

# Hadrian Primary School

## Complaints Policy



**Date: September 2023**

**Review: September 2027**

**Staff responsible:**

**Mr Brown Head Teacher**

**Mr J Brown Chair of Governors**

## **HADRIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL** **COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

This policy should be used in conjunction with the Department for Education Guidance (Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016) and alongside our Home/School Agreement.

This policy is written in accordance with Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, which states all local authority (LA) maintained schools must have and make available a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides.

### **Introduction:**

Hadrian Primary School welcomes comments and concerns / complaints as an opportunity to improve the quality of the services that we offer. If you feel that something has gone wrong or that you or your child has been unfairly treated or if you are not happy with any aspect of the school then please contact a member of staff as soon as possible. Hadrian Primary School is also committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage and we will do our best to informally resolve any concerns to your satisfaction.

While we will do our best to deal with any concerns informally, we recognise that there may be an occasion when you wish to make a more formal complaint. While we hope that this situation does not arise, we do have a formal Complaints Procedure in place. The aim of this procedure is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Malicious or vexatious complaints may incur appropriate action by the school.

The following details outline the stages that should be used to resolve complaints.

- Stage 1 – A concern is raised informally with a member of staff or with the Head teacher.
- Stage 2 – A formal complaint is made to and heard by the Head teacher.
- Stage 3 – A formal complaint is made to the Co-Chairs of Governors and heard by the Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Committee.

### **Stage 1 – Raising a concern**

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will resolve the concern. The school requests that parents make their first contact with the child's Class Teacher, Head teacher, Deputy Head teacher or School Office Manager.

On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others. If this is the case you will receive an informal but informed response within a day or two.

The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at Stage 1, please write, email, telephone or visit the school within **10 school working days** and state what you would like the school to do. The school will take brief notes of any conversations that are held with regards to the complaint. The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

Where there are communication difficulties, schools may wish to use recording devices to ensure the complainant is able to access and review the discussions at a later point.

## **Stage 2 – Complaint made to and heard by Head teacher.**

Formal complaints should be put in writing and addressed to the Head teacher. The complaint will be logged, including the date it was received. The school will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 2 school working days of receiving it.

The Head teacher will investigate the complaint and following this will normally give a written response within **10 school working days**. In many cases this response will also report on the action the school has taken to resolve the issue. Alternatively, a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. This meeting will normally take place within **10 school working days**. The aim will be to resolve the matter as speedily as possible.

## **Stage 3 – Complaint made to Chairs of Governors and heard by the Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel**

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 2, then you will need to write to the Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint. Please address the envelope to: The Chairs of Governors and mark it Confidential. The Chairs or a nominated Governor will convene a complaints panel from members of the governing body.

The hearing will normally take place within **10 school working days** of the receipt of the written request for Stage 3 investigation. Complaints will not be shared with the whole governing body, except in very general terms, in case an appeal hearing needs to be organised.(see below)

The aim of the Appeal panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the Panel's decision in writing within **three school working days** after the date of the hearing. The letter will also contain what you need to do if you wish to take the matter further.

Complainants have the right to request an independent panel, if they believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings. Hadrian Primary will consider the request but ultimately, the decision is made by the governors.

Please note: In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of the Head teacher, the Chair of Governors should be informed of the complaint, and then arrange for the matter to be investigated. In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of a member of the Governing Body, the Head teacher and Chair of Governors should be informed of the complaint.

The Governors appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process. Although the Governing Body is accountable for the conduct of the school, additional support from Local Authority Support may be available to support resolution of complaints. This facility can only be used where the school complaint procedure as set out in this document has been fully exhausted.

Contact Details:

- Chair of Governors Mr Jack Brown, c/o Hadrian Primary School, Baring Street, South Shields NE33 2BB
- Head teacher Mr Scott Brown, Hadrian Primary School, Baring Street, South Shields NE33 2BB

Serial and Persistent Complainants

Hadrian Primary School will do their best to be helpful to people who contact them with a concern, complaint or a request for information. However, in cases where the school is contacted repeatedly by an individual making the same points, or who asks them to reconsider their position, schools will need to act appropriately.

There will be occasions when, despite all stages of the complaint procedure having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. There will come a point when the school recognises when we really have done everything we can in response to a complaint. It is a poor use of schools' time and resources to reply to repeated letters, emails or telephone calls making substantially the same points. If a complainant tries to re-open the same issue, the Chair of Governors can inform them that the procedure has been completed and that the matter is now closed.

If the complainant contacts the school again on the same issue, then the correspondence may be viewed as 'serial' or 'persistent'. The school will however be careful that we do not mark a complaint as 'serial' before the complainant has completed the procedure. The school will always ensure that a complainant has the right to have any new complaint heard.

If the school feels that a complainant's correspondence is 'serial' or 'persistent' as a last resort the school may make the decision to not respond or implement a tailored communication strategy such as restricting them to a single point of contact via an email address. The case is stronger if the school agrees with one or more of these statements:

- The school has reason to believe the individual is contacting them with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience - have they actually said as much in a letter, email or telephone call?
  - Their letters/emails/telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive.
  - They make insulting personal comments about or threats towards staff.
- In extreme circumstances if a parent's behaviour is a cause for concern, the school can ask him/her to leave school premises. In serious cases, the Head teacher can notify them in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any representations

that the parent may wish to make. The school will always give the parent the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing. The decision to bar will then be reviewed, taking into account any representations made by the parent, and either confirmed or lifted. If the decision is confirmed the parent will be notified in writing, explaining how long the bar will be in place.