

# Woolenwick Junior School

## COMPLAINTS POLICY V3

Policy Name	Complaints
Created by	CS/MC/RR
Responsibility of	School Improvement Committee
Reviewed by	CS / RR
This Review Date	Nov 2014
Next Review Due	2017
Cycle	3 years
Ratified by Full Governing Body on	November 2014

### Version History

Version	Amendments	Date	Author
V1	Reviewed	September 2011	CS/RR
V2	Amended in line with legislation	Jan 2013	CS
V3	Amendments following use of policy by panel	Nov 2014	CS

### PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

At Woolenwick Junior School we undertake to provide a friendly and safe environment in which pupils will be helped to achieve their potential, both academically and socially.

We believe that a close partnership between the school, parents and pupils is essential to ensure pupil progress and well-being. In support of this, parents/carers are invited to enter a Home-School Agreement. This agreement sets out the school's aims and values, as well as the responsibilities of the school and parents/carers, and our expectations of pupils.

Through our programme of meetings between parents/carers and teachers, as well as through informal contact, we provide opportunities for parents/carers to raise matters of concern – about the curriculum or more general issues. If a concern is not resolved through discussion with a teacher, the parent or the teacher can refer it to the Headteacher. Complaints from members of the public should be made directly to the Headteacher.

Complaints will be dealt with under the school-based complaints procedure adopted by the Governing Body.

The headteacher will offer a meeting with the parent or other complainant, as far as possible at a mutually convenient time. At that meeting, and through discussion, the headteacher will seek an outcome that is acceptable to all parties involved.

If the headteacher is unable to resolve the complaint within 10 school days, or is the subject of the complaint, the Headteacher or the complainant can refer it to the Chair of Governors; at this point the complaint must be put into writing.

## The Chair of Governors will

- Write to the complainant acknowledging their complaint and enclosing a copy of the complaints policy. A meeting will be offered to the complainant with either the Chair of Governors or another appropriate governor, determined by the nature of the complaint.
- Write to the Headteacher, informing them a complaint has been received and ask for an initial response within 5 school days. (If the complaint is about the Headteacher, a response is not required.)
- Inform the Chair of Complaints that a complaint has been received.
- Determine how the complaint will be handled: by a panel of governors or at a full hearing.
- Send the completed complaints form to anyone relevant to the complaint so they can respond in writing if they wish, giving them 5 school days to respond.

## The Chair of Complaints will:

- Write to the complainant, enclosing the official complaint form within 3 school days. The complaints form will enable the complainant to set out their concerns in detail, but this is not essential. The completed complaints form should be returned to the Governing Body within 5 school days of its receipt.
- The Chair of Complaints will arrange a meeting of the complaints panel (usually 3 governors) of the Governing Body, as far as possible at a time convenient to all parties, within 15 school days from receipt of the complaints form.

The complaints panel will either be a Complaints Hearing Panel or a Governor Panel.

### Complaints Hearing Panel

- The complainant, the Headteacher and any member of staff about whom there are complaints will be invited to the hearing. Any person invited can bring a friend or supporter if they wish. **This is called a Complaints Hearing Panel, to be known as a Hearing** and will follow the model procedures set out by HCC. The clerk will be in attendance to record proceedings.

### Governor Panel

- In certain circumstances, determined by the Chair of Governors and the nature of the complaint, a panel of governors will meet to interview staff and consider all evidence before determining a decision. They may also wish to invite the complainant or any other relevant person. The decision of the panel will be given in writing within 48 hours of the panel meeting and sent to all parties mentioned in the complaint along with any recommendations to the school. **This is known as a Governor Panel.**

If the complaint is complex, the Chair of Governors can appoint an investigating officer to gather evidence and conduct preliminary interviews. The investigating officer will then support the complaints panel in hearing the case.

In the event of the Chair of Complaints being unable to chair the hearing, the Chair of Governors will either find another suitable person or chair the panel themselves, with the aid of the Clerk.

The complaints panel will consider any written material, and also give the person making the complaint, the Headteacher and staff an opportunity to state their case and to question the other side during a hearing. The chair of the panel will ensure that all present are treated fairly.

The panel will give a decision as soon as possible after the hearing, and will confirm it in writing, along with the reasons for their decision. Recommendations may also be made.

## **COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE CURRICULUM**

At Woolenwick Junior School we believe education should be a partnership between home and school. This partnership is based on mutual trust and respect. We therefore value parents'/carers' comments; be they supportive or critical. If parents/carers are unhappy in any way we ask that you telephone or visit the school and arrange to speak with the Class Teacher. The majority of concerns can be sorted out in this way, informally and quickly.

If after speaking to the Class Teacher parents/carers feel a problem has not been resolved, or, if it is felt more appropriate, then parents/carers should make an appointment to see the Headteacher. Our policy is to see parents/carers promptly and take their concerns seriously.

Should parents/carers feel that neither the staff nor Headteacher are able to help, the next step would be to write to the Chair of Governors.

### **Additional Functions of the Governing Body**

The Governing Body of a maintained school shall:

- Establish procedures for dealing with all complaints relating to the school and publicise the procedures so established.
- In establishing or publicising these procedures, the Governing Body shall have regard to any guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State (in relation to England) or by the National Assembly for Wales (in relation to Wales).

In addition to this complaints policy the Governing Body will take regard to the HCC model policy and procedures at all times. A copy of this can be found on the HCC website or you can request a printed copy from the school office.