

Edinburgh Primary School COMPLAINTS POLICY

This policy should be used in conjunction with DfE Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016.

Introduction:

The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or pupils, are concerns rather than complaints. Edinburgh Primary School is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish or be asked to follow the school's formal complaints procedure.

The prime aim of Edinburgh Primary School's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Complaints should be considered and resolved as quickly and as efficiently as possible. Complaints should be made as soon as possible after an incident arises (DfE guidance indicates three months to be an acceptable time frame although exceptions will be considered). Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Malicious complaints may incur appropriate action by the school. If properly followed, a good complaints procedure will limit the number of complaints that become protracted. However, there will be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the chair of the GB is able to inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints.

The Edinburgh Primary School Complaints Policy has three main stages.

In summary they are as follows: -

- Stage 1 – A concern is raised informally with a staff member.
- Stage 2 – Complaint is heard by head teacher.
- Stage 3– Complaint is heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel.

Stage 1 – 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 their child's class teacher or, in the case of a school administration issue, the school business manager. On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with a senior member of staff e.g. assistant headteacher, deputy headteacher, in which case you will receive an informal but informed response within a few days. The majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 1, please write to or call the school within 10 school working days and state what you would like the school to do. The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

Stage 2 – Complaint heard by head teacher

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 1, the head teacher will arrange further investigation. Following the investigation, the head teacher will normally give a written response within 10 school working days. If you are dissatisfied with the result at stage 2, you should let the school know within 10 school working days of getting the response.

(NB If the complaint is about the headteacher the complaint should be addressed to the chair of governors who will decide whether the complaint is a concern that can be dealt with at Stage 1 by him/herself or whether it should be referred to a governing body complaints panel. If it is dealt with at Stage 1 but the complainant is not satisfied the complaint can be referred on to a governing body complaints panel)

Stage 3 – Complaint heard by the Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 2, then you should write to the Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint. The Chair or a nominated Governor will convene a complaints panel. The hearing will normally take place within 10 school working days of the receipt of the written request for Stage 3 investigation.

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 school working days after the date of the hearing. The letter will also contain what you need to do if you wish to take the matter further.

Individual complaints would not be discussed by the whole governing body at any stage as this could compromise the impartiality of any panel set up for a disciplinary hearing against a member of staff following a serious complaint.

N.B. In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of the head teacher, the head teacher and Chair of Governors will be informed of

the complaint. The Chair will arrange for the matter to be investigated. Complaints about a governor should be addressed to the clerk of the governing body. In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of a member of the Governing Body the member will be informed of the complaint.

The Governors appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process.

Complainants also have the right to refer their complaint to Waltham Forest Council or the Department for Education.
Complaints not in scope of the procedure

There are exceptions to the scope of the school complaints procedure which are dealt with under separate statutory policies. Exceptions include admissions, statutory assessment of SEN, school re-organisation proposals, matters likely to require a child protection investigation, exclusion of children from school, whistleblowing, staff grievances and disciplinary procedures, complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities.

Unreasonable complaints

Edinburgh Primary is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and to provide a high quality of service to those who complain. We do not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However we do not expect staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening. Unreasonable complainants are defined as those who, because of the frequency or nature of their complaints, hinder consideration of their or other people's complaints.

April 2017

Signed Chair of governors

Signed Headteacher