



**Archers Brook SEMH Residential School**  
**Complaints Policy – Parental**







## **Background Information**

This document sets out the policy for dealing with parental concerns and complaints. We always aim to maintain positive relationships with parents and carers and do our best to address any concerns as soon as they arise. However we are aware that in some instances a parent/carer may wish to make a complaint.

## **Aims**

This policy should be used for:

- Complaints relating to the schooling of your child
- Complaints about the education and care provided to pupils at the school
- Complaints about the school's operational arrangements

This policy is limited to matters which can reasonably be investigated and therefore concerns and complaints should relate to matters which have occurred within the last 12 months.

This policy should not be used for:

- Complaints by staff relating to grievances about their employment
- Complaints about the actions of a Governor
- Complaints about the actions of another parent
- Allegations of abuse
- Issues between the school and community groups/PTA

These matters will be dealt with by:

- Complaints by staff relating to grievances about their employment (There is a separate staff grievance procedure)
- Complaints about the actions of a Governor (This should be reported to Chair of the Governing Body in the first instance).
- Complaints about the actions of another parent (This should be reported to the Headteacher who will investigate whether the action can be taken by the school).
- Allegations of abuse (Any allegation of abuse should be discussed with the Headteacher or a senior staff member in the first instance).
- Issues between the school and community groups/PTA (These will be resolved informally by discussion).

## Purpose

The School's values are concerned with meeting the needs of students, parents and other stakeholders. The governing body believes that feedback is an important ingredient in self-evaluation and raising standards. All stakeholders should feel that their concerns or complaints can be voiced and will be considered seriously. The school takes informal concerns seriously and aims to resolve them at the earliest stage in order to reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints. The underlying principle to have a complaints procedure will not in any way undermine efforts to resolve the concern informally. Staff will endeavour to resolve issues on the spot.

Formal procedures will be invoked when initial attempts to resolve an initial concern are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

## Applicability

The policy shall apply to all employees and Governors of the school. It is the shared responsibility of the Headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body to ensure that these groups are made aware of the policy and procedure.

The Concerns and 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 panel *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 improved.

## **School Complaints Procedure**

In brief the procedure is as follows:

### **Stage One:**

- Concern/Complaint heard by staff member (informal) who will attempt to resolve the concern. (if letter received, acknowledgment letter to be sent immediately).
- Concern/Complaint to be dealt with within 7 days of receipt of complaint.

### **Stage Two:**

- Complaint heard by Headteacher (formal) or
- Complaint is heard by the Chair of Governing Body (if complaints is about the Headteacher) (formal);
- A resolution will be sought.
- Complaint to be heard with within 14 days of receipt of complaint.

### **Stage Three**

Complaint heard by Governing Body's Complaints Panel (review). The Concerns and Complaints Policy/Procedure are publicised to all stakeholders through:

- the school prospectus;
- the information given to new parents when their children join the school;
- the school website.
- Complaint to be heard within 21 days of receipt.

If, at any stage of the process, the complainant starts legal action in relation to the matters under consideration, the complaints process will automatically cease, and all further correspondence will be with the School's legal representatives.

## **Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy**

All documentation regarding complaints (including notes of any related meetings and telephone calls), the action taken and the final outcome will be recorded and a summary included in the Headteacher's next report<sup>6</sup> to Governors. The governing body will monitor the level and nature of complaints and review the outcomes on a regular basis to ensure the effectiveness of the procedure and make changes where necessary. Complaints information shared with the whole governing body will not name individuals.

The monitoring and review of complaints by the school and the governing body is a useful tool in evaluating the school's performance, and will contribute to school improvement. Any underlying issues identified will be addressed.

**Record Keeping**

All complaints will be responded to in writing.

At Stage One – even though this is an informal stage, the complainant will receive a reply in writing and a copy should be retained for reference.

At Stages Two and Three – there should be clear communication in writing throughout the handling of the complaint.

A copy of all written communication should be retained for reference.

Only complaints relating to the schooling of a specific child would be kept within the child’s files. Other issues will be filed separately in a secure location and will be retained for a period of 7 years.

J Sedgwick  
July 2016

Signed: .....  
Mrs Myers-Whittaker  
Headteacher

Date: .....

Signed: .....  
Mr R Crompton  
Chairman of Governors

Date: .....