

Perryfields Primary School Concerns and Complaints Policy

Background

In line with Section 29 of the Education Act (2002) Perryfields Primary has made available a clear procedure so that any concerns and complaints raised can be appropriately dealt with. This does not limit complainants to parents/carers of pupils registered at the school. A complainant could be a member of the wider community or a representative of an ex pupil.

The law also requires the procedure to be published.

A concern may be defined as an *'expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought.'* For the purpose of clarification, the use of the word 'concerns' refers to matters that present at an informal stage. The person raising the concern will be asked to identify what they think would help to resolve the situation.

A complaint may be generally defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or lack of actions.'* Once raised a 'complaint' is restricted to situations requiring formal investigation.

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to invoke formal procedures. We take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

There will be occasions when complainants would prefer to raise their concerns formally. In those cases, the school's formal procedure will be invoked through the stages outlined within the procedure.

General Principles

This procedure is intended to enable concerns or complaints to be raised, relating to Perryfields Primary School or the services that we provide.

An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

To enable a proper investigation concerns or complaints must be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible.

Perryfields Primary School Policy has 4 main stages. In summary, they are as follows:-

Stage 1 (informal): Concern heard by the most appropriate member of staff

Stage 2 (formal): Complaint heard by the Headteacher

Stage 3 (formal): Complaint heard by the Chair of Governors

Stage 4 (formal): Formal complaint heard by the Governing Boards' Complaints Appeal Panel

Stage One- Informal Complaint

All concerns need to be shared at the earliest opportunity. The person raising the concern needs to either communicate directly with the members of staff concerned. This will more often than not be the Class Teacher. If this is not appropriate, the concern needs to be shared with the Family Link Worker or the Deputy Head Teacher. Concerns will also be heard by the Head Teacher if deemed appropriate to do so.

The most appropriate members of staff will arrange to meet with the person raising the concern and notes take during the meeting. A concern can also be shared in a telephone conversation or email correspondence. Whatever the preferred method of communication, all concerns will be responded to in the same manner.

During the meeting/conversation, the person raising the concern will be invited to share any appropriate suggestions in order to resolve the matter.

Actions points will be agreed and followed up by the member of staff chairing the meeting.

Many concerns can often be resolved by providing further clarification or the provision of relevant additional information. On some occasions, the concern raised may require investigation or discussion with others.

Feedback regarding the action taken and the outcomes from such, will be shared with the person raising the concern. This will either be by the end of the day or within 24 hours, provided that there are no factors which might prevent the time scale being adhered to. If additional time is required, this will be shared with the person raising the concern along with an explanation.

All concerns will be listened to and a proportionate amount of time given in the aim of resolving the matter without needing further action.

It is anticipated that most concerns will be resolved at this stage. However if the concern cannot be resolved or the person raising the concern is dissatisfied with the outcome, it will be reviewed at Stage 2.

Stage Two – Complaint heard by the Head Teacher

If the concern is not resolved at the informal stage, the complainant has the option to put the complaint in writing. A Complaints Form is available from the School Reception Office (Appendix 1) If used, the completed form must be placed in a sealed envelope and addressed FAO of the Head Teacher.

The Public Sector Equality Duty will be adhered to by ensuring that complaints can be submitted via means other than the conventional written approach.

The complaint must be brought to the attention of the Head Teacher who is responsible for ensuring that the matter is investigated appropriately.

Although the task of collecting any additional information may be delegated to other staff members, the decision regarding action taken is made by the Head Teacher.

Within 5 days of the receipt of the formal complaint, school will inform the complainant of how they intend to proceed. An indication of the anticipated timescale will be included in the written response.

The Head Teacher will aim to provide a written response within 10 school working days of sending the acknowledgement. (Acknowledgement Letter Appendix 2). However, if the complaint is more complex to review this can be extended to 20 school working days. The school will provide the complainant with details of the new deadline and an explanation of the delay.

It is important that confidentiality is respected that only relevant and appropriate information is shared with the relevant parties.

However, if the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage Two they must write to or telephone the school within 10 days of receiving the Stage Two response. The school will then look at the complaint at the next stage.

Stage Three – Formal Complaint heard by Chair of Governors

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage Two or the complaint is about the Head Teacher, contact must be made with the Chair of Governors c/o the school, ideally using the Form provided (Appendix 3). Copies of which are available from the School Office.

Chair of Governors will arrange for the complaint to be acknowledged within 5 school working days of receiving it and a meeting arrange to discuss the matter further. (Appendix 4).

Following an investigation, the Chair of Governors will aim to provide a written response within 10 school working days. However, if the complaint is more complex to review this can be extended to 20 school working days. The school will provide the complainant with details of the new deadline and an explanation of the delay. However, if the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage Three they must write to or telephone the school within 10 days of receiving the Stage Three response. The complaint will then be reviewed at the next stage.

Stage Four – Complaint Heard By Governing Board Complaints Appeal Panel

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage Three, the complainant needs to contact the Clerk of Governors giving details of the complaint and request that it is put before the appeals panel.

Should the Chair of Governors have been involved at any previous stage in the process, a nominated Governor, impartial to the complaint, will arrange a complaints panel.

The hearing will normally take place within 20 school working days of sending the acknowledgement. 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 Governors Appeals Panel decision within 5 school working after the date of the hearing. The letter will also inform the complainant of required action should they wish to take the matter further. (Appendix 5)

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

From 1st August 2012 complains about maintained schools not resolved by the school should be addressed to the Schools Complaints Unit (SCU), Department of Education, 2nd floor, Piccadilly Gate, Manchester, M1 2WD