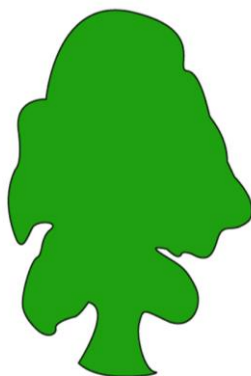


Complaints and Resolutions Policy

FOR ELMHURST SCHOOL



Adopted:	April 2017
Next Review Date:	April 2020
Responsible Committee	Full Governing Body

Signed:	
Headteacher:	Mrs R Lee
Chair of Governors:	Dr D Gamble

Complaints and Resolutions Procedure for Schools

Date: April 2017



Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	1
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	1
AREAS NOT COVERED BY THIS PROCEDURE.....	1
STAGE 1 – INITIAL CONCERNS.....	2
STAGE 2 – FORMAL PROCEDURE	2
COMPLAINT FORM.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
STAGE 3.....	3
OUTCOME OF THE PANEL HEARING.....	3
MONITORING AND REVIEW.....	4
FLOWCHART SUMMARY.....	5
APPENDIX ONE - COMPLAINT FORM	7
APPENDIX TWO - AT THE PANEL HEARING.....	9
APPENDIX THREE - COMPLAINING TO OFSTED.....	10

Introduction

Our governing board has adopted this procedure to deal with concerns or complaints from members of the school community or general public.

Aims and Objectives

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint and to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding.

Careful consideration will be given to all concerns and complaints and we will deal with them as swiftly as possible. We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed.

In all cases we will put the interests of the child above all other issues.

Our procedure is underpinned by the following **framework of principles**: -

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
- be easily accessible and publicised
- be simple to use and understand
- be impartial
- be non-adversarial
- allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress
- ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary
- respect people's desire for confidentiality, wherever possible (some information sharing may be necessary to carry out a thorough investigation)
- address all points of issue, providing an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- provide information to the school's senior management team so that services can be improved.

Areas not covered by this procedure

This procedure does not apply to issues concerning admissions, exclusion appeals, statutory assessments of special educational needs or grievances by school staff. These are the subject of separate complaints procedures; more information can be obtained from the school.

In addition, Ofsted has the power to investigate certain (qualifying) complaints about maintained schools, including those from parents. A qualifying complaint is one that affects the whole school, not an individual. (See Appendix 3)

All other complaints are handled by the school according to the arrangements set out below.

Stage 1 – initial concerns

If you have any concerns about the school, or the education we are providing at any time, please discuss the matter with **your child's class teacher** at the earliest opportunity.

It is **not** appropriate to publicise any concerns you may have on social networking sites. Please speak, or write, to someone at the school at your earliest convenience, rather than using any other means.

The school considers any concerns very seriously and most problems can be resolved following discussion and a shared understanding of the issues. All members of staff work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school and is making good progress and they always want to know if there is a problem so they can help to resolve it.

Most concerns can be resolved at this level, however, if after speaking to your child's class teacher, you are still concerned please discuss the matter with the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Stage 2 – formal procedure

Most concerns are resolved at Stage 1. However if you remain dissatisfied and wish to take the matter further you can let us know in person, by telephone or in writing.

There is a complaint form (Appendix 1) attached to this procedure which can be helpful to complete. The aim of the form is to give us as clear an understanding as possible of your complaint and includes a section on what actions you feel would resolve the problem.

If you would like support in completing the form from someone unconnected with the complaint, please let us know and we would be happy to organise this for you.

If you are making your complaint in writing, it should be returned to the headteacher. However, if the complaint is about the headteacher or a governor, it should be returned to the chair of the governing board at the school address, marking the envelope 'FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION'. If your complaint is about the chair of the governing board, your completed form should be returned to the clerk of the governing board.

You will receive an acknowledgement of the receipt of your complaint within 5 school days.

Investigation

An investigation will be carried out into the complaint and the way it has been handled by the school. This will include a review of any relevant documentation and information and seeking the views of relevant people, where necessary. The person undertaking the investigation will normally write to you with the outcome of this process within 15 school days of receiving the complaint.

If, at any time, it becomes apparent that the complaint is a disciplinary or capability issue, the matter will be dealt with by following the appropriate procedure rather than the complaints procedure. You will be notified if this is the case with your complaint, however, you are not entitled to know which procedure, or the final outcome, because of the right to confidentiality of the member of staff involved.

Following the outcome of the investigation, if you feel your concern has not been resolved, you may choose to move to Stage 3 of the procedure. You must let the school know if you wish to do this within 15 school days of the completion of Stage 2.

