures

Some examples of statutory procedures and appeal mechanisms are listed below. The list is not exhaustive. The Principal/ Chair of Governors will advise on the appropriate procedure to use when the complaint is raised.

Matters may still be referred to NIPSO, if it is felt that maladministration has occurred.

Exceptions	Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Admissions / Expulsions / Exclusion of children from school	Contact www.eani.org.uk Director of Operations and Estates Sara Long
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)	Contact www.eani.org.uk Director of Children and Young People's Services Dr Clare Mangan
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School Development Proposals	Contact www.eani.org.uk Director of Education John Collings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child Protection / Safeguarding	Contact www.eani.org.uk Director of Children and Young People's Services Dr Clare Mangan

4.3 The school will not normally investigate anonymous complaints, unless deemed by the Chairperson of the Board of Governors to be of a serious nature. The decision of whether to deal with such complaints will be at the discretion of the Board of Governors.

5. WHAT TO EXPECT UNDER THIS PROCEDURE

5.1 Your rights as a person making a complaint

In dealing with complaint we will ensure;

- fair treatment
- courtesy
- a timely response
- accurate advice
- respect for privacy - complaints will be treated as confidentially as possible allowing for the possibility of consultation with other appropriate parties about the complaint and
- clear reasons for decisions.

5.2 Your responsibilities as a person making a complaint

In making a complaint it is important to;

- raise issues in a timely manner
- treat our staff with respect and courtesy
- provide accurate and concise information in relation to the issues raised
- use these procedures fully and engage with them at the appropriate levels.

5.3 Rights of parties involved during the investigation

Where a meeting is arranged the complainant may be accompanied but not represented by another person.

This Procedure does not take away from the statutory rights of any of the participants.

5.4 Timeframes

Where concerns are raised with the relevant Teacher or Principal, a response will normally be provided during the meeting or within an agreed timeframe.

Stage 1 - Normally acknowledge within 5 school working days, response normally within 20 school working days

Stage 2 - Normally acknowledge within 5 school working days, response normally within 20 school working days

If, for any reason, the review of a complaint takes longer to complete, you will be informed of revised time limits and kept updated on progress.

These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods.

6. MAKING A COMPLAINT

6.1 Equality

The school requires complaints to be made in writing. Where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support the complainant with this process.

6.2 Unreasonable Complaints

The school is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain.

There will be occasions when, despite all stages of the complaints procedure having been completed and the complaint having been reviewed by the Ombudsman, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If they try to re-open the same issue, the Chair of Governors will inform them that the procedure has been completed and that the matter is now closed.

If the complainant repeatedly continues to contact the school with the same issue it may choose not to respond.