

Policy Statement COMPLAINTS & CONCILIATION PROCEDURE

BACKGROUND

The majority of parental complaints arise from misunderstandings which are dealt with satisfactorily through informal discussion. This procedure has been instituted for the very small number of occasions where matters cannot be resolved through informal discussion between parents or guardians and teachers. The complaints and conciliation procedure shows that the school recognises its accountability to parents or guardians. It helps the school in tackling the broader issue of standards of service; for by accepting and acting upon positive criticism, it can improve quality and maintain and build upon its reputation.

Without a formal procedure the school and its governors can be faced with difficult issues of protocol when approached by parents or guardians who wish to raise matters of concern. A complaints and conciliation procedure enables governors in particular to listen sympathetically, direct the complainant to the appropriate channels and be confident that the matter will be dealt with in an agreed manner.

The complaints and conciliation procedure is designed to protect staff by setting out a clearly delineated, agreed procedure. Staff will be involved in monitoring the procedure, evaluating its effectiveness, and revising it in the light of experience.

These have been clearly laid down in recent education reforms and the Governing Body has now adopted the model procedure advised by the Southwark Diocese and attached it to the policy.

This policy recognises the importance of an effective home/school/parish partnership in achieving the aims of the schools mission statement.

THE PROCEDURE

When dealing with parental complaints every effort will be made to resolve matters informally. If informal discussion fails, all complaints must be placed in writing to the Headteacher. Arrangements will be made, if they are needed to give assistance to those who find difficulty in presenting their complaint in writing.

A formal complaint will be acknowledged within two working days, by a standard holding letter. This letter will name the member of the school staff who is dealing with the matter. The Headteacher should receive a copy of this letter.

A formal response will be sent in writing by the nominated member of the school staff within five working days. In the event of matters being more prolonged the complainant will be told what action is being taken and kept informed of progress.

The school's formal response will address the substance of the complaint, clarifying factual matters and acknowledging the accuracy of the complaint, or refuting it. The complainant will also be given the opportunity to discuss the matter.

If the complaint is acknowledged to be valid, the school will indicate what action will be taken and the change of policy it intends to initiate to alleviate similar problems. If the complaint is found to lack substance, the school will notify the parent that their complaint is unsubstantiated.

The school response will also state that in the event of a parent being dissatisfied there is a right to appeal to the Chair of Governors.

The Governing Body will then take up the procedure adopted in its model policy.