



# **Wessex Gardens Primary School**

## **Complaints Policy**

Date of Policy  
Date of Next Review

December 2016  
January 2020

**Introduction:**

This policy sets out our approach for dealing with parental concerns and complaints. We always aim to maintain positive relationships with parents and carers and do our best to address any concerns as soon as they arise. The majority of problems can be sorted informally, in person, by telephone etc. However, we are aware that in some instances a parent/carer may wish to make a complaint. The governing body believes that feedback is an important ingredient in self-evaluation and in raising standards. All stakeholders should feel that their concerns or complaints can be voiced and will be considered seriously and in confidence.

This policy should be used for:

- Complaints relating to the schooling of your child.
- Complaints about the education and care provided to pupils at the school.
- Complaints about the school's operational arrangements.

This policy is limited to matters which can reasonably be investigated and therefore complaints should relate to matters which have occurred within the last twelve months.

If, at any stage of the process the complainant starts legal action in relation to the matters under consideration, the complaints process will automatically cease, and all further correspondence will be with the school's legal representatives.

Only complaints relating to a specific child will be kept in the headteacher's office. All other issues will be kept in a secure location and retained for seven years.

**Aims:**

- That all complaints should be effectively resolved
- That parents should feel secure in the knowledge that their complaints will be taken seriously and acted upon in an appropriate manner
- That the process should be both transparent and fair

**Objectives:**

- To provide a standardised system for dealing with complaints
- To ensure that all parties involved in a complaint have a set of procedures to follow
- To communicate the procedures effectively to all relevant parties

**The Complaints Procedure****Stage 1 Initial contact with the school**

Complaints will initially be informal and parents will be encouraged to speak, in the first instance to the class teacher, or a phase leader if the class teacher is the subject of the complaint. Any actions or monitoring of the situation that has been agreed will be communicated clearly and will be followed up. It is important at this stage to establish what has happened and who has been involved and to conduct the interview with an open mind. If a satisfactory solution is not reached an appointment will be made with the headteacher.

**Stage 2 Meeting with headteacher**

At this stage the headteacher will become involved. Any complainant who is not satisfied with the outcome of the response at the informal stages will be advised of his or her right to make a formal complaint to the headteacher using the form in appendix 1. The

headteacher will decide whether to respond in writing or to hold a meeting at which the complaint will be considered and to which the parent will be advised that they may bring a friend. Subsequent to a formal meeting with the headteacher the parent will be provided with a written response which will include an explanation for the decision and details of the action the school intends to take. If the problem is still not resolved the complainant will be advised that he/she may take their complaint in writing to the chairman of the governing body.

### **Stage 3 Chairman of governing body**

Please use the form in appendix 2 to write to the chairman of the governing body. In cases where a formal complaint is received by the chairman of governing body the chairman of the complaints committee will acknowledge the complaint in writing and will convene a complaints panel hearing at which the complaint will be considered.

The complaints committee will be made up of three governors and will not include the headteacher or any staff governors. The hearing will take place within fifteen school days of the receipt of the written complaint.

At least five days before the hearing by the complaints panel both the complainant and the headteacher will provide the clerk with any documentation to be used at the hearing and the names of any witnesses to be called. The clerk will distribute any documentation to both parties and to members of the panel at least three days before the hearing. The complainant and the headteacher will be advised by the clerk that they may be accompanied by a friend or a representative at the hearing.

The procedure to be followed at the hearing is as follows:

- After introductions the complainant is invited to explain their complaint
- The complainant's witnesses are called (and leave after their evidence)
- The headteacher may question both the complainant and the witnesses after they have spoken
- The headteacher is then invited to explain the school's actions and the school's witnesses are called (and leave after their evidence)
- The complainant may question both the headteacher and the witnesses after they have spoken
- The panel may ask questions at any point
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint
- The headteacher is then invited to sum up the school's action and response to the complaint
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues
- The chairman explains that both parties will hear from the panel within five days

The panel may:

- Dismiss the claim in whole or in part
- Uphold the claim in whole or in part
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- Recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur

The chairman of the panel will notify the complainant of the panel's decision, in writing, within five days of the hearing. This letter will inform the complainant of any further right to appeal.

