

QUEENSWOOD SCHOOL



Strengthening Our Community

Complaints Policy

STATUTORY POLICY

Agreed by Governors:	July 2015
Reviewed by Governors:	July 2018
To be reviewed:	July 2021

1. AIMS

Our school aims to meet its statutory obligations when responding to complaints from parents of pupils at the school, and others.

When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel, where necessary
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response
- Respect complainants' desire for confidentiality
- Treat complainants with respect
- Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process
- Consider how the complaint can feed into school improvement evaluation processes

We try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed.

The school will aim to give the complainant the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full.

To support this, we will ensure we publicise the existence of this policy and make it available on the school website.

2. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This document meets the requirements of section 29 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which states that schools must have and make available a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides.

It is also based on [guidance for schools on complaints procedures](#) from the Department for Education (DfE).

This document meets the requirements set out in part 7 of the schedule to [the Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which states that we must have and make available a written procedure to deal with complaints from parents of pupils at the school.

It is also based on guidance published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on [creating a complaints procedure that complies with the above regulations](#), and refers to [good practice guidance on setting up complaints procedures](#) from the Department for Education (DfE).

In addition, it addresses duties set out in the [Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework](#) with regards to dealing with complaints about the school's fulfilment of Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.

3. DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

The DfE guidance explains the difference between a concern and a complaint.

A concern is defined as "an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought". The school will resolve concerns through day-to-day communication as far as possible.

A complaint is defined as "an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action".

The school intends to resolve complaints informally where possible, at the earliest possible stage.

There may be occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. This policy outlines the procedure relating to handling such complaints.

This policy does not cover complaints procedures relating to:

- Admissions
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)
- Safeguarding matters
- Exclusion
- Whistle-blowing
- Staff grievances
- Staff discipline

Please see our separate policies for procedures relating to these types of complaint.

Arrangements for handling complaints from parents of children with SEN about the school's support are within the scope of this policy. Such complaints should first be made to the school's SENCO; they will then be referred to this complaints policy.

Complaints about services provided by other providers who use school premises or facilities should be directed to the provider concerned.

4. HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

A parent or member of the public can make their complaint in the first instance either verbally or in writing to the head teacher. The school expects that complaints will be made as soon as possible after an incident arises and no later than 3 months afterwards. We will consider exceptions to this time frame in circumstances where there were valid reasons for not making a complaint at that time and the complaint can still be investigated in a fair manner for all involved.

The school, if asked, may help anyone who would like assistance to set out their complaint including access to translation services where necessary.

5. HOW ARE COMPLAINTS DEALT WITH?

When investigating a complaint, we will try to clarify:

- What has happened
- Who was involved
- What the complainant feels would put things right

We also intend to address complaints as quickly as possible. To achieve this, realistic and reasonable time limits will be set for each action within each stage.

Complaints that cannot be resolved informally should be dealt in accordance with the following promises:

- an acknowledgement (or final response where possible) should be sent to the complainant within five working days (i.e. school term days).
- the complainant should be told the name and telephone number of the person dealing with the complaint.
- a full response should be sent within twenty working days (i.e. school term days) or if a complete answer still cannot be given the complainant should be told what is being done to investigate the complaint and how long this should take.
- the complainant should be told if their complaint has to be dealt with under a special procedure.

6. WHERE TO GO IF NOT SATISFIED WITH THE OUTCOME

(i) Complainants not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint dealt with by the head teacher should write to: -

The Chair of Governors
c/o Queenswood Primary School
Yates Way
Ketley Bank
Telford TF2 0AZ

The Chair of Governors will arrange for the complaint to be looked into by the governing body's complaints committee. Even at this stage there is provision within the policy for the complaint to be tried to be resolved informally and the chair of governors may choose to try to do so in the first instance before formal referral to the complaints committee itself.

(ii) Thereafter, complainants still not satisfied with the outcome and who want to take the matter further, beyond the school, can write to either: -

Director of Children's Services
Telford and Wrekin Council
Addenbrooke House
Ironmasters Way
Telford
TF3 4NT

or,

The Secretary of State for Education
Ministerial and Public Communications Division
Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

However, the LA's policy is that unless allegations relate to very serious incidents of staff conduct, child protection issues or potential criminal activity it is not prepared to be involved in looking into complaints about matters in schools raised by parents and other complainants until after the school's own complaints procedures have been fully exhausted and concerns still remain at that time.

The LA consider it important that schools have every opportunity to resolve complaints about matters in school at local level in the first instance. The LA also consider that the majority of issues raised can only be effectively resolved at local level where, in most cases the power (s) to take appropriate action is vested in the school rather than the LA.

7. WHAT TO DO IF THE COMPLAINT IS ABOUT THE HEADTEACHER OR A GOVERNOR?

Complaints about the head teacher that the complainant cannot or does not wish to raise directly with the head teacher should in the first instance be sent to the chair of governors who will arrange for the matter to be dealt with as set out in 4(i) above.

Complaints about a governor should in the first instance be sent to the clerk to the governing body at: -

The Clerk to the Governing Body
c/o Queenswood Primary School
Yates Way
Ketley Bank
Telford TF2 0AZ

8. MONITORING OF COMPLAINTS

An anonymous analysis of all formal complaints should be reported to the governing body regularly so that any necessary changes in the school's policies, practices or procedures can be considered and implemented. The school believe that it is imperative that any lessons to be learned from the handling of complaints are effectively taken on board.