



## FRIEZLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Complaints Policy

Lead person: Miss R Swaby

Chair of Governors: Mr. N. Jones

Date written: Summer 2016

Date for review: Summer 2017

### **Aim:**

To provide information about the school complaint procedure and how the school will respond to any concerns or complaints received about school matters.

### **Rationale:**

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, the governing body of all maintained schools and nursery schools in England are required to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school and to any community facilities or services the school provides. The law also requires the complaint procedure to be publicised.

### **Open Door Policy**

At Friezland Primary School, we operate an *Open Door Policy* whereby parents and carers are encouraged to speak to a member of staff at the earliest time should they have any concerns. In the first instance any concerns should be discussed with the class teacher and most matters can be resolved informally in this way.

If the concern or complaint is about the class teacher then it should be made direct to the Head Teacher.

If the matter is a safeguarding issue (including child protection) concerns must be raised with the Head Teacher, Miss Swaby, in her role as Designated Safeguarding Officer. If Miss Swaby is not available, Miss Hodgson is second Designated Officer. If neither are available and the matter is urgent, Miss Hill is the Assistant Head and the third designated person. In the rare case where no members of the Leadership Team are present, please ask Mrs. Flynn for the most senior member of staff in school at the time.

NB: Individual school governors should not become involved in individual complaint matters and complaints should not be heard by the whole governing body at any stage, as this compromises the required impartiality of governors at stage 3 of the process.

### **Complaint Records and Monitoring of Complaints**

All documentation relating to complaints will be held by the Head Teacher in a way that is secure and confidential. Complainant's personal details will not be passed on when complaints are monitored and reported.

### **Investigating Complaints**

Although we try hard to get things right first time we recognise that sometimes things will go wrong, when this happens we will deal with any parental concerns or complaints in a positive way and as quickly as possible. Most matters we will be able to resolve informally without the need to engage

the formal procedure, however if there is a need for a formal complaint investigation then this will need to be conducted quickly, and in a way that is open and transparent.

Complainants should be kept fully informed about what is happening with their complaint, and reassurance should be given that we are listening to and taking any concerns seriously.

### **Resolving Complaints**

At each stage in the procedure we will want to keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- an apology;
- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- Where it is appropriate, a review of school practice/policy in light of the complaint.

### **The Complaint Process**

#### **Stage One: Complaint Heard by Staff Member**

In the first instance any complaint should be discussed with the class teacher who will make every effort to try to resolve matters.

If the complaint cannot be resolved in this way then it can be progressed to the next stage of the complaint process.

#### **Stage Two: Complaint Heard by Head Teacher**

At this stage the complaint should be made to the Head Teacher either in person (an appointment may be necessary) or in writing.

The Head Teacher will acknowledge your complaint and may need to investigate matters further before they can respond. They may need to speak with those involved and look at any information or records that are available.

You will usually receive a response from the Head Teacher to your complaint within 10 working days, if the Head Teacher feels that more time is needed to investigate matters you will be informed of the delay and any new timescale.

Following investigation the Head Teacher will write to you to let you know the outcome of any investigation into your complaint, and may want to meet with you to discuss the outcome and any actions the school are going to take as a result.

Most complaints are resolved at this stage.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the response from the Head Teacher and matters are not resolved, then they can write to the Chair of Governors with details of their complaint.

### **Stage Three: Complaint Heard by Governing Body Complaints Appeal Panel**

The Chair of Governors will acknowledge receipt of any complaint, and may wish to meet with the complainant to see if any further resolution can be found. If a resolution still cannot be identified then the complainant can ask for the Chair of Governors to arrange a Governing Body Complaint Appeal Panel to hear the complaint. A Panel will usually be arranged within 10 working days of receiving the request.

The Governing Body Complaint Appeal Panel must be seen to be independent and impartial, and is made up of either 3 or 5 governors who have had no prior involvement in the complaint. The nominated Chair of the panel will oversee the panel process, and both the complainant and the school will be invited to attend. Attendees will receive a Panel Information Pack in advance of the panel meeting and both parties will have been invited to contribute information for inclusion within the information pack.

The Chair of the Panel will write to the complainant and to the Head Teacher to inform them of the outcome of the Panel and any recommendations made, usually within 5 working days of the panel meeting.

The Panel can:

- \*Dismiss the complaint in part or in whole
- \*Uphold the complaint in part or in whole
- \*Make recommendations about what action should be taken to resolve matters

\*Recommend changes to school practice, policy or procedures to ensure similar problems do not recur

NB: It is recognised that in some cases it may not be possible for a resolution to be agreed, and in these cases the most that the Complaint Panel may be able to achieve is to identify the best way forward and any options available.

The Governing Body Complaint Appeal Panel is the final stage of the school complaint process, and if complainants feel that the school has not properly investigated and responded to their complaint they can write to the Secretary of State for Education.

Information about school complaints procedures and how to contact the Secretary of State is available on the Department for Education website.

Once a complaint has progressed through the whole school complaint process and complainants have received the Panel response to their complaint, the school will consider the matter to be closed. The school will not investigate complaint matters where these have:

- Already been previously investigated via the school complaint process.

Or:

- Where complaints are considered to be vexatious in nature.
- Where the same complaint is made repeatedly with a refusal to accept the outcome.
- Where there is an unreasonable outcome being sought

**Unreasonable/Unacceptable Behaviour:**

The school will not normally restrict access to the school complaint procedure; however it is recognised that in a small number of cases where the behaviour of a complainant is felt to be rude, offensive or abusive. Or where behaviour is unreasonably persistent and impacting negatively on the ability of the school to carry on day to day business, then in these cases a management plan may need to be put in place, or in extreme circumstances access to the procedure may be blocked.

The school may seek legal advice where this is felt to be necessary to protect pupils and staff from behaviour that is deemed to be threatening in any way or violent.

Complaint form – to be completed by the complainant

Please complete and return to **Business Support, Rock Street Centre, Rock Street, OL1 3UJ, marked FOR THE ATTENTION OF MR. N. JONES** (Chair of Governors) 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 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 whom:**

**Complaint referred to:**

**Date:**

**SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FLOWCHART**

