

Dudley House School

Complaints Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 We welcome suggestions for improving our work in school and appreciate the assistance we receive from parents in addressing any problems that arise. Please tell us of your concern as soon as possible as it is difficult for us to investigate an incident or problem if it took place sometime previously.
- 1.2 If any parents or carers are unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or have any concerns relating to the school, we encourage them to talk to the child's class teacher immediately. We always seek to resolve any concerns as quickly as possible, in the best interests of the child. In the vast majority of such cases, issues can be resolved to the satisfaction of parents and carers without recourse to formal procedures.
- 1.3 If, having spoken to the class teacher, you still have concerns you should speak to the Headteacher, who will investigate the problem and discuss the findings with you so that we can find a way forward together which serves the interest of both the school and your child. In the unlikely event of the problem remaining unresolved you can put your complaint in writing if necessary, and could subsequently refer it to the Chair of Governors.
- 1.4 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. Parents may also contact Ofsted.

2 Aims

- 2.1 Our 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. In all cases we put the interests of the child above all else. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

3 The process

- 3.1 The procedure to be followed in the event of a complaint being made is summarised in the following stages:

Stage 1: Informal Action

- Parents discuss concerns with the class teacher.
- The teacher/member of staff logs the concern / complaint on a Concern / Complaints form, which is then handed in to the headteacher.
- The headteacher logs the complaint in the Complaints / Concern Log.
- The teacher investigates the matter, adding notes on the form.
- The teacher will address the concern within 5 working days.
- The teacher ensures that the parent is clear of what action or monitoring situation has been agreed.
- When complete, the teacher informs the headteacher and records the final outcome on the form.
- If no satisfactory solution has been found, parents are asked if they wish the concern to be considered further.

Stage 2: Referral to the Headteacher

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parent/ complainant should put their complaint in writing to the Headteacher.
- The Headteacher acknowledges the complaint, orally or in writing, within 3 working days.
- A meeting is arranged with the complainant to clarify any supplementary information given.
- The Headteacher investigates further, interviewing witnesses as appropriate. If the complaint centres on a pupil, the pupil would normally be interviewed with a parent present, or, if this is not possible, with a member of staff who is involved.
- The headteacher keeps written records of meetings, telephone conversations and other documentation.
- Once all relevant facts have been established, the Headteacher responds to the complaint. If the complaint was in writing, a written response will be sent.
- If the complaint is against the Headteacher, the Stage 2 procedures are carried to the Education Director at the British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Stage 3: Review by the Governing Body:

- The chair acknowledges receipt of the written complaint, informing the complainant that the complaint is to be heard by a committee of three members of the School's Governing Body as well as an independent headteacher from a local school within 20 working days.
- The chair arranges to convene a complaints panel elected from members of the governing body. The members should have no prior involvement with the complaint and they should elect a chair for the committee. All relevant documentation regarding the complaint should be given to the members of the committee as soon as possible.
- The Chair of the Committee will write and inform all concerned of the time and place of the meeting at least 5 working days in advance. The notice to the complainant should also inform him/her of the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend and the right to submit further written evidence.
- It is the responsibility of the chair of the committee to ensure that there are accurate minutes of the meeting.
- A record is kept of all complaints, and whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a panel hearing.
- After the meeting the committee will consider the evidence and a written response with the findings and action to be taken will be sent to the headteacher, the complainant and the person being complained about within 15 working days.
- All correspondence, statements, and records are filed in the 'complaints file' and are kept strictly confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Stage 4 - Referral to Secretary of State:

- If any parent is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then s/he is entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education. Parents may also contact Ofsted.

4 Monitoring and review

- 4.1 The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The headteacher logs all complaints received by the school, and records how they were resolved. Governors will examine this log on an annual basis.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 This policy is reviewed every three years, or before if necessary.

Signed:

Date: October 2016