



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES POLICY

Autumn 2014

Manager

Mrs S A WILSON

Review date – Autumn 2017

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES POLICY

Procedures For Dealing With Complaints

(Taken from the NAHT model policy)

At Gayton 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 recognise that sometimes things can go wrong and parents, carers and members of the public may need to make a complaint or raise concerns they have with the school.

This policy tells you what to do if this happens.

INFORMAL STAGE

Most complaints/issues can be resolved informally and quickly by discussion with the member of staff concerned or the Headteacher. Alternatively parents/carers can write to the member of staff or the Headteacher outlining the issue clearly.

Any complaint/issue that is put in writing should be written clearly outlining all the issues and what it is hoped that the preferred outcome should be. All complaints will be acknowledged in writing within 3 – 5 working days.

Parent/carers should make an appointment to discuss their concerns with the member of staff who knows about the issue or incident. If the complaint relates to a pupil, ideally the member of staff concerned should be directly involved with the pupil, for example, class teacher.

The member of staff will usually write notes during the meeting. Parents/carers can ask for a copy of these notes.

FORMAL STAGE

There are three formal stages:

Stage 1

If a parent/carer is still dissatisfied after the informal stage, they, or the member of staff can refer the matter to the Headteacher. This can be done in writing, as this will often make the situation clear to all involved parties.

The Headteacher will offer a meeting with the parent/carer or other complainant at a mutually convenient time. At the meeting, and through discussion, the Headteacher will clarify what the issues are. The hopes of what the parent/carer is trying to achieve will also be discussed. Together all parties will agree an acceptable outcome. This should be to the satisfaction of all parties involved. These should be written down and agreed by all parties so there is no misunderstanding. Again parents/carers should be given a copy of this.

If the issue is complex the Headteacher may need to speak to other staff and pupils to investigate the concerns. This should happen within 10 school days. If this timescale cannot be met the Headteacher should inform the parent/carer that this will take longer, explain the reasons for this and give a timescale for when the investigation will be completed.

STAGE 2

After meeting with the Headteacher if the complaint is still not resolved to the parent/carer's satisfaction, the complaint can be referred to the chair of governors. This should be in writing, using the school proforma (appendix 1). The Headteacher can also refer the complaint to the Chair of Governors.

If the Headteacher is the subject of the complaint, the complaint should go straight to the chair of governors and miss out Stage 1. The chair of governors will ask for the complaint to be put in writing (if this has not already happened).

The chair of governors will offer to meet with the parent/carer or other complainant, at a mutually convenient time.

The chair of governors has 15 school days to investigate the complaint. If it cannot be resolved within this time, the chair will inform the complainant and explain why it is taking longer. Reasons for this may be that the complaint is complex and needs more time or someone involved is absent through sickness or holidays. The chair of governors should, however, give a realistic timescale for when the complaint should be resolved. The chair should inform the complainant of when it is expected that the investigation should be completed.

If the chair of governors can resolve the complaint there is no need to hold a Complaints Committee meeting. As far as possible it is recommended that Complaints Committees are a last resort.

STAGE 3

If the complaint is still not resolved to the parent/carer's satisfaction, or chair of governors feels that it is necessary, s/he can set up a complaints committee to consider the complaint. The chair of governors will decide if this is appropriate.

The chair of governors can appoint an investigating officer to gather evidence and conduct preliminary interviews on the chair's behalf. The investigating officer will provide a detailed report of his/her investigation of the complaint. Parents/carers should be given a copy of this report. It is important that the investigating officer is seen as impartial. So whilst the investigating officer is another governor, s/he cannot be a member of the associated complaints committee.

The complaints committee is made up of three non staff members of the school's governing body. Sometimes governors need to be brought in from other schools' governing bodies because the school's governors are 'tainted' because they have prior knowledge of the complaint.

The complaints committee should meet at a time convenient to all parties. The complainant, the Headteacher, the chair of governors and any member of staff the complaint is about will be invited to the meeting. Any person invited can bring a friend or supporter if they wish. The complaints committee will consider any written material, and also give the person making the complaint and the Headteacher, Chair of governors and staff an opportunity to state their case and to question others present. The committee will ensure that all present are treated fairly. The meeting will be minuted by the clerk to governors and everyone present will be given a copy of the minutes.

