

Complaints Policy

1 Introduction

We believe that Penn Fields School provides a good education for all our pupils, and that the head teacher and all 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, members of staff, governors, visitors, etc. The complaints procedures are published and available in the school prospectus.

The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows.

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 with the head teacher in the first instance. If a member of staff, governor, etc. is unhappy with a situation, we deal with all complaints in accordance with procedures set out by Wolverhampton LEA. If the school cannot resolve any complaint itself, those concerned can ask the LEA to intervene. 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

Penn Fields 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

If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their head 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.

Members of staff with a complaint are encouraged to speak with their line manager/mentor in the first instance. If the member of staff feels the matter has not been resolved they should then see the head teacher.

Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the school, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the head teacher. The head teacher considers any such complaint very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage.

Should a parent, member of staff, governor, etc. have a complaint about the head teacher, they should first make an informal approach to the Chair of the

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governing body, who is obliged to investigate it. The chair in question will do all s/he can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if a parent/member of staff, etc. is unhappy with the outcome, they can make a formal complaint, as outlined below.

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 complainant should send this written complaint to the Chair of Governors. The governing body will convene the 'governing body complaints panel' who will 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 their complaint in more detail. The school gives the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting. After hearing all the evidence, the governor's panel 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. The complaints panel can:-

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- Recommend changes to the school's system or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

The chair of the panel needs to ensure that the complainant is notified of the panel's decision, in writing, with the panel's response. The letter must explain if there are any further rights of appeal and if so to whom they need to be addressed.

If the complaint is not resolved, a parent may make representation to the LA. Further information about this process is available from the school or from the LA. Another meeting is chaired by an independent person, who considers all the evidence. A further judgement is made in an attempt to resolve the complaint. If the complainant is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then they are entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education.

4 Monitoring and review

The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The head teacher logs all complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis.

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.

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Penn Fields School Complaint Form

Please complete and return this form to the head teacher or chair of the governing body who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:-

Pupil's name (if applicable) :-

Address:-

Postcode:-

Telephone number:-

Please give details of your complaint:-

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. Who did you speak to and what was the response?

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

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Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:-

Date:-

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:-

By whom:-

Complaint referred to:-

Date:-