

Date agreed	Review Cycle 3 years	Due for review September 2019
Signed		

Complaints Policy

Introduction

It is our aim at Effra Early Years Centre to work closely with all parents and carers in a partnership which benefits all children and ensures that their experience at Effra is happy and secure.

Aims

- To reaffirm the partnership between parents and carers, staff and governors as they work together for the good of the children in the centre
- To ensure that it is easy for parents and carers to inform the staff and governors of any concerns they may have and that they will respond quickly and positively to complaints from parents.
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What is a complaint?

From time to time parents express concerns and these are dealt with as a matter of routine through discussion with the key person or another member of staff.

Occasionally a parental concern may become more serious and develop into a complaint and be a clear statement of dissatisfaction. This may relate to a variety of issues. Anonymous complaints are discouraged as they are difficult to deal with in a way that will be useful to all parties.

Sometimes a complaint is about a third party who is delivering a service on the Effra site, which includes the children's' centre at Brockwell. In this case the third party will follow their own complaints procedure.

Arrangements for managing complaints

- Parents may request a copy of this policy from the school office at any time.

- The head teacher, deputy head teacher or federation deputy headteacher will respond to a verbal or written complaint within 48 hours of receiving during the working week, it but may well need longer to fully investigate the circumstances leading to the complaint. Parents and carers will be kept informed of time scales involved. Timescales need to be flexible to meet particular circumstances however a response will normally be provided within 5 working days.
- Procedures will then be followed as outlined in the final section of this policy
- All complaints are handled in strict confidence and the attitude of staff to a child would never be affected by a parent/carer complaint
- The centre will ensure that all staff have opportunities to discuss, respond and understand the centre's response to concerns and complaints made by parents and carers.
- Any person complained against has equal rights with the person making the complaint
- The school would not seek to directly involve children in a complaints procedure.

The role of the head teacher

The head teacher is responsible for the internal organisation and management of the school. They therefore have overall responsibility for considering complaints in the first instance or arranging, if appropriate, for a designated member of staff to deal with them. However the head teacher must be kept fully informed of the complaint and the way in which it is being addressed.

When deciding which course of action to take over a response to a complaint the head teacher may wish to consult with the Chair of governors, or the local authority (LA)

The head teacher will keep a record of complaints received and outcomes. These will be logged on a complaints log. Outcomes of complaints will also be recorded here. Complaints would usually be expected to be written however, in line with the Equalities Act 2010, they can be in the preferred communication method used by the complainant.

The role of the governing body

The governing body is responsible for the overall conduct of the school and the Early Years provision, and must ensure that a complaints procedure is in place and reviewed every three years. The head teacher will normally inform the Chair of the governing body of complaints received unless they are going to form part of any committee to hear disciplinary or capability procedures in which case they must remain untainted.

If a governor receives a complaint from a parent it will be referred to the head teacher to investigate. If the head teacher is the subject of the complaint then the Chair of the governing body will undertake the investigation.

The governing body should appoint a Complaints Committee of three governors to consider any formal written complaints should it reach this stage. A pool of governors from which this committee can be formed will be agreed at the beginning of each school year. Regard must be given to confidentiality throughout the process to ensure that governors do not become tainted and are therefore not able to serve on such a committee.

After a complaint has been dealt with it may be appropriate for the head teacher or Chair of the governing body to make a brief report to the governing body without mentioning names and protecting confidentiality.

The role of the local authority

The local authority will

- Provide guidance and advice to schools on good practice
- Provide procedures for schools for parental complaints against the curriculum and matters relating to it
- Provide advice to complainants on how to complain.

The Role of the School Complaints Unit If a complaint has completed the local procedures and the complainant remains dissatisfied, they have the right to refer

their complaint to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State has a duty to consider all complaints raised but will only intervene where the governing body has acted unlawfully or unreasonably and where it is expedient or practical to do so. The School Complaints Unit (SCU) considers complaints relating to LA maintained schools in England on behalf of the Secretary of State.

The SCU will look at whether the complaints policy and any other relevant statutory policies were adhered to. The SCU also looks at whether statutory policies adhere to education legislation. However, the SCU will not normally re-investigate the substance of the complaint. This remains the responsibility of schools. The SCU will not overturn a school's decision about a complaint except in exceptional circumstances where it is clear the school has acted unlawfully or unreasonably.

If the SCU finds that the school has not handled a complaint in accordance with its procedure, we may request that the complaint is looked at again. If legislative or policy breaches are found, the SCU will report them to the school and the complainant, and where necessary, ask for corrective action to be taken.

The SCU normally also seeks written assurances as to future conduct. Failure to carry out remedial actions or provide written assurances could ultimately result in a formal Direction being issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with her powers under sections 496 and 497 of the Education Act 1996.

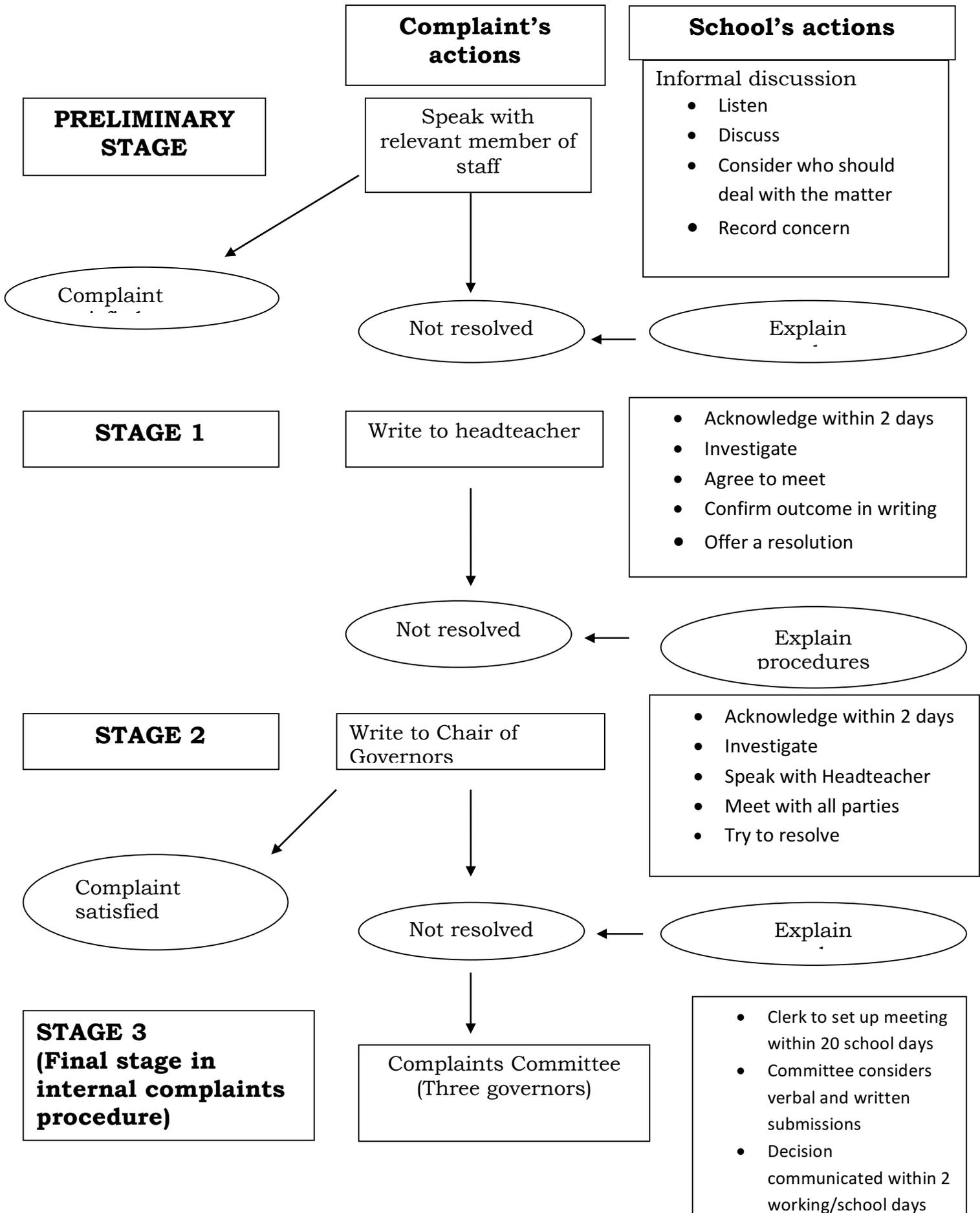
Schools may wish to contact the SCU for advice on whether they have acted reasonably; for example: in closing down a complaint from a serial complainant before the local procedure has been completed. However, the SCU will not be able to advise on how to resolve the complaint.

Further information can be obtained from the SCU by calling the National Helpline on 0370 000 2288 or going online at: www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus or by writing to:

Department for Education
School Complaints Unit 2nd Floor,
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street Manchester
M1 2WD

The final section gives an overview of the complaints procedure

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



SUMMARY OF TIMES

STAGE	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSE
Preliminary Stage	Discussions with relevant member of staff and/or headteacher.	As soon as possible but no later than 7 school days.
Stage 1	Written complaint to Headteacher.	Acknowledge within 2 school days. Response normally within 5 school days.
Stage 2	Written complain to Chair of Governors.	Acknowledge within 2 school days. Response normally within 10 school days.
Stage 3	Complaints' Committee Hearing	Hearing set up within 20 school days within 10 days notice of meeting. Agenda and papers sent out 7 days in advance. Decision letter with 2 school days.

For the purposes of this document a written complaint may be in a the format of a letter, email or attachment to an email