Stage 3

At this stage the complaint will be considered by a panel, who will meet to consider the complaint and make a final decision about it on behalf of the governing board.

Panel members will have no detailed prior knowledge of the complaint, or connection with the complainant. The meeting will normally take place within 15 school days of your request.

You will have the opportunity to submit evidence on the complaint prior to the meeting of the panel and also to attend, accompanied by a friend/partner if you wish, to put your case. The headteacher will be given the same opportunities. Appendix 2 outlines the process that will be followed at a panel hearing.

Outcome of the Panel Hearing

The panel will write to you with its conclusion within 5 school days of the meeting, and its decision is final.

If you are still not satisfied, you may wish to put your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education, who can review whether the school has acted reasonably and followed the correct procedures.

The Schools Complaint Unit (SCU) considers complaints relating to LA maintained schools in England on behalf of the Secretary of State and can be contacted via: -

- National Helpline 0370 000 2288
- online at: www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus
- by writing to the Department for Education, School Complaints Unit, 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD

Serial or Persistent Complaints

Unfortunately, in a small minority of cases, people pursue their complaints in a way which can either impede the investigation of their complaint or can have significant resource issues for the school.

These actions can occur either while the complaint is being investigated, or once the school has concluded the complaint investigation.

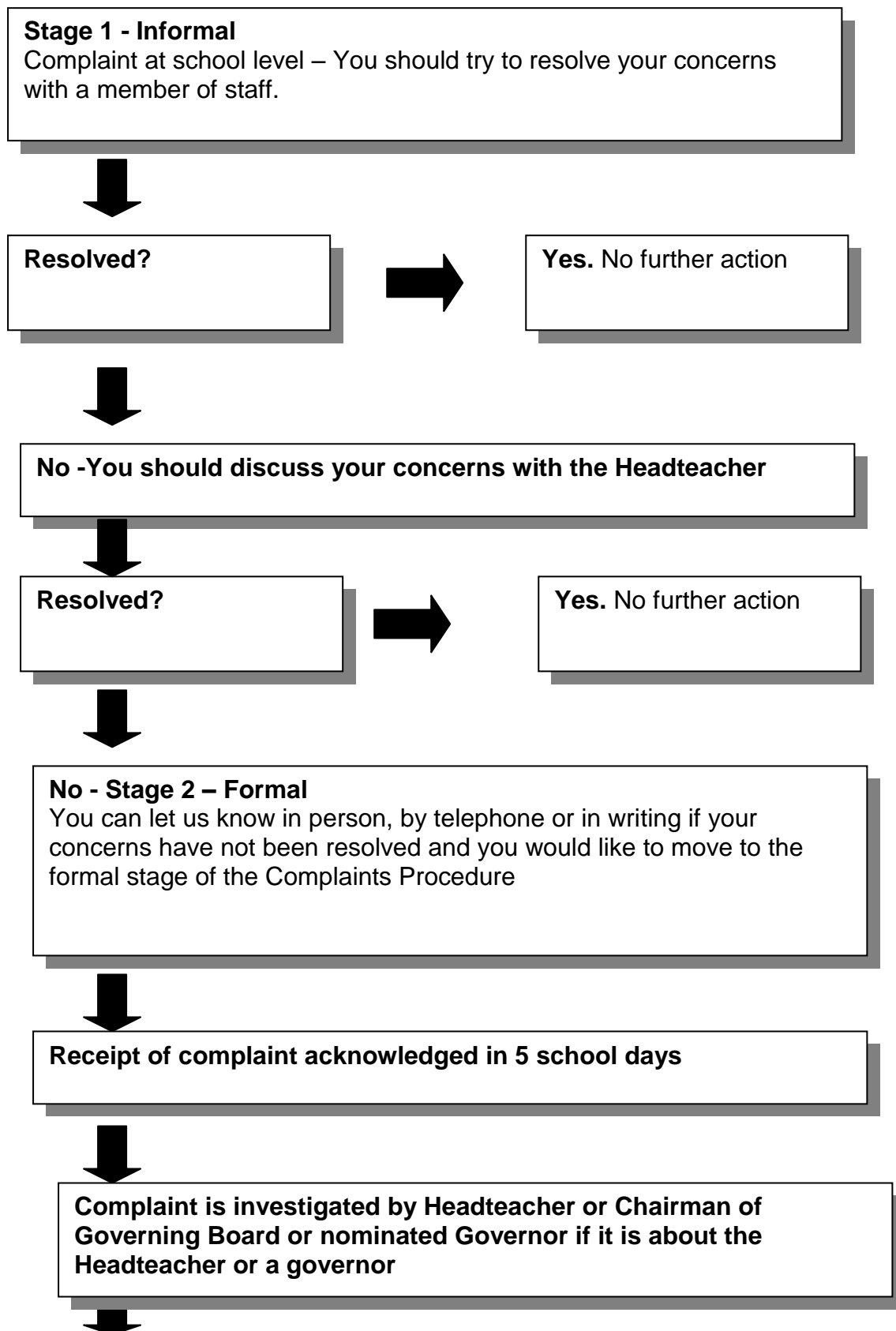
In such cases, the school will follow advice from the Department for Education and the Local Government Ombudsman for unreasonable complainants.

