



THE PARTNERSHIP TRUST

COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

Review Due:	July 2019
Adopted:	10 th July 2017
Applicable to:	Nunney First School
Reviewed by:	The Trust Board and Nunney First School's Local Governing Body

Procedures for Dealing with Concerns and Complaints

At Nunney First School we undertake to provide a friendly and safe environment in which pupils will be helped to achieve their potential, both academically and socially. We recognise, however, that sometimes things can go wrong and parents, carers and members of the public may need to make a complaint or raise concerns they have with the school. This policy tells you what to do if this happens.

Introduction

The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or pupils, are concerns rather than complaints. We are committed to taking concerns seriously at the earliest stage without needing formal procedures, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish to follow the school's complaints procedure. For the school to be able to investigate a complaint, it needs to be made within 3 months of the incident occurring. If a complaint is older than 3 months it will not be investigated.

The prime aim of the school's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Malicious complaints may incur appropriate action by the school. Any complaints concerning the conduct of school staff will be handled in accordance with the school's internal disciplinary procedures. Such an investigation will remain confidential. The following details outline the procedure followed by the school to resolve concerns and complaints.

The School Policy has four main stages

Informal Stage – Raising a concern

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will resolve the concern. The school requests that parents make their first contact with the pupil's classroom teacher. Alternatively, the concern can be raised with the Headteacher.

It is important for parents / carers / community members to recognise that the school is a busy organisation and that whilst we will do our best, it may not be possible to offer an appointment immediately.



THE PARTNERSHIP TRUST

On some occasions, the concern raised may require investigation or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an informal but informed response within a day or two. The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way.

Stage 1 – Complaint heard by Headteacher

If your concern or complaint is not resolved informally you may wish to put the complaint in writing. This will need to be within 10 working days. You should hand it to the Headteacher, who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately. If the complaint is about the headteacher, your complaint should be passed to the Chair of the Local Governing Body.

It is very important that you include a clear statement of the actions you would like the school to take to resolve your concern. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed and you are therefore advised to use the school Complaint Form for this purpose (please see link at the bottom of the page). The complaint will be logged including the date it was received.

The Headteacher (or Chair) may invite you to a meeting to clarify your concerns and to explore the possibility of an informal resolution.

If your complaint is not resolved through an informal meeting then arrangements will be made for the matter to be fully investigated using the appropriate procedure. In any case you will learn in writing, usually within five working days of the school receiving your formal complaint, of how the school intends to proceed. This notification will include an indication of the anticipated timescale.

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

Stage 2 – Complaint heard by Chair of Governors

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed by the Headteacher, you may request that the Chair of Governors reviews the process followed by the school. Any such request must be made in writing to the Chair within 10 school days of receiving notification of the outcome. Your request must include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure.

The Chair of Governors will arrange for a further investigation. Following the investigation, the Chair of Governors will normally give a written response within ten school days. If you are dissatisfied with the result at Stage 2, you will need to let the school know within ten working days of receiving the response. A Review Request form is available for your convenience.



THE PARTNERSHIP TRUST

Stage 3 – Complaint heard by The Partnership Trust’s Complaints Appeal Panel

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 2, then you will need to write to the Chair of The Partnership Trust Board giving details of the complaint. The panel will be composed of at least 3 people not directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the school. A complaints appeal panel will be convened by the Clerk to The Partnership Trust Board of Trustees.

A hearing will normally take place within 20 working days of the receipt of the written request for a Stage 3 investigation. Parents or community members will be invited to attend the hearing and we will ensure that they received at least 3 working days’ notice of the date of the hearing. The aim of the Appeal Panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the Panel’s decision in writing within three working days of the date of the hearing. The letter will also contain what you need to do if you wish to take the matter further although it should be noted that the decision of The Partnership Trust’s Complaints Panel is final. Where the complainant remains unsatisfied, they may direct their complaint to the Education Funding Agency (EFA).

NOTE.

Allegations of abuse against a member of the school staff must be reported to the Headteacher immediately. Allegations of abuse against the Headteacher must be reported to the Chair of Governors immediately.

In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of the Headteacher, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors will be informed of the complaint. The Chair of Governors will arrange for the matter to be investigated. In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of a member of the Governing Body the member will be informed of the complaint.

Review

The Local Governing Body will review this policy every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

This Policy has been written with regard to guidance from the following:

- *DFE: Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016*
- *Education Funding Agency: Procedure for Dealing with Complaints about academies 2016*
- *National Association of Headteachers: Advice and Guidance School Complaints Procedures 2016*
- *The Key for School Leaders / Governors*