



MORDIFORD CE PRIMARY SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. Introduction

All Academies must have a complaints procedure which meets the standards set out in the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014.

Academies' complaints procedures must be in writing, be made available to parents and set out clear timescales for the management of the complaint.

At Mordiford CE Primary School we all work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. Our aim is to deal with issues and problems before they become a 'complaint'. However there is a clear protocol to follow if necessary and the steps to follow and their outcome is outlined in this document.

1. If any parents are unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or have any concerns relating to the school, we encourage them to talk to the child's class teacher immediately. There is no doubt that if a concern is shared with the class teacher they can either reassure worried parents or together devise steps to take to address the concern. Parents must never worry about sharing their concerns with the class teacher. They will always be taken seriously and due consideration given to a mutually agreeable resolution.

2. We promise we will always be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint and to deal with them as swiftly as possible. Our focus will always be on the child and what is best for them.

2. The complaints process

Stage 1. Informal

Informal expression of concern made to the school. In the first instance, the matter should be discussed with the child's class teacher. In our experience most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way with apologies where necessary. Members of the school's senior leadership may be involved at this stage. We expect most complaints to be resolved by this stage. However if the matter has not been resolved and needs further investigation parents must make an appointment with the Head teacher. The Head teacher may then need time to fully investigate the matter and will respond within 7 school days.

Stage 2. Formal

Formal complaint: Complaints rarely reach this formal level but if you need to you should make a formal complaint to the Head Teacher. Complaints at this stage should be written and received within **10 school days** of the Head teacher's initial feedback. Your letter should be addressed to the Head teacher and marked "private and confidential". The letter should say why you remain unhappy and what you wish to see happen. The Head teacher will let you know when your complaint is to be considered. If a meeting with you and others involved is considered necessary you will be given adequate notice to prepare. You will be informed of the outcome of the head teachers' investigation and decision on what further action will be taken within 10 school days.

If parents have a complaint about the Head Teacher, they should first make an informal approach to the Chair of the Governors (as at stage 3 below, who is obliged to investigate it).

The Chair will do all they can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if parents are unhappy with the outcome; they can make a formal complaint, as outlined below.

Stage 3 Governing Body: Panel Hearing

If the complaint is not resolved, and all previous stages have been explored, a parent may make representation to the Governing Body. You may take your complaint to the school Governing Body **within 6 months** of the Head Teachers' response.

1. The complainant should refer the matter in writing to the Chair of Governors setting out the complaint. The Chair of Governors will consider the evidence of the complaint, in confidence and without reference to any other member of the Board. If the complaint is serious or complex, advice must be sought from the Academy's appointed legal advisors, Lanyon Bowdler. Having considered the complaint the Chair will either write to the complainant with his/her findings and, should it be necessary, the reasons for a meeting with the complainant and the Headteacher in an attempt to resolve the matter.

Should either the complainant or the Headteacher be dissatisfied with the outcome of the Chair of Governors investigation they may ask for the matter to be referred to a panel by writing to the clerk of the Governing Body setting out the reasons for the referral.

The panel should consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and include at least one member who is independent of the management and running of the academy.

2. The complainant, Headteacher and Chair of Governors will provide the clerk with all the documentation to be used at the meeting, at least 10 days before the meeting takes place.
3. The clerk will distribute all documentation to both parties and to members of the panel at least 7 days before the meeting.
4. The complainant will be advised by the clerk that they may be accompanied by a friend or representative at the meeting.
5. The normal procedure to be followed at the meeting is set out below.
 - the Chair explains the purpose of the meeting and introduces those present
 - the person calling the meeting presents their case
 - the panel will have an opportunity to question the person calling the meeting
 - the respondent presents their case
 - the respondent can be questioned by the panel
 - both parties withdraw
 - the panel consider the case and then write to both parties within seven working days to advise them of their findings and their reasons.
6. Examine all necessary correspondence, reports and so on.
7. Talk to any other individuals or groups as necessary to arrive at a view.
8. Take some time to reflect.

9. Respond in writing and consider meeting with the complainant again to explain your findings.

10. There is no specific format required when putting the conclusions of an investigation into a report or letter to the complainant. However the following might be useful: (i) indicate what evidence had been taken into account. It is important to include all interviews and the main reports, letters and so on. (ii) An outline of the complaint. (iii) Your general findings, outlining the views from various parties. (iv) Your conclusion. (v) As raised in the previous point, recommendations may be made. If these are appropriate, then these should be in a separate section in

Stage 4. Further representation.

This stage is reached if all efforts to resolve the complaint at academy level have been exhausted. In these circumstances the complainant can complain to the **Education Funding Agency (EFA)** [http://gov.uk/schools complaints form](http://gov.uk/schools-complaints-form)

For information please also see EFA document “**Procedure for Dealing with Complaints about academies**”

If, despite all stages of this policy being followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied they are not entitled to reopen the same issue. In such cases the Chair of Governors is able to inform them in writing that the process has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

If an anonymous complaint is received it will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances serious concerns such as child protection issues or bullying allegations, where the school might consider it appropriate to contact outside agencies.

3. Investigating complaints

The person investigating the complaint will:

- 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 further information is required
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.
- Conduct any interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning.
- Complete all necessary notes.

4. Resolving complaints

At each stage in the complaint schools and complainant 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 admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- Assurance that the event that was the basis of the complaint will not recur
- Explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure it does not happen again

- Details of any disciplinary procedures that have taken place as a result of the complaint will not be shared
- An undertaking to review school policy or procedure in light of the complaint
- An explanation that there is insufficient evidence and thus the complaint cannot be upheld
- An explanation that, following investigation, the evidence does not substantiate the concern

**An admission that the school could have handled things better is not the same as an admission of negligence*

5. Monitoring and review

The Governors will monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The head teacher will log all stage 2 complaints received by the school, and record how they were resolved. These will be reported as part of the Head Teacher's report to Governors.

The Governors of Mordiford CE Primary School review this policy as necessary

Latest Review April 2018