Monitoring and Review

The governing board monitors the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The headteacher logs all formal complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis and consider the need for any changes to the procedure.

Flowchart Summary*

* Please refer to the procedure for more detailed information.





You will be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 15 school days of receiving the complaint.



Resolved?



Yes. No further action



No - If you wish to take your complaint to Stage 3 of the procedure you will be asked to confirm this within 15 school days of the completion of Stage 2.



Governor Complaints Panel meets to consider your complaint with 15 school days. If you wish to submit evidence to the panel you will be invited to do so in advance of the meeting. You will also be invited to attend the panel meeting to explain the nature of your complaint



Panel will make a final decision on behalf of the Governing Board and writes to you within 5 school days



Resolved?



Yes. No further action



No - You can write to the Secretary of State of Education and Skills if you feel the school has acted unreasonably or not followed the correct procedures.

Appendix One - Complaint form

Please complete and return to the Headteacher who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give concise details of your complaint, including dates, names of witnesses etc, to allow the matter to be fully investigated

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak to/write to and what was the response)?

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

Appendix Two - At the panel hearing

- After introductions, the complainant will be invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses (if any).
- The headteacher/Chairman of Governors may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The headteacher/Chairman of Governors is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses (if any).
- The complainant may question both the headteacher/Chairman of Governors and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The panel may ask questions at any point.
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
- The headteacher/Chairman of Governors is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
- The Chairman of the panel explains that both parties will hear from the panel within five school days.
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
- The clerk remains to support the panel.

Appendix Three - Complaints procedure – GOV.UK

Ofsted has limited legal powers to consider complaints about schools.

You can complain to Ofsted if you think a school isn't run properly and needs to be inspected. Ofsted will not look into problems with individual pupils, such as exclusions or not getting a place at a school.

You can only complain to Ofsted if you have already followed the school's complaints procedure.

There is a pro-forma on the Ofsted website for complainants to explain the reason for a complaint about a school.

How to make a complaint about Ofsted's staff or service.

You can make a complaint if you're unhappy about the behaviour of our staff or the quality of service we've provided.

Make a complaint about Ofsted's staff or service

Use the [online form](#) to make a complaint about an interaction with Ofsted staff or the quality of service we've provided. You must do this within 10 working days of the incident you'd like to complain about.

There are separate processes to:

- [complain about a state school or childminder](#) or
- [complain about an Ofsted inspection](#) (you should make any complaint about an inspection no more than 10 working days after the report is published)
- [complain about a social care provider](#)

What happens next

When we receive your complaint, an investigating officer will contact you to discuss the issue and determine if it can be resolved quickly. If not, we'll investigate and send you a written response addressing your concerns within 30 working days.

We don't normally withhold publication of an inspection report or withdraw a published inspection report while we investigate complaints about an inspection, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If you're not satisfied

If this doesn't resolve your complaint to your satisfaction you can request an internal review of our handling of the complaint using our [online complaints review form](#).

This must be completed within 15 working days of the date of the original complaint response. A senior manager at Ofsted will conduct an independent review of the handling of your complaint.

A 'scrutiny committee' will independently review the handling of your complaint. You should get a final response within 30 working days.

If you're still not satisfied

If you remain unhappy following the internal review you can request an external review from the [Independent Complaints Adjudication Service for Ofsted \(ICASO\)](#). You must do this within 3 months of receiving the written response to the internal review from Ofsted.

Independent Complaints Adjudication Service for Ofsted
% CEDR
70 Fleet Street
London
EC47 1EU

If you're are an individual or a private organisation and remain unhappy after the ICASO's review, you can complain to the [Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman](#). The Ombudsman does not handle complaints from public organisations, eg state schools.