

Lakeside Community Primary School

School Complaints Procedure

At Lakeside Community Primary School, we undertake to provide a friendly and safe environment in which pupils will be helped to achieve their potential, both academically and socially. We recognise that sometimes things can go wrong and parents, carers and members of the public may need to make a complaint or raise concerns they have with the school.

General Principles:

- this procedure is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school or the services that it provides
- an anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances
- to allow for a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, the school will not consider any complaint that was raised more than 12 months after the event
- all complaints should be resolved as quickly as possible
- if a complaint is not from a parent/carer of a pupil of the school (an example being a member of the public) these should be made directly to the Principal, preferably in writing.
- all complaints will be recorded formally by the school in a central log.

Raising a concern or complaint

Informal Stage (2-3 school days)

In the first instance speak directly with the member of staff concerned. This may be by letter, by telephone or in person by appointment. Many concerns can be resolved by at this informal stage.

In the case of serious concerns, it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Executive Head/Head of School (or to the Chair of the Governing Body, if the complaint is about the Executive Head/Head of School).

If you are uncertain about whom to contact, please seek advice from the school office or the Clerk to the Governing Body.

Formal Stage – there are three formal stages:

Stage 1 –Executive Head/Head of School (10 days – acknowledge receipt of complaint within 3 to 5 school days)

If your concern is not resolved at the informal stage you may put the complaint in writing or complete a complaints form and pass it to the Executive Head/Head of School, (or to the Clerk to the Governing Body, for the attention of the Chair, if the complaint is about the Executive Head/Head of School) who will be responsible for ensuring that your complaint is investigated appropriately. If you require support to do this you may request help from the school.

Please include details that will help the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents.

It is important that you tell us what you would like to happen to put things right.

All complaints will be acknowledged in writing within 3-5 school days, a copy of the Complaints Procedure will be included.

The Executive Head/Head of School (or Chair) should invite you to a meeting to discuss your complaint. A friend, interpreter or advocate may accompany you if you wish, to help you in explaining your complaint. **Any complaint about the Executive Head/Head of School will start at Stage 2.**

It is possible that your complaint will be resolved through a meeting with the Executive Head/Head of School (or Chair). If not arrangements will be made for the matter to be referred to the Chair of Governors.

Stage 2 Chair of Governors (15 school days)

The Chair of Governors may invite you to a further meeting to discuss your complaint and to seek a resolution. Again, if you accept that invitation, a friend, interpreter or advocate may accompany you to help you explain your complaint.

The Chair may also appoint a governor to be an Investigating Officer to undertake a detailed investigation of the complaint. If the complaint requires the appointment of an Investigating Officer, the timescale can be extended, and you will be informed of this.

If the Executive Head/Head of School is the subject of the complaint, the complaint should go straight the Chair of Governors and miss out Stage 1.

If your complaint cannot be resolved within 15 days the Chair will inform the complainant and explain why it is taking longer. Reasons for this may be that the complaint is complex and needs more time or someone involved is absent through sickness or holidays. The Chair of Governors should give a realistic timescale for when your complaint should be resolved. The Chair will inform you when it is expected that the investigation should be completed.

Stage 3 Complaints Panel (28 school days)

If you remain dissatisfied, you can request that the Governing Body conduct a review into the process followed by the school in dealing with your complaint.

A panel of three members of the Governing Body will form the Complaints Panel.

The panel will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented and:

- reach a unanimous, or at least a majority decision, on the complaint
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- decide on any appropriate action, if any, to be taken
- where appropriate, suggest changes to, or request a review of, the school's systems or procedures to ensure that the problems of a similar nature do not happen again.

When the complaint has been fully investigated and the hearing has taken place, you should be notified of the **findings** in writing by the Chair of the Panel hearing the complaint or the Governor responsible for the investigation within five school days of the hearing date. You will also be informed how you can take your complaint further if still dissatisfied.

The report, with findings, should, at the same time, be published to the Chair of Governing Body who will report back to the Governing Body with a table of recommendations taken from the report.

Any complaint about the Governing Body should be delegated to a named governor (e.g. the Chair of the Governing Body), or to a complaints panel previously convened by the full Governing Body.