



## Tranmere Park Primary School

### Complaints Policy

#### 1.0 INFORMAL STAGE

- 1.1 The school welcomes feedback from parents/carers. Sometimes this will take place at formal planned events such as parents' evenings. Between times, complainants are encouraged to raise any concern they may have about child or an issue within the school **as and when it occurs**. Complainants should feel free to raise their concerns with the class teacher, or other appropriate member of staff, either in person, by telephone or in writing.
- 1.2 The school is committed to responding as quickly as possible to any issues raised. Staff will listen to parents' concerns and seek to reach a speedy and satisfactory resolution. **Complainants will, where possible, receive a response to their concern within 5 schools days**. If it is not possible to meet this deadline they will be informed of when a response will be made.
- 1.3 If, after attempting to resolve the issue formally, complainants remain dissatisfied with the outcome they will be provided with information about the school's formal complaints procedure.
- 1.4 Complaints should be encouraged to outline the remedy they are seeking.

#### **Exceptions**

- 1.5 Any complaint which involves a claim for compensation or an allegation or misconduct about particular member of staff should be put in writing to the headteacher.
- 1.6 A complaint which concerns the headteacher should be made in writing to the Chair of Governors. The Governing Body should consider appointing a designated governor (with LEA support if necessary) to investigate the complaint.

#### 2.0 FORMAL STAGE 1: HEADTEACHER

##### **Dealing with a complaint**

- 2.1 Where a complainant has not been able to resolve a concern or complaint informally they are entitled to ask that the issue be investigated by the headteacher or a senior member of staff nominated by the headteacher. The complaint should be put in writing to the headteacher.

- 2.2 **Acknowledgement within 5 days:** Receipt of the complaint will be Acknowledged with 5 school days and will specify how the complaint will be Investigated, by whom and the timescale within which a full response will be made.
- 2.3 **Full response within 10 school days:** The headteacher will ensure that a full response is made within 10 school days. If the timescale needs to be extended (if, for example, meetings with complainants or relevant persons cannot be Arranged within this timescale) complainants will be informed.

### **Investigating a complaint**

- 2.4 The headteacher should nominate a senior member of staff, who has had no prior involvement with the complaint, to investigate the complaint (where resources and the size of the school staff body allows). This allows the headteacher to retain a degree of detachment and independence from the complaint, which may be helpful in maintaining good relations between the complainant and the school after the complaint procedure has run its course.
- 2.5 During the investigation the headteacher, or nominated person, may contact the complainants to clarify the details of the complaint and speak to other persons as necessary.
- 2.6 Complainants will be allowed the opportunity to meet with the investigating officer and to be accompanied by a friend or relative to speak on their behalf Or help them make their case. Interpreting facilities can be made available, if necessary, through Leeds City Council.
- 2.7 The emphasis of the investigating officer as this stage is to compile accurate evidence. The headteacher or nominated person investigating the complaint will need to interview relevant witnesses and take statements from those involved.
- 2.8 If the complaint involves a pupil, his/her parent/carer should be contacted and, if interviewed, ideally a parent/carer should be present. In some cases this might not be possible and a member of staff with whom the pupil feels comfortable e.g. learning mentor, should attend the interview.
- 2.9 The investigating officer should keep written records of all meetings and telephone conversations undertaken as part of the investigation together with any other relevant documentation.

## **The Outcome**

- 2.10 A full written response will be made to complainants who may be offered a further meeting to explain how the investigation was carried out and how decisions were reached.
- 2.11 Complainants will be advised that if they are dissatisfied with the outcome they may refer the matter to the Governing Body. This should be done by writing to the Chair of Governors **with 10 school days** of receipt of the letter from the headteacher.

## **3.0 FORMAL STAGE 2: APPEAL TO PANEL OF GOVERNORS**

### **The Appeal Panel**

- 3.1 If complainants are dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1 there will be a further and final right of appeal to a specially convened panel of governors.
- 3.2 **Lodging appeal within 10 school days:** Appeals should be lodged with the Chair of Governors within 10 school days of receipt of the Stage 1 decision.
- 3.3 **Convene panel meeting within 20 school days:** The panel will meet within 20 school days of receiving the complaint and complainants and the headteacher will be informed of the date, time and venue of the hearing.
- 3.4 The panel will comprise at least 3 governors who have had no previous knowledge of, or involvement in, the case. The panel should not include teaching or staff governors. It may be appropriate, in the interests of independence and objectivity, for the Governing Body to have, as a co-opted member, an independent person who is not on the Governing Body.
- 3.5 The panel will appoint its own chair, normally the Chair or Vice-chair of governors. The chair of the panel will ensure that the appeal hearing is minuted.

### **The Review**

- 3.6 The panel will consider the way the complaint has been investigated and handled by the school. The panel will carry out a review of the investigation carried out at Formal Stage 1. It will hear the report of the investigating officer at Formal Stage 1 and any submissions on that report by the complainant. The review should not entail a rehearing of the case.
- 3.7 It will be open to the governors to uphold the complaint and / or direct a different remedy to that decided upon by the investigating officer at Stage 1. This consideration will be in the light of the school's policy on complaints or any other relevant policies or good practice guidelines which exist.

- 3.8 Complainants may be accompanied by a friend or relative to speak on their behalf or help present their case. Interpreting facilities can be made available, if necessary, through Leeds City Council.
- 3.9 The conduct of the panel meeting will be at the discretion of the Chair, but there will be an opportunity:
- for the investigating officer to resent their report
  - for the complainants to make their submission on that report
  - for either party to ask questions
  - for the panel to ask any questions of either the complainants or the headteacher

### **The outcome**

- 3.10 The panel will :
- reach its decision
  - decided on appropriate action
  - consider any recommendations it will make to review or change school policies or procedures
- 3.11 **Decision with 3 school days.** The decision of the panel is final and will be communicated in writing to complainants and the headteacher within 3 school days.

### **LEA Investigations**

- 3.12 If complainants believe that the matter has not been dealt with fairly they may ask Education Leeds to examine the process that has been followed. Leeds City Council will appoint an Investigating Officer who will check that:
- reasonable procedures have been followed
  - that the complainant has been treated fairly, and
  - that there has been no breach of statutory regulations``
- 3.13 Education Leeds does not have the power to set aside the decision of the Governor's panel. It may only comment on the fairness of the process.

### **Secretary of State Investigation**

- 3.14 A further stage of appeal can be taken to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, but only on the grounds that the Governing Body or Leeds City Council is acting or proposing to act unreasonably or illegally.

