



# STOW HEATH PRIMARY SCHOOL

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Governing Body of Stow Heath Primary School have adopted this policy to ensure that there is a clear procedure to resolve a concern as informally as possible and to resort to formal procedures only as a last resort.

### General Principles:

- This procedure is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school or the services that it provides.
- An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- To allow for a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, any matter raised more than 3 months after the event being complained of, will not be considered, although Governors may consider exceptions to this.
- To ensure that complaints of fraud, malpractice or other improper conduct can be raised without fear of reprisal and dealt with properly and with due consideration refer to whistleblowing policy.

### Dealing with complaints – initial concerns

It is important to differentiate between a complaint or a concern.

1. A concern can be defined as ‘an expression of worry or doubt’ for which reassurance is sought.
2. A complaint can be defined as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction’ which can be regarding actions taken or a perceived lack of action.

Any complaint or concern will be taken seriously and both will be addressed through this policy.

### Raising a concern or complaint. There are four main stages:

#### 1. Informal Stage

It is normally appropriate to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned. This may be by letter, by telephone or in person by appointment. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information and it is anticipated that most complaints/concerns will be resolved by this informal stage.

In the case of serious concerns it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Headteacher (or to the Chair of the governing body, if the complaint is about the Headteacher).

If you are uncertain about who to contact, please seek advice from the school office or the Clerk to the governing body.

#### 2. Formal Stage:

- i. Complaint heard by the head teacher
- ii. Complaint heard by the Chair of Governors
- iii. Complaint heard by the Governing Bodies complaints appeal panel

If your concern or complaint is not resolved at the informal stage you must put the complaint in writing and pass it to the Headteacher (or to the Clerk to the governing body, for the attention of the Chair, if the complaint is about the Headteacher) who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately. A Complaint Form is provided to assist you.

You should include details which might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events and copies of relevant documents.

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It is very important that you include a clear statement of the actions that you would like the school to take to resolve your concern. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed.

Please pass the completed form, in a sealed envelope to the Headteacher or to the Clerk to the governing body, as appropriate.

The Headteacher (or Chair) may invite you to a meeting to clarify your concerns and to seek an informal resolution. If you accept that invitation, you may be accompanied by a friend, if you wish, to assist you in explaining the nature of your concerns.

It is possible that your complaint will be resolved through a meeting with the Headteacher (or Chair). If not arrangements will be made for the matter to be fully investigated, using the appropriate procedure. In any case you should learn in writing, usually within 5 days of the school receiving your formal complaint, of how the school intends to proceed. The investigation will be completed as soon as reasonably practicable but normally within 20 working days.

Any investigation will begin as soon as possible and when it has been concluded, you will be informed in writing of its conclusion.

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, you may request that the Chair of Governors hears the complaint (Stage 3). If you are not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, you may request that the governing body (Stage 4) reviews the process followed by the school in handling the complaint. Any such request must be made in writing to the clerk to the governing body, within 10 school days of receiving notice of the outcome and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure. The procedure described below will be followed. A Review Request form is provided for your convenience.

### **Review Process**

Any review of the process followed by the school will be conducted by a panel of 3 members of the governing body. This will usually take place within 10 school days of receipt of your request.

The review will normally be conducted through a consideration of written submissions but reasonable requests to make oral representations should be considered sympathetically.

The panel will first receive written evidence from the complainant.

The panel will then invite representatives of the school (Usually the Headteacher or the Chair of the governing body panel that has considered the matter), as appropriate, to make a response to the complaint.

The panel may also have access to the records kept of the process followed.

You, and the school representative(s), will be informed in writing of the outcome, usually within 5 school days of the panel meeting.

The matter will then be closed as far as the school is concerned.

If you believe that the Governing Body has acted illegally or arbitrarily in handling the complaint, then you may make representations to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families.

**School Complaint Form**

Please complete this form and return it to Headteacher (or Clerk to the governing body), who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship with school (e.g. parent of a pupil on the schools roll): \_\_\_\_\_

Pupil's name (if relevant to your complaint): \_\_\_\_\_

Your address:

Daytime telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Evening telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Please give concise details of your complaint, (including dates, names of witnesses etc), to allow the matter to be fully investigated:

You may continue on separate paper or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of additional pages attached:

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? (i.e. who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?)

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Signature:

Date:

**School use**

Date form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

Complaint referred to:			
Date:			

**School Complaint Review Request Form**

Please complete this form and return it to Headteacher (of Clerk to the governing body), who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Your Address:

Daytime telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Evening telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Sir

I submitted a formal complaint to the school on \_\_\_\_\_ and am dissatisfied by the procedure that has been followed.

My complaint was submitted to \_\_\_\_\_ and I received a response from \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_.

I have attached copies of my formal complaint and of the response(s) from the school.

I am dissatisfied with the way in which the procedure was carried out, because:

You may continue on separate paper or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of additional pages attached:

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Signature:

Date:

**School use**

Date Form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

Request referred to:			
Date:			

**Recording complaints**

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All complaints will be recorded with the final outcome. It is preferable that complaints are received in writing but a complaint can be made in person, by telephone, or in writing. All complaints will be recorded and agreement reached by all parties on what was discussed and agreed.

### **Governing Body**

The Governing Body will review complaints and outcomes. No individuals will be named. The Governing Body will look for any underlying issues that need to be addressed.

### **Publishing this policy**

Reference to this policy will be included in the School Prospectus and the school website.