



GREAT MISSENDEN C of E COMBINED SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

This document sets out the school's procedure for addressing complaints.

Please note that this procedure does not apply to issues concerning the admissions, exclusion appeals, statutory assessments of special educational needs or grievances by school staff. These are the subjects of separate complaint procedures: more information can be obtained from the school.

In addition, Ofsted has the power to investigate certain (qualifying) complaints about maintained schools, including those from parents. A qualifying complaint is one that affects the whole school, not an individual. More information can be obtained from the school or Ofsted.

All other complaints are handled by the school according to the arrangements set out below.

The school policy is to work closely with parents at all times, and to improve by listening and acting promptly on any justified suggestion or comment.

Aims and Objectives

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint and to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding.

Careful consideration will be given to all concerns and complaints and we will deal with them as swiftly as possible. We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed.

In all cases we will put the interests of the child above all other issues.

Our procedure is underpinned by the following **framework of principles**: -

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
- be easily accessible and publicised
- be simple to use and understand
- 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, wherever possible (some information sharing may be necessary to carry out a thorough investigation)
- address all points of issue, providing an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- provide information to the school's senior management team so that services can be improved.

Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – School Level

Most complaints are best dealt with informally. If you have any concerns about the school or the education provided, please discuss the matter with your child's class teacher, by prior appointment at the earliest opportunity.

The school considers any concerns very seriously and most problems can be resolved following discussion and a shared understanding of the issues. All members of staff work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school and is making good progress and they always want to know if there is a problem so they can help to resolve it.

If you feel that a concern has not been addressed through discussion with the class teacher, or that the concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, please make an appointment to discuss it with the head teacher. Most complaints can be resolved at this stage.

Stage 2 - Chair of Governors

Most concerns are resolved at Stage 1, however if you remain dissatisfied and wish to take the matter further you can let us know in person, by telephone or in writing.

There is a complaint form (Appendix 1) attached to this procedure which can be helpful to complete. The aim of the form is to give us as clear an understanding as possible of your complaint and includes a section on what actions you feel would resolve the problem.

If you would like support in completing the form from someone unconnected with the complaint, please let us know and we would be happy to organise this for you.

If you are making your complaint in writing, it should be returned to the headteacher. However, if the complaint is about the headteacher or a governor, it should be returned to the chair of the governing body at the school address, marking the envelope 'FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION'. If your complaint is about the chair of the governing body, your completed form should be returned to the clerk of the governing body.

You will receive an acknowledgement of the receipt of your complaint within 5 school days.

Investigation

An investigation will be carried out into the complaint and the way it has been handled by the school. This will include a review of any relevant documentation and information and seeking the views of relevant people, where necessary. The person undertaking the investigation will normally write to you with the outcome of this process within 15 school days of receiving the complaint.

If, at any time, it becomes apparent that the complaint is a disciplinary or capability issue, the matter will be dealt with by following the appropriate procedure rather than the complaints procedure. You will be notified if this is the case with your complaint, however, you are not entitled to know which procedure, or the final outcome, because of the right to confidentiality of the member of staff involved.

Following the outcome of the investigation, if you feel your concern has not been resolved, you may choose to move to Stage 3 of the procedure. You must let the school know if you wish to do this within 15 school days of the completion of Stage 2.

Stage 3 – Governing Body Panel

If you are not satisfied with the result, you may ask to refer your complaint to Stage 3 of the procedure. At this Stage, a panel of 3 governors will meet to consider the complaint and make a final decision about it on behalf of the governing body. The panel will consist of governors who have no detailed prior knowledge of the complaint, or connection with the complainant. The meeting will normally take place within 15 working days of your request.

You will have the opportunity to submit written evidence on the complaint prior to the meeting of the panel and also to attend part of the meeting accompanied by a friend/partner if wished, to put your case. The head teacher will be given the same opportunities. The panel will write to you with its conclusion within 5 working days of the meeting.

The decision of the panel is final in so far as the school is concerned. However, if you wish there is a further opportunity to put your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education.

As Great Missenden School is an academy, if you are still not satisfied, you may also contact the Education Funding Agency via its Schools' Complaints Form.

https://form.education.gov.uk/fillform.php?self=1&form_id=cCCNJ1xSfBE&type=form&ShowMsg=1&form_name=Contact+the+Department+for+Education&noRegister=false&ret=%2Fmodule%2Fservices&noLoginPrompt=1

Serial or Persistent Complaints

Unfortunately, in a small minority of cases, people pursue their complaints in a way which can either impede the investigation of their complaint or can have significant resource issues for the school.

These actions can occur either while the complaint is being investigated, or once the school has concluded the complaint investigation.

In such cases, the school will follow advice from the Department for Education and the Local Government Ombudsman.

Monitoring and Review

The governing body monitors the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The head teacher logs all formal complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. All complaints referred to the chair will be reported to the governing body.

The written record of all complaints is kept in the school. It includes details of whether the complaints have been resolved at the preliminary stage or have proceeded to a panel hearing. The record of complaints is available for inspection on the school premises by the Academy Board.

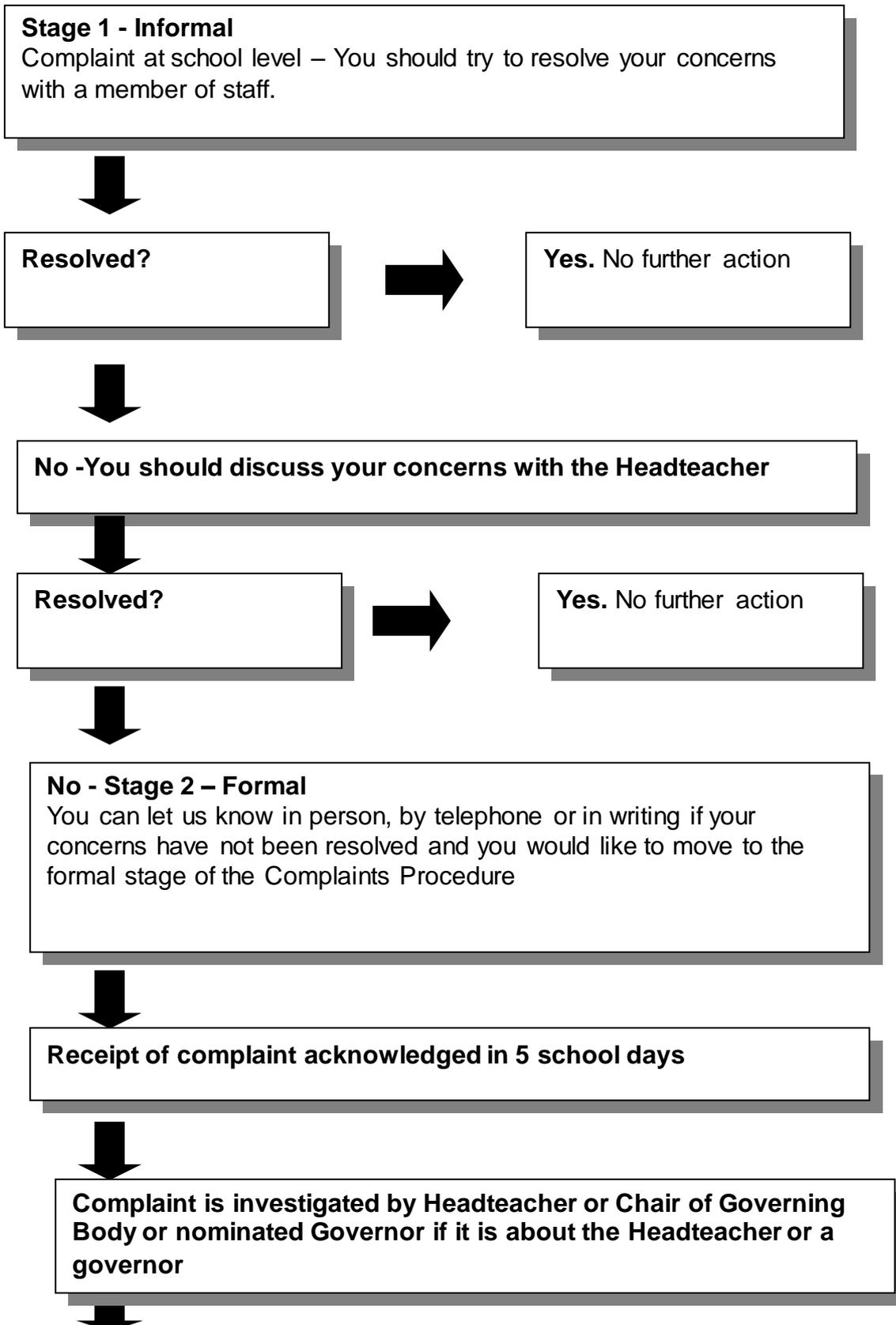
All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection requests access to them.

Availability

A copy of this procedure is provided to all parents on request, and is available on the school website.

Flowchart Summary*

* Please refer to the procedure for more detailed information.

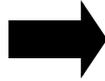




You will be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 15 school days of receiving the complaint.



Resolved?



Yes. No further action



No - If you wish to take your complaint to Stage 3 of the procedure you will be asked to confirm this within 15 school days of the completion of Stage 2.



Governor Complaints Panel meets to consider your complaint with 15 school days. If you wish to submit evidence to the panel you will be invited to do so in advance of the meeting. You will also be invited to attend the panel meeting to explain the nature of your complaint



Panel will make a final decision on behalf of the Governing Body and writes to you within 5 school days



Resolved?



Yes. No further action



No - You can write to the Secretary of State of Education and Skills if you feel the school has acted unreasonably or not followed the correct procedures.

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 whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

Appendix Two - At the panel hearing

- After introductions, the complainant will be invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses (if any).
- The headteacher/Chair of Governors may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The headteacher/Chair of Governors is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses (if any).
- The complainant may question both the headteacher/Chair of Governors and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The panel may ask questions at any point.
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
- The headteacher/Chair of Governors is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
- The Chair of the panel explains that both parties will hear from the panel within five school days.
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
- The clerk remains to support the panel.

Policy reviewed and updated October 2016