The committee will give its decision, in writing, within five school days after the meeting, along with the reasons for their decision.

If after this school based process the complaint is still not resolved to the parent/carer's satisfaction, they should write to the Secretary of State if it is a general complaint, or to the Local Authority if the complaint is about the curriculum and is a curriculum related matter.

If a complaint is not from a parent/carer of a pupil of the school (an example being a member of the public) these should be made directly to the Headteacher in writing.

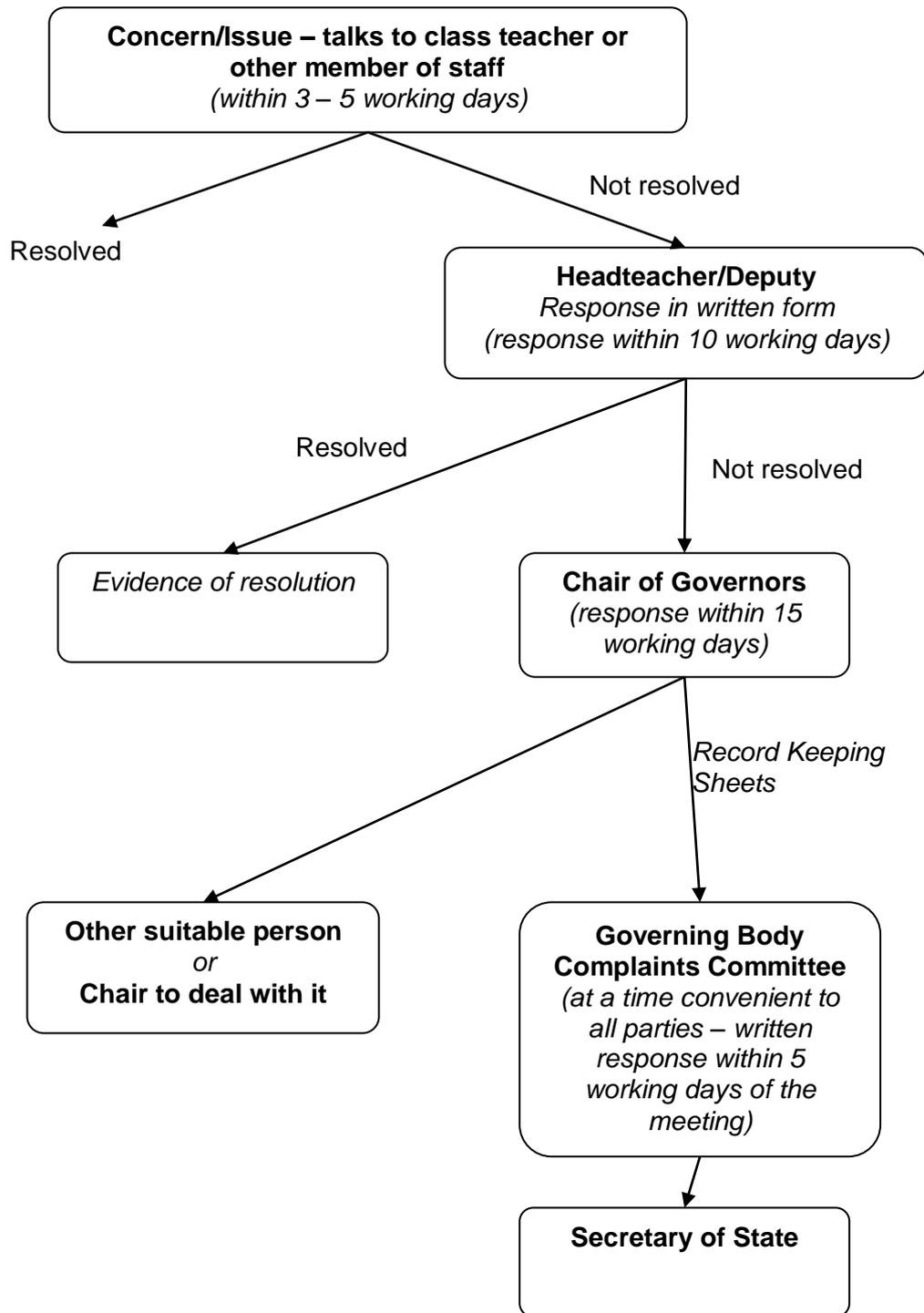
All complaints will be recorded formally by the school in a central log.

