

# Complaints Policy and Procedures



## Kington Primary School

**Reviewed and  
Approved by:**

The staff and governors of Kington  
Primary School

**Date: September 2025**

**Next review due by:**

September 2027

## **PARENTAL/PUBLIC COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES**

It should be noted that there are some complaints (from parents or members of the public) which are dealt with under specific statutory requirements and should not follow the guidance defined below. Complaints related to the following named subjects should be referred to the named officer of the LA below:

### **TYPES OF COMPLAINTS:**

Child Protection - Head of Children's Services

Curriculum Matters - Head of Learning and Achievement

Pupil Admissions - School Services Manager

Pupil Exclusions - Social Inclusion Officer

School Transport - School Services Manager

SEN – Head of Additional Educational Needs

Employment issues including:

Dismissal Procedures – Human Resources (Education)

Grievance Procedures - Human Resources (Education)

## **GENERAL CONSIDERATION FOR MANAGING COMPLAINTS OTHER THAN FORMAL COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CURRICULUM AND RELATED MATTERS AND THOSE DEFINED ABOVE**

The following procedure applies to any complaint which does not fall under the categories above:

- A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, by a parent or person with a legitimate interest in the school, about school policies or procedures, the conduct, actions or omissions of members of staff or governors at the school and the standards of teaching and learning.
- Initially, most complaints should be raised in conversation with the Class Teacher or Head Teacher.
- If a Governor is approached by a parent or a member of the public wishing to complain about the school, the Governor should direct that person to take their complaint to the Headteacher. However, there may be some instances, when the complaint is about the Headteacher, when it might be appropriate for the Complainant to be advised to speak to or write to the Chair of the Governing Body instead of the Headteacher. Similarly, any Complainant who approaches the LA will be referred back to the Headteacher or the Chair of the Governing Body, as appropriate.
- Where a Complaint is made to a teacher or Governor they should note the date and keep a brief written record of the conversation, and any subsequent conversations on the matter. This record should be made available to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors should the complaint proceed.
- All concerns will be taken seriously in order to establish an effective partnership between the school and the parents and should be dealt with promptly so that they can be resolved swiftly at the time.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

All concerns and documents will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and only shared with those who are involved or supporting the investigation if appropriate. Occasionally there may be complaints where the individual complainant does not wish to be identified at the preliminary stage. As far as possible, these should be dealt with under this procedure. However, there may be circumstances where confidentiality cannot be guaranteed because of the seriousness of the complaint. In addition, the wish of the individual complainant to remain anonymous may limit the ability of the school/LA to fully investigate the nature of the complaint or to take any action once an investigation is complete. The complainant should be informed if their desire for confidentiality inhibits the full investigation of the complaint.

The school and Local Authority may decline to investigate a matter if it is not very recent and the complaint could reasonably have been expected to be raised earlier. The normal expectation is that a complaint will be raised within three months of the alleged subject matter of the complaint though it will be important to judge whether or not the nature or seriousness of the allegation merits a more flexible approach.

## PRINCIPLES TO BE ADHERED TO

An effective Complaints Procedure will:

- Encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
- Be easily accessible and publicised
- Be simple to understand and use
- Be impartial
- Be non-adversarial
- Allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress
- Ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary
- Respect people's desire for confidentiality
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- Provide information to the school's senior management team so that services can be reviewed/improved.

It is suggested that at each stage, the person investigating the complaint makes sure that they:

- Establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved
- Meet with the complainant or, at least contact them
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right
- Interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- Conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- Keep notes of the interview
- Feedback to the complainant.

## **STAGES OF PROCEDURE**

### **INFORMAL STAGE ONE**

- School prospectuses advise parents that the vast majority of their concerns will be satisfactorily addressed by the class teacher.
- If the Complainant is not satisfied with the response from the class teacher, they should take their complaint to the Headteacher. It will often be helpful if the complainant puts the complaint in writing.
- There may be instances, depending on the seriousness of the complaint, when the Complainant will directly approach the Headteacher. The Headteacher will investigate the complaint and respond informatively with an explanation to the Complainant as soon as possible either in writing or by ways of a meeting giving a decision and the reasons for it. It is important that it is considered even when the parental complaint appears to be unreasonable. It is hoped that this will resolve the complaint. A written record should always be retained of the response.
- A complaint form can be found at the end of this policy, should the Complainant wish to use it.