The panel does not have any disciplinary powers. Should they reach a conclusion that there is a possibility that an employee may have behaved unprofessionally the matter should be referred to the headteacher or if the headteacher is the employee in question, the chairman of the governing body, will consult with the LA.

Complaints involving racism should be reported to the equalities team at the earliest opportunity.

In the case of complaints involving child protection issues, CP guidelines should be followed and advice should be sought immediately from the Principal Education Social Worker or Social Services as appropriate.

### **Anonymous Complaints**

Although it is usually proper to disregard anonymous complaints, if the complaint relates to something serious the headteacher and governing body should decide whether or not to investigate it, bearing in mind that if the allegation is later proved to be true, the complainant may resurface and claim that he/she alerted the school.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The clerk:

- Sets the date, time and venue of the hearing
- Collates any written material and sends it to the parties in advance of the hearing
- Meets and welcomes the parties as they arrive at the hearing
- Records the proceedings
- Notifies all parties of the panel's decision

The Chairman of Governors:

- Checks the correct procedure has been followed
- If a hearing is appropriate, notifies the clerk

The Chairman of the Panel ensures that:

- The remit of the panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity to put their case
- The issues are addressed
- Key findings of facts are made
- Parents and others who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease
- The hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating all others with respect and courtesy
- The panel is open minded and acting independently
- No member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement at an earlier stage of the procedure
- Each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions
- Written material is seen by all parties. If a new issue arises it would be useful to give all parties the opportunity to consider and comment on it
- All parties involved will respect people's desire for confidentiality.

## **Wessex Gardens Primary School Policy for Parental Complaints**

### **Guidance Notes for Parents**

We trust that your child is happy at this school. On occasions, however, a problem may arise. The majority of problems can be sorted out informally . in person, by telephone etc. If, at any time, you think that we have not taken action over a significant problem or we have made the wrong decision and you wish to make a complaint, the procedure is as follows:

#### **General Complaints**

1. If you have a general complaint, please speak to the class teacher/phase leader about the incident in the first instance.
2. If a satisfactory solution is not reached please make an appointment through the school office with the headteacher, who will either deal with the problem or arrange for the appropriate member of the senior staff to do so.
3. If the problem is still not resolved you will need to consider whether to make a formal written complaint to the headteacher. The appropriate form should be obtained from the school office.
4. If the problem is still not resolved then a formal written complaint can be made to the chairman of the governing body complaints appeal panel. Please obtain a form from the school office.

#### **Other Complaints**

- If your initial complaint is about the headteacher and you have discussed the problem with the headteacher and you are still not satisfied, please write to the chairman of the governing body using the form in appendix B.
- If your complaint is about a particular member of the governing body and you have discussed the problem with the person concerned and are still not satisfied, please write to the chairman of the governing body.
- If your complaint is about the chairman of the governing body and you have discussed the problem with the person concerned and are still not satisfied, please write to the Chief Education Officer at the London Borough of Barnet

School Complaint Form A

Please complete and return to the headteacher

**Personal Details:**

**Your name:**

**Child's name:**

**Your relationship to the child:**

**Address:**

**Postcode:**

**Day time telephone number:**

**Evening telephone number:**

**Please give details of your complaint.**

**What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak 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 who:

Complaint referred to:

Outcome:

Date:

**Wessex Gardens Primary School**

**School Complaint Form B**

If you have tried to sort out your complaint with the headteacher and you are not satisfied with the response, or the complaint is about the headteacher, please complete this form and address it to the Chairman of the Governing Body

**Personal Details:**

**Your name:**

**Child's name:**

**Your relationship to the child:**

**Address:**

**Postcode:**

**Day time telephone number:**

**Evening telephone number:**

**Please give details of your complaint and explain why you are dissatisfied with the school's response.**

**What action do you feel the Governing Body can take to resolve the problem:**



**Signature:**

**Date:**

Governing Body use:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Date of Complaint Hearing:

Outcome:

Date: