

TUDHOE MOOR NURSERY SCHOOL
POLICY FOR HANDLING GENERAL SCHOOL COMPLAINTS



Introduction

The staff and Governors of Tudhoe Moor Nursery School accept that any complaint or criticism from parents / carers should be taken very seriously. Concerns can either be sorted out informally or if necessary via a more formal procedure.

This document provides information on how other specific types of complaints may be progressed.

Scope

This policy statement applies to all parents and carers of children attending Tudhoe Moor Nursery School.

Definition

The Governors and staff of Tudhoe Moor Nursery School accept that this policy statement is a fair way to deal with all complaints from parents, carers and children.

Aims

The staff and Governors of Tudhoe Moor Nursery aim to resolve any complaints that arise in a fair way. The following section outlines how all complaint received by the Governing Body will be dealt with.

The following complaints are covered by the General School Complaints Procedure.

- Most matters to do with the management of the school are the responsibility of the school Governing Body (e.g. how children are taught and the behaviour of staff) It is appropriate for these issues to be resolved in school and /or by the school Governing Body.
- Other matters are the responsibility of the Local Education Authority (LEA). It is appropriate for these matters to be resolved by procedures established by the LEA.
- The general school complaints procedure only applies to complaints that are the responsibility of the School Governing Body and are not covered by other separate procedures.

Complaints that are NOT covered by the General School Complaints Procedure are:

- Matters that are the responsibility of the LEA.
- Conduct of the staff at school.
- Content of a statutory statement of special educational needs.
- Pupil admissions.
- Pupil exclusions.
- Nations curriculum and related issues including religious education.
- Child protection.

Please see appendix 2 of this document for information about where to direct complaints about these issues.

If you are unsure whether your complaint is a school or LEA matter please contact School and Governor Support Service (s list of useful telephone numbers and email addresses is given at the end of this document.)

Quick, efficient, full and Fair Consideration.

All complaints will be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible. The period of consideration will vary with the gravity and complexity of the complaint and the urgency which it needs to be settled.

How does listening to a concern affect the role of the governor?

Although governors will wish to be helpful, reassuring any concerned parent that an issue will be handled fairly, taking part in such a discussion can later prejudice their involvement. Governors are, therefore, advised to either:-

- make this difficulty known and refer the parent to the head teacher
- Listen in order to help resolve the concern but accept this will prejudice their impartiality if the issue develops. This may mean that the governor concerned may not participate in any consideration of this complaint by the Governing Body or any of its committees.

Who will deal with your complaint?

Stage 1 – First contact – Informal Stage

- Parents or carers should be provided with the opportunity to discuss any concerns with the appropriate member of staff. The member of staff should try to clarify with the parents the nature of their concern and assure them that the school wants to listen and resolve their concerns. In response the member of staff may explain to the parent how the situation happened. It can be helpful to identify at this point what sort of outcome the parent is looking for.
- If the member of staff first contacted can not immediately deal with the matter they should note the details of the concern and refer it to the appropriate person e.g. head teacher / deputy. In smaller schools or on certain major issues, the Head teacher may deal with concerns directly.
- The member of staff dealing with the concern should ensure that the parent or carer clearly understands
 - What action has been agreed?
 - When they may be provided with a response if one can not be provided immediately. (other than in exceptional circumstances a response should be provided within 10 school days.)
- The member of staff should also arrange for the matter to be put in writing if this seems the best way of making things clear.
- If the parent or carer is not satisfied with the response they should request that their concerns be referred to the Head Teacher (if they have not already dealt with the issue.) The Head teacher will seek any necessary clarification of the concerns including interviewing the parents where this would be helpful. The head Teacher will advise the

parents of the outcome of their consideration. Other than in exceptional circumstances the head Teacher should provide a response to the parent or carer within 10 school days of them requesting the involvement of the Head teacher.

- In the response that they receive from the head Teacher the parents or carers should be made aware of the procedures for considering further should they not be satisfied after this stage has been completed.

Stage 2 – formal Consideration

- Where a parent or carer has made an approach to the school through the informal stage and is not satisfied with the outcome, they should write to the head Teacher giving details of their concerns and asking for the matter to be given further consideration.
- Such letters need only be a single statement. Parents who feel unable to write a letter may contact the Education Welfare Service who may be able to provide help. The contact telephone number is at the end of this document.
- All complaints reaching this stage will be logged and acknowledged immediately by the school and copied to the Clerk of the Governing body for information.
- The Head Teacher will seek clarification necessary about the complaint, including interviewing the parent where necessary.
- The Head Teacher may also seek any necessary advice on the matter.
- Other than in exceptional circumstances the parent or carer should receive written response from the Head Teacher that addresses their concerns within 15 school days of receipt of their letter to the Head Teacher.
- Where a parent or carer is not satisfied by with the outcome of this formal stage, they have 20 school days, from the date of the head Teacher's letter, to register the complaint with the Clerk to the Governing Body of the school c/o The school and Governor Support Service, Education Department, County Hall, Durham DH1 5UJ.

Stage 3 – Appeal – referral to the Governing Body

- Where a parent or carer has made an approach to the school through the formal stage and is not satisfied with the outcome, they should write to the Clerk of the Governors giving details of their concerns and asking for an appeal against the decision or action taken by the Head Teacher.
- The Governing Body of the school will only hear appeals that have been passed through stages 1 and 2 of this procedure.
- On receipt of a written request for an appeal from a parent or carer, the clerk to the Governing Body will:-
 - Immediately log and acknowledge receipt of the appeal
 - Check that the complaint has already completed stages 1&2
 - Check that the 20 school period since stage 2 was complied with
 - Arrange for the Governing Body to consider the appeal as soon as it is practical to do so and, other than in exceptional

circumstances within 20 school days of receipt of the letter requesting an appeal and

Invite the parent and any representative to the meeting.

- A committee of the Governing Body will consider the appeal, with the parent or carer and their representative, who will be given the opportunity to address them.
- The Clerk to the Governing Body will notify in writing the outcome of the appeal to parents or carer and the head Teacher within 5 school days.

This concludes the process for considering a general complaint.

Note

Where there is a specific complaint about the conduct of a member of staff, including the Head Teacher, it may be more appropriate for it to be considered under the separate disciplinary [process where the findings and outcomes are confidential.

Where a complaint is made which relates to the Head Teacher, the Chair of the Governing Body is responsible for determining whether any issue should be progressed via this or any other school procedures, including the Disciplinary Procedure.

A school day is defined as any day that the school is open for the teaching of children.

Conclusion

Tudhoe Moor nursery is committed to implementing the above [policy in order to provide appropriate learning to its young children.

Reviewed September 2018

Next review September 2020

Signed _____