### **INFORMAL STAGE TWO - INVOLVEMENT OF THE CHAIR OF THE GOVERNING BODY**

- The Headteacher will notify the Complainant that, if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the response from the Headteacher, they will be able to refer the matter in writing to the Chair of the Governing Body setting out the complaint.
- The Chair of the Governing Body will consider the evidence of the Complaint, in confidence and without reference to any other member of the Governing Body. If the complaint is serious or complex, advice must be sought from the Education Directorate or Legal Services Department of the Council. Having considered the complaint, the Chair will either write to the Complainant with their findings and reasons or meet with the Complainant and the Headteacher in an attempt to resolve the matter.
- Where a complaint may give rise to disciplinary action, a careful balance will need to be struck between the rights of the complainant to have their complaint properly determined and to be kept informed against the rights of individual staff members in the disciplinary procedure. In such cases, advice should be sought at an early stage from the HR (Education) or the Legal Department.
- Cases which may result in disciplinary action being taken against a member of staff must follow the procedures recommended by the Education Personnel Section from whom further specific advice should be sought.
- Where the Chair of the Governing Body is being asked to consider a complaint about a matter which involves the Headteacher's management responsibilities, they should consider carefully whether the Headteacher's actions are within the boundary of reasonable responses and not substitute their own retrospective view of how they would have acted in the same circumstances.
- The Chair should consider whether a conciliatory role between the Headteacher and the complainant would be the best way of resolving the complaint.

### **FORMAL STAGE - INVOLVEMENT OF THE GOVERNING BODY INVESTIGATION PANEL**

- Should either the Complainant or the Headteacher be dissatisfied with the outcome of the Chair's investigation they may ask for the matter to be referred to a panel of the Governing Body by writing to the Clerk of the Governing Body setting out the reasons for the referral.
- The Chair should summarise the complaint to other members of the Complaints Committee and ascertain their preliminary view as to whether the matter should be dealt with at a meeting of the Committee. If the members' view is that the complaint should not proceed, the complainant should be informed, with reasons.
- The Local Authority or Legal Services Department should be consulted at an early stage in the case of serious or complex matters.

## PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE EVENT OF A GOVERNING BODY PANEL MEETING

- The Governing Body will at their autumn term meeting elect a panel, in accordance with the School Government Regulations for the resolution of complaints. At least three Governors will be selected for the panel. In the case of a complex issue, specific advice should be sought from the Local Authority or the Legal Department.
- The clerk will arrange a suitable date and time for the meeting.
- The Complainant, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors will provide the clerk with all documentation to be used at the meeting, at least ten days before the meeting takes place.
- The clerk will distribute all documentation to both parties and to the members of the panel at least seven days before the meeting.
- The Complainant, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors will be advised by the clerk that they may be accompanied by a friend or representative at the meeting.
- The normal procedure to be followed at the meeting is as set out below. Provided they are satisfied that it will give all parties an opportunity to present their case, the Vice-Chair may vary this procedure with advice from the Clerk. The panel will be chaired by the Vice-Chair and they will make arrangements for a note taker to be present. In the absence of the Vice-Chair the panel will agree a suitable chairperson for the meeting.
  1. The Chair explains the purpose of the meeting and introduces those present.
  2. The person calling the meeting presents their case.
  3. The panel will have an opportunity to question the person calling the meeting.
  4. The respondent presents their case.
  5. The respondent can be questioned by the panel.
  6. Both parties state any final points they wish to make.
  7. Both parties withdraw.
  8. The panel consider the case and then write to both parties within seven working days to advise them of their findings and their reasons.
- The panel does not have any disciplinary powers. Should they reach a conclusion that there is a possibility that an employee may have behaved unprofessionally the matter must be referred to the officers of the LA.
- If the matter has not been resolved by these procedures the complainants may be referred to the LA.

## COMPLAINT FORM

Please complete and return to the Headteacher or Chair/Vice Chair of Governors who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give details of your complaint:

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint?  
(Who did you speak to and what was the response?) Please include dates and times if possible.

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

OFFICIAL USE

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE (Summary)

### STEP 1

- Talk to the teacher about your concerns and explain them carefully. (Often this is all that is needed to find a solution).

*If you still have concerns and do not feel that the teacher has addressed them adequately:*

- Make an appointment to talk to the Headteacher/Senior Manager. Say that you have already talked to the teacher but you still have concerns.
- Discuss the matter with the Headteacher/Senior Manager.

*If you still have concerns and do not feel that the Headteacher/Senior Manager has addressed them adequately:*

### STEP 2

- You should write to the Chair of Governors. The address is available from the school. Depending on your complaint, the Chair of Governors may refer the matter to a committee panel.
- Your letter should state clearly the concerns that you have and should contain all the relevant facts of which you are aware. If possible, include dates, times and the names of staff and/or pupils who know about the matter.

*If you do not feel that the Governing Body and panel have addressed and dealt with your concerns to your satisfaction...*

### STEP 3

- You can refer your concerns to the Children's Services department of the Local Authority.
- Your letter should state clearly the concerns you have and should contain all the relevant facts. If possible, include dates, times and the names of staff and/or pupils who know about the matter.