



# Mill Lane Primary School

## Complaints Policy

**June 2021**

Adopted by: Sue Skillcorn
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## **Policy for Dealing with Parental**

### **Complaints**

**Produced by School and Governor Support Service**

**January 2012**

#### Introduction

Mill Lane Primary School staff are dedicated to giving all children the best possible education and caring properly for their health, safety and welfare at all times. We are committed to working closely with parents and believe that the school and parents must work together in partnership, each carrying out their own particular responsibilities to help pupils gain the most from their time in school. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents, carers or legal guardians. This following policy sets out the procedures that the school and parents should follow in such cases.

#### Purpose of the Policy

This policy aims to reassure complainants that any complaint raised will be dealt with in a fair, open and responsive way with the aim of achieving a speedy and satisfactory resolution. The school recognises a willingness to listen to questions and criticisms and to respond positively and in a way in which improvements can be made to school practices.

#### Initial Concerns and Complaints

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The complainant should initially raise any concern directly with the class teacher informally at a mutually agreed time.

#### Second Contact: Referral to Headteacher

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response from the class teacher they should:

- Raise any concerns that they have directly with the Headteacher, preferably in writing.
- The Headteacher will investigate the complaint via discussions with the parent and those involved.
- Once all of the relevant facts have been established, the Headteacher will produce a written response to the complaint and/or may wish to speak to the parent to resolve the matter directly.

- The response will document the decision reached and the reasons for it. Where appropriate, it will also include what action the school will take/has taken to resolve the complaint. (It is best practice for the Headteacher to include verbally or in the letter the right for the complainant to write to the Chair of Governors if not satisfied with the Headteacher's decision)
- As far as is reasonable this will take place within 10 school working days of the initial complaint being received by the Headteacher.

### Third Contact: Referral to Chair of Governors

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Headteacher's response then they have the option to put their complaint in writing within 10 school working days of the Headteacher's response, addressing their correspondence to the Chair of Governors c/o the school in a sealed envelope.

It is helpful at this point if the complainant can indicate in writing how they would like the matter to be resolved and what outcome they would like to see achieved.

**If the complaint relates to the Headteacher, the complainant should write directly to the Chair of Governors, c/o the school, with their complaint.**

The Chair of Governors will acknowledge the complaint in writing within five school days of receipt.

The Chair of Governors will conduct their own investigation into the complaint and may provide an opportunity for parents/carers to meet informally to discuss the complaint.

The Chair of Governors will make a decision, on the basis of the information gathered, and possible outcomes may include:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

All decisions will be recorded in writing within 10 school working days of the Chair of Governors completing their investigation, as far as is reasonably practical, and a copy provided to the complainant. The letter to the complainant will offer the right of appeal to the Governing Body Complaints Committee.

### Fourth Contact: Referral to the Complaints Committee

If the complainant wishes to appeal they must do so in writing to the Chair of Governors, c/o the school, within 10 school working days providing a clear explanation as to why they wish to lodge an appeal.

*Individual complaints would not be heard by the whole GB 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.*

The complainant will be offered the opportunity to attend a meeting where they will have the opportunity to discuss their complaint with the committee (minimum of three governors, not previously involved) and explain why they are not satisfied with the Chair of Governor's decision. Should the complainant or school intend to call witnesses to the Complaints Committee meeting, their name/s should be notified to the Clerk to the Committee prior to the meeting in order that appropriate accommodation can be sought. It is the responsibility of the complainant and school to ensure that witnesses are invited to the meeting.

The complaints committee will consider the issue and write to inform the complainant within **10 school working days** of their decision. Possible outcomes may include:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

**This is the last school-based stage of the complaints process and is not convened to merely rubber stamp previous decisions.**

Should the complainant not be satisfied with the outcome then they may complain to the Secretary of State for Education. Concerns, reasons why the complaint is being submitted and copies of all correspondence relevant to the complaint should be mailed to:

The Secretary of State  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

#### Anonymous Complaints

The Governing Body will not consider anonymous complaints.

#### Vexatious Complaints

There may 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 Governors will inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.