



POOL HAYES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Complaints Policy

Current Policy Date: Summer term 2018

Review: Annually

Date of Next Review: Summer term 2019

1. Introduction

Pool Hayes Primary School's aim is to provide a range of first-class services for all its staff, parents & pupils. No matter how good a service is, there will always be times when something goes wrong and a person is aggrieved or dissatisfied. How a school reacts in this situation says a good deal about the kind of organisation it is.

Pool Hayes will have a complaints procedure, which is positive and conciliatory. In the same way the school traditionally views every problem as a window of opportunity, so every complaint received by Pool Hayes Primary will be regarded (potentially, at least) as an opportunity to put something right or do something better. Clear guidelines on how to complain and how Pool Hayes will deal with complaints will be published. A clear and unequivocal routine for handling complaints should also reduce tension, not only between parents and staff but also between staff members themselves.

If there is a clear, simple and easily accessible channel for expressing dissatisfaction or giving voice to grievances, parents and staff are less likely to seek alternative remedies such as legal redress, reports to media etc.

Definitions and scope

The DfE guidance explains the difference between a concern and a complaint. A **concern** is defined as "an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought".

The school will resolve concerns through day-to-day communication as far as possible.

A **complaint** is defined as "an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action".

The school intends to resolve complaints informally where possible, at the earliest possible stage.

There may be occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. This policy outlines the procedure relating to handling such complaints.

This policy does not cover complaints procedures relating to:

- Admissions

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- Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)
- Safeguarding matters
- Exclusion
- Whistle-blowing
- Staff grievances
- Staff discipline

Please see our separate policies for procedures relating to these types of complaint.

Arrangements for handling complaints from parents of children with SEN about the school's support are within the scope of this policy. Such complaints should first be made to the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO); they will then be referred to this complaints policy. Our SEN policy and information report includes information about the rights of parents of pupils with disabilities who believe that our school has discriminated against their child.

- 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. 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.
- 1.2 If any parent 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 We deal with all complaints in accordance with procedures set out by the LA. If the school cannot resolve any complaint itself, those concerned can ask the LA to intervene.
- 1.4 All parents 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 anyone 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 an individual 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 an individual have a complaint about the headteacher, she/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 she/he can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if a parent is unhappy with the outcome, she/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 individual should send this written complaint to the Chair of Governors.
- 3.5 The governing body must consider all written complaints within three weeks of receipt. All parties are interviewed and if the complaint is not dealt with at this stage, it arranges a meeting of the Staffing & Personnel Committee to discuss the complaint, and invites the person making it to attend the meeting, so that she/he can explain her complaint in more detail. The school gives the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting. If this committee is unable to hear the complaint another committee will be set up in order to preserve objectivity.
- 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 individual's satisfaction.
- 3.7 If the complaint is not resolved within 15 working days, an individual may make representation to the appeals committee. A further meeting is chaired by a governor not involved in the initial complaint who considers all the evidence and makes a further judgement in an attempt to resolve the complaint.

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3.8 If the individual is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then she/he is entitled to appeal to the Director of Education. If the person making the complaint is a parent, and they are still not satisfied they may make a complaint 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.

Signed:

Date: