

NICHOLAS HAWKSMOOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 We believe that our school provides a good education for all our children, and that the headteacher and other staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents/carers. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents/carers. The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases.
- 1.2 If any parent/carer is unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or has any concern relating to the school, we encourage that person to talk to the child's class teacher immediately.
- 1.3 All parents/carers have the right, as a last resort, to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education, if they still feel that their complaint has not been properly addressed.

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

- 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. 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 is 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.
- 3.2 Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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- 3.5 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. The school gives the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 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 notifies the Chair of Governors of all complaints and how they have been resolved. Summary notes of meetings with parents/carers are kept on Parent/Carer contact forms and relevant staff are informed as appropriate.
- 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/carers so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

Signed:

Date:

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What you should do if you have a complaint

At Nicholas Hawksmoor we are committed to maintaining a positive partnership with parents/carers. Sometimes things happen which make children or parents/carers unhappy. It is important that you feel able to raise concerns and do this in the best way. In most cases, concerns and complaints can be resolved by talking to staff at the school. Sometimes parents/carers may wish to raise a more formal complaint. Below are the procedures used by the school for dealing with general complaints. It is important that if you want your complaint to be fully investigated, these procedures must be followed.

Stage 1 – Initial approach

It is important that parents/carers contact the school first with their concerns and talk to a teacher or the Headteacher. Most problems can be sorted out in this way easily and informally.

Stage 2

If you are still unhappy the next stage is to raise a formal complaint by writing to the Headteacher, (or Chair of the Governing Body if you have already spoken to the Headteacher). The Headteacher (or nominated member of staff), or Chair of Governors will investigate your complaint. After they have looked into the issues, you may be asked to meet with the Headteacher or Chair of Governors or you may get a letter explaining the school's response.

Stage 3 – Appeal to Governors

If you were still unhappy after raising the complaint at Stage 2, you would need to inform the Chair of Governors in writing and request a hearing. The school's complaints procedure does offer the opportunity for your complaint to be heard by a panel of the Governing Body. You will be asked to meet with the panel and explain your case. The panel will listen to you and the Headteacher, and will inform you in writing of their decision.

Timescales for dealing with your complaint

Ideally, complaints will be dealt with quickly, but if your complaint is complicated or requires detailed investigation, it may take a longer time to sort out. We will let you know how a complaint is being addressed and when you can expect to hear from us.

The role of Education Services

Education Services can provide information on schools' and parents'/carers' responsibilities and give advice to you on how best to resolve a complaint. We will expect that you have raised the issues first of all with the school.

Other types of complaints

The following types of complaints about education are dealt with in different ways. There are special arrangements under the Education Acts if you want to appeal or complain about: admission to schools; exclusion from school; school reorganisation proposals; special education provision; religious education and collective worship; national curriculum issues. You can ask your school or Education Services for guidance on the issues above.

May we also stress that we are most concerned when a parent has a complaint – we will always try to resolve the matter in a positive, informal and friendly manner in the first instance. If you are particularly distressed about any matter, we respectfully ask that you do not to speak to the teacher in front of the class as this can cause embarrassment to the children. Please ask for a private consultation and this can be arranged through the School Office. However, where a parent is abusive and aggressive towards a member of staff, the Governing Body will not hesitate to take legal advice and inform the police.

Signed:

Date: