



Rookery School

Complaints policy

8 March 2017

Rookery School: Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 We believe that our school provides a fantastic education for all our children, and that the Headteacher and other staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents. The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases.

2. Aims and objectives

2.1 Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

3. The complaints process

How to share a concern

3.1 If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher or the Phase Leader. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and making good progress; they always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the child's progress.

What to do if the matter is not resolved through informal discussion

3.2 Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher and/or the phase leader, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Headteacher. The Headteacher considers any such complaint very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage.

Sharing a concern about the Headteacher

3.3 Should a parent have a complaint about the Headteacher, s/he should first make an informal approach to one of the members of the governing body, who is obliged to investigate it. The governor in question will do all s/he can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if a parent is unhappy with the outcome, s/he can make a formal complaint, as outlined below. A [list of governor names](#) is available from the school office.

How to take the matter further

3.4 Only if an informal complaint fails to resolve the matter should a formal complaint be made to the governing body. This complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far. The parent should send this written complaint to the [Chair of Governors](#) via Sue Heath Gardiner, (Clerk to the Governing Body), based in the leadership team office.

The governing body must consider all written complaints within three weeks of receipt. It arranges a meeting to discuss the complaint, and invites the person making it to attend the meeting, so that s/he can explain her complaint in more detail. *It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to ensure that there is an independent representative present at the meeting.* The school gives the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting.

After hearing all the evidence, the governors consider their decision and inform the parent about it in writing. The governors do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction.

Who to appeal to next

3.5 If any parent is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then s/he is entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education.

4. Monitoring and review

4.1 The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Headteacher logs all complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis.

4.2 Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

March 2017



Note:

This policy can also be adapted to manage unreasonable or persistent contact not directly associated with, or resulting from, formal complaints.

Rookery School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

Rookery School defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an '*unreasonable*' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Rookery School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from Rookery School.