It should be noted that schools do not need to consider complaints made more than one year after the incident/situation.

If a complaint is made about an issue that is over a year old the school will write to the complainant explaining why this is the case.

Complaints Process

Flowchart for Primary Schools



APPENDIX 1



Gayton Junior School Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it to Head Teacher who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name:

Relationship with school [e.g. parent of a pupil on the school's roll]:

.....

Pupil's name [if relevant to your complaint]:

.....

Your Address:

Daytime 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.:

You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional paperwork, if you wish.

Number of additional pages attached =

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? [i.e. who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?]

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

Signature:

Date:

School use:
Date Form received:
Received by:
Date acknowledgement sent:
Acknowledgement sent by:

Complaint referred to:			
Date:			

Model Response to spurious complainant

Dear

Following receipt of your communications and careful consideration of the same, I regret that I am unable to deal with this matter under the governing body's General Complaints Procedure as:
[Please select appropriate wording from the following]

- You have not identified any specific actions of which you might complain
- Your concerns are presented as conclusions rather than specific actions of which you complain.
- The concerns that you identify relate to historical actions and any evidence which might have enabled an objective investigation of your complaint is no longer available.
- The substance of your complaint has been addressed under this procedure already.
- The concerns that you raise do not fall within the scope of this procedure.
- You have not identified any potential sources of evidence which might allow the matter to be investigated.
- The school offered to resolve the matter informally and in my judgement you refused unreasonably to take advantage of this.

If you wish my decision to be reviewed then you may take advantage of the procedure outlined in Annex 3 of the complaints procedure, by writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher
Or Chair of Governing Body

Model letter of
NOTIFICATION OF DECISION REGARDING GENERAL PARENTAL COMPLAINT

Dear

Following receipt of your complaint and careful consideration of all the available relevant evidence, I have concluded that:

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so the complaint cannot be upheld. If you are able to provide additional evidence forthwith I/we will reconsider this decision.

OR

- The concern is not substantiated by the evidence in that

OR

- The concern was substantiated in part/in full, as The school will review its practices/procedures..... with the intention of avoiding any recurrence. Parents will be informed in due course of any policy changes.

OR

- In order to address fully the matters investigated, the school has initiated appropriate internal procedures. Due to the nature of these procedures, their outcome must remain strictly confidential. We are confident, however, that the circumstances that gave rise to your complaint should not recur.

I hope that we may now put this matter behind us and work together for the benefit of your child's progress.

Yours truly

Head Teacher / Chair of Governing Body

c.c. Head Teacher

Model REVIEW OUTCOME NOTIFICATION

Dear

Having carefully considered your representations in the context of the relevant evidence, the Governing Body Complaints Review Panel has concluded that the General Complaints Procedure was followed appropriately in respect of your complaint in that

Therefore, the matter is now closed as far as the school is concerned.

Or

Having carefully considered your representations in the context of the relevant evidence, the Governing Body Complaints Review Panel has concluded that the Head Teacher/ Chair of Governors followed the General Complaints Procedure except

Therefore, the following action will be taken

Once this action has been completed the school will consider the matter to be closed.

Or

Having carefully considered your representations in the context of the relevant evidence, the Governing Body Complaints Review Panel has concluded that the Head Teacher/ Chair of Governors followed the General Complaints Procedure except that

We have determined that this procedural failure did not affect the outcome of the consideration of your complaint so, while we regret this error, we will now consider this matter to be closed as far as the school is concerned.

Yours truly

Chair of Complaints Review Panel

c.c. Head Teacher
Chair of Governors