

# **School Complaints Policy**

## Overview

Since 1 September 2003 Governing Bodies (GBs) of all maintained schools and maintained nursery schools are required under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides. The law also requires the procedure to be publicised. The prime aim of the school's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confident manner. Malicious complaints may incur appropriate action by the school. Most concerns or complaints are of a general nature and are dealt with by the school. However, concerns or complaints about any of the following issues should be made in writing to Walsall Children's Services:

- Delivery of the national curriculum
- School admissions or exclusions
- Special educational needs assessments
- Provision of religious education and collective worship (with the exception of church-aided schools)
- Delivery of disability services

All other concerns or complaints should be taken up with the school.

This Governing Body Complaints Procedure seeks to:

- Encourage resolution of problems by Informal means wherever possible;
- Be easily accessible and publicised
- Be simple to understand and use;
- Be impartial and 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
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary;
- Provide information to the school's senior management team so that services can be improved

Further information can be found at [www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/governance](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/governance)

# School Complaints Policy

## Introduction

The majority of issues raised by parents, pupils or the community are concerns rather than complaints. The school is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. The prime aim of the school's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible.

The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints; This Complaints Policy has three main stages;

- **Stage 1** – A concern is raised informally with staff member / Headteacher
- **Stage 2** – Formal complaint is heard by Chair of Governors
- **Stage 3** – Complaint is heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel.

### Stage 1 – Raising a concern

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will usually result in a speedy response, which will resolve the concern. The school requests that parents make their first contact with Class Teacher, Deputy Head or Headteacher. Sometimes the concern raised will require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an initial response within a day or two and, if required, a subsequent substantive response.

The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 1, please write to the Chair of Governors within 10 days as set out below.

### Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

If you wish to make a formal complaint, please write to the Chair of Governors stating that you wish to make a formal complaint. Your letter should state details of the complaint and the outcome that you are seeking. The Chair will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and will then investigate the complaint with the school.

The investigation will be undertaken by the chair or a person appointed by the chair and acting on the chair's behalf. The nature of investigation will vary according to the complaint but may involve;

- Establishing **what** has happened so far, and **who** has been involved;
- clarifying the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- meeting with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information is necessary);
- clarifying what the complainant feels would put things right;
- interviewing those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- conducting the investigation with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- keeping notes of the interview.

The chair will write to the complainant following the investigation and will outline her / his findings.

If you remain dissatisfied you will need to let the school know within 10 school working days of receiving the chair's findings on the complaint. Your complaint will then be considered by a panel of governors.

### **Stage 3 – Formal Complaint**

The final stage will involve a panel of Governors, the Governors appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process. The aim of the appeal panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. The hearing will normally take place within 10 school working days of the receipt of the written request. The panel will consider the chair's investigation and report and will also consider the representations of the complainant. All parties will be notified of the panel's decision in writing within three school working days after the date of the hearing. The Governors appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process. If you believe that the Governing Body has acted unreasonably or has failed to carry out its statutory duties you may take your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education. The Secretary of State must be satisfied that a decision is unreasonable in the sense that no reasonable authority, acting with due regard to its statutory responsibilities, would have reached that decision.

## Flowchart – Summary of dealing with Complaints

