

Lower Kersal Primary School

Complaints Policy



Head Teacher: Miss S Steward

Oct 2017

Reviewed Sept 18

At Lower Kersal Primary School (LKPS) we encourage all parents and pupils to approach any member of staff in the first instance if they have any concern or complaint.

In the event that these initial approaches fail to resolve a complaint this policy lays out the procedure that should be followed to allay any concerns about a particular issue.

If you are unsure of any part of this policy please do not hesitate to contact the Head Teacher or the member of the governing body responsible for complaints (the school office can be contacted in confidence to obtain contact details).

Your complaint will be investigated fully, ensuring all relevant facts are taken into consideration.

For further information about current government legislation please see Appendix 1.

Registering a Complaint

Initially we would ask that a parent or pupil discuss the complaint with the relevant member of staff. However, if they have difficulty with discussing this issue with the member of staff, the issue can be referred to the deputy head teacher or head teacher.

If governors are involved in a complaint at an early stage they must be made aware of the procedure to be followed for complaints and not act unilaterally outside the formal procedure.

If a member of parent or pupil felt that their initial contact with a member of staff did not deal with the concern to their satisfaction they should complete a complaints form (Appendix 2) and return it to the head teacher (or chairman of governors if the complaint refers to the head teacher).

If the complaint concerns the governing body then the form should be returned to the Local Education Office (address can be obtained in confidence from the school office).

If you want to complain about our school's SEN support, you should do so whilst your child is registered with us. This includes complaints that school has not provided support required by your child's Education Health and Care Plan.

Please talk to our special educational needs co-ordinator, Mrs Mitchell, about your complaint. If you do not feel your complaint has been resolved, you should follow our school's complaints procedure

Investigating the Complaint

The nature of the complaint will be clarified and unresolved issues outlined. It will be established what has happened so far and who has been involved. A meeting will be arranged to ensure all the information relating to the complaint has been documented and to find out what action the complainant feels would put things right. Everyone involved in the complaint will be interviewed. Notes will be kept of the discussions and all parties asked to sign the notes to show that they feel they are an accurate record of the meeting.

Those involved in the complaint will be encouraged to state what actions they feel would remedy the situation at any time.

The head teacher or chair of governors will remain impartial during the interviews.

The Head Teacher will maintain a record of any formal complaints at the school.

Resolving Complaints

Once the complaint has been fully investigated all persons involved will be informed of the findings and suggested actions to remedy the situation.

Areas of agreement between the parties will be highlighted and any misunderstandings clarified to create a positive outcome.

The Complaints Appeal Panel

If necessary, the chairman of the governing body will convene a complaints panel consisting of three governors who should not have been involved in the early stages of the complaint. They will collate all information and send it to

the involved parties prior to the meeting. A record will be taken of the proceedings and all involved parties will be informed of the panel's decision.

This panel is the last school based stage of the complaints process. Individual complaints would not be heard by the whole governing body at any stage as this would compromise the impartiality of any panel set up for a disciplinary hearing against a member of staff following a serious complaint. It is important that the appeal hearing is independent and impartial and that it is seen to be so. No governor may sit on the panel if they have had prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it. In deciding the make-up of the panel, governors need to try and ensure that it is a cross section of the categories of governor and sensitive to issues of race, gender and religious affiliation.

If a child is the complainant it may not be necessary for the child to be present for the whole of the hearing. The child must be accompanied by his/her parents throughout the process.

In the event that the complainant does not feel that their complaint has been dealt with to their satisfaction, they may contact the Local Authority. Details may be obtained in confidence from the school office at any time.

Time Limits

Complaints need to be considered, and resolved, as quickly and efficiently as possible and within realistic time limits that may be set by the appointed governor or head teacher and agreed by the complainant.

Review of Complaints

The governing body will monitor the level and nature of complaints and review the outcomes on a regular basis to ensure the effectiveness of the procedure and make changes where necessary. The head teacher will report any official complaints in the Head teachers Report to Governors.

As well as addressing an individual's complaints, the process of listening to and resolving complaints will contribute to school improvement. When individual complaints are heard the governing body may identify underlying issues that need to be addressed. The monitoring and review of complaints by the school

and the governing body will be a useful tool in evaluating the school's performance.

Appendix 1

Legislation

Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 requires that:

- (1) The governing body of a maintained school (including a maintained nursery school) shall:
 - a) Establish procedures for dealing with all complaints relating to the school or to the provision of facilities or services under section 27, other than complaints failing to be dealt with in accordance with any procedures required to be established in relation to the school by virtue of a statutory provision other than this section, and
 - b) Publicise the procedures so established.
- (2) In establishing or publicising procedures under subsection(1), the governing body shall have regard to any guidance given from time to time (in relation to England) by the Secretary of State.

Section 39 of the Education Act 2001 provides the following:

“maintained school” means a community, foundation or voluntary school, a community or foundation special school or a maintained nursery school”.



Chair of Governors

Concerns and Complaints about Schools : Guidance Notes for Parents

If you have a concern or complaint

We would like you to tell us about it. We welcome suggestions for improving our work in the school. Be assured that no matter what you want to tell us, our support and respect for you and your child in the school will not be affected in any way. Please tell us of your concern as soon as possible. It is difficult for us to investigate properly an incident or problem, which has happened some time ago.

What to do first

Most concerns and complaints can be sorted out quickly by speaking with your child's class teacher. If you have a complaint, which you feel should be, looked at by the Headteacher in the first instance you can contact him/her straightaway if you prefer. It is usually best to discuss the problem face to face. You may need an appointment to do this, and can make one by ringing or calling in to the school office. You can take a friend or relation to the appointment with you if you would like to.

All staff will make every effort to resolve your problem informally. They will make sure that they understand what you feel went wrong, and they will explain their own actions to you. They will ask what you would like the school to do to put things right. Of course, this does not mean that in every case they will come round to your point of view but it will help both you and the school to understand both sides of the question. It may also help to prevent a similar problem arising again.

What to do next

If you are dissatisfied with the teacher's response you can make a complaint to the Headteacher. This should be made in writing.

If your complaint is about an action of the Headteacher personally, then you should refer it to the Chair of Governors now. You can contact him/her by writing to him/her and handing this in at the school office. Please mark the envelope 'confidential'

The Headteacher will ask to meet you for a discussion of the problem. Again you may take a friend or someone else with you if you wish. The Headteacher will conduct a full investigation of the complaint and may interview any members of staff or pupils involved. You will receive a written response to your complaint.

If you are still unhappy

The problem will normally be solved by this stage. However, if you are still not satisfied you may wish to contact the Chair of the governing body to ask for referral or your complaint to a

Governors' Complaints Panel. It will then be heard by a group of three governors who have no previous knowledge of the problem and so will be able to give it a fresh assessment. You will be invited to attend and speak to the panel at a meeting, which the Headteacher will also attend.

Our chair of governors is Mr Peter Dickinson. Please place your complaint in a sealed envelope and hand it into school. Please be assured that School will not open this letter.

Further action

Complaints about school problems are almost always settled within schools but in exceptional cases it may be possible to refer the problem to an outside body such as the Local Education Authority or Salford Children's Services. Salford City Council can be contacted directly on 0161 794 4711. If you are still dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, the City Council will be able to inform you of ways of taking this matter even further.

Lower Kersal Primary School

At a Glance

How to Make a Complaint.

