

Tudhoe Moor Nursery School

Complaint procedure statement



Policy statement

Our setting believes that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the setting. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

Purpose of a Complaints Procedure

This procedure aims to reassure parents and others with an interest in the school that:

- Where possible, complaints will be dealt with informally and at the lowest possible level in school in order to reach a resolution promptly;
- Any complaint against the school will be dealt with in a fair, open and responsive way, with the aim of achieving a speedy and satisfactory resolution; and
- The school recognises that a willingness to listen to questions and criticism and to respond positively, can lead to improvements in school in practices as well as provision.

An effective Complaints Procedure will:

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
- be easily accessible and publicised
- be simple to understand and use
- 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
- address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary

Investigating Complaints

It is suggested that at each stage, the person investigating the complaint makes sure that they:

- establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved
- clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved
- meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information is necessary)
- clarify what the complainant feels would put things right
- interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- keep notes of the interview

Resolving Complaints

At each stage in the procedure schools 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
- It would be useful if complainants were encouraged to state what actions/outcome they feel might resolve the problem at any stage
- An admission that the school could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence
- 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
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint

An effective procedure will identify areas of agreement between the parties. It is also of equal importance to clarify any misunderstandings that might have occurred as this can create a positive atmosphere in which to discuss any outstanding issues.

Recording Complaints

Schools should record the progress of the complaint and the final outcome. A complaint may be made in person, by telephone, in writing (email). An example of a complaint form can be found in Appendix 2 of the policy. At the end of a meeting or telephone call, it would be helpful to ensure that the complainant and the school have the same understanding of what was discussed and agreed. A brief note of meetings and telephone calls can be kept and a copy of any written response added to the record.

Monitoring the Policy

The Governing Body should review their Complaints Policy regularly and monitor the number and range of complaints received, how these were dealt with and any action taken. The monitoring and review of complaints can be a useful tool in evaluating the school's performance.

Complaints about the Headteacher

Where it is clear that a complaint is against the Headteacher the matter has to be referred immediately to the Chair of Governors who, acting as *line manager*, will be responsible for dealing with the matter.

It is not always clear if the complaint is against the Headteacher given they are responsible for all operational decisions across the school even if made by other staff.

In most cases complaints raise concerns around the conduct of the Headteacher. In any event, advice from the Local Authority should be sought.

Reviewed: September 2018

Reviewed by: Julia Hymers HT

Next review: September 2020