



## HIGHGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

### **Complaints Procedure**

November 2023

#### **Introduction**

The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or pupils, are concerns rather than complaints. Highgate Primary School is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of maintain positive relationships and avoiding unnecessary formal procedures.

However, a complainant may wish or be asked to follow the school's formal complaints procedure. For the school to be able to investigate a complaint, it needs to be made within one year of the incident occurring. If a complaint is older than a year it will not be investigated.

The prime aim of the school's Complaints 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.

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

#### **The Complaints Policy has four main stages.**

In summary they are as follows: -

- Stage 1 – A concern is raised informally with a staff member
- Stage 2 – Complaint is heard by the appropriate member of staff
- Stage 3 – Formal Complaint is heard by Headteacher
- Stage 4 – Complaint is heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel

#### **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 in the first instance the complainant makes their first contact with the child's class teacher. Where appropriate, the member of staff will discuss the concern with their line manager.

On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with other members of staff. If this is the case the complainant will receive an informal but informed response within 5 school days. The majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way.

#### **Stage 2 – Complaint heard by the appropriate staff member**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome at Stage 1, they should either write to, or make an appointment to speak to the appropriate member of staff (which may be the Headteacher). Any correspondence should state the nature of the complaint and how the complainant would like the matter to be resolved.

An informal meeting will be arranged to discuss and hopefully resolve the issue. The school will write to clarify the outcome of the meeting within 5 school working days.

### **Stage 3 – Formal Complaint heard by Headteacher**

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 2, the complaint needs to be escalated to a Formal Complaint to the Headteacher. This needs to be made in writing using the appropriate form (Appendix I). This form is available on the school website and from the school office.

The headteacher will consider the complaint and may arrange further investigation. The Headteacher will offer to meet with the complainant within 10 school days. A formal written response will be provided within 5 days of this meeting.

### **Stage 4 – Complaint heard by the Governing Body's Appeal Panel**

If the matter has still not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 3, then the complainant should write to the Chair of Governors, providing full details of the complaint and including all previous correspondence. This should be done within 10 school days of receiving the Headteacher's Stage 3 response. The Chair, or a nominated Governor, will convene a Governors Complaints Panel. The hearing will normally take place within 10 school days of receipt of the written request for a Stage 4 investigation.

The aim of the Governors Complaint 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 of the date of the hearing.

The local authority is no longer able to review complaints to individual schools. The Governors Appeal Hearing is therefore the last stage of the school's complaints process.

### **Complaints against the Headteacher or a member of the Governing Body**

In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of the Headteacher, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors will be informed of the complaint. The Chair will arrange for the matter to be investigated. In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of a member of the Governing Body, the member will be informed of the complaint.

### **Support and advice**

At any stage of the process, complainants are welcome to speak informally to a member of staff or a school governor who may be able to advise on how best to proceed with the complaint. However, they should be aware that individual governors with prior knowledge of the complaint would be unable to sit on any Appeals panel.

### **Policy Monitoring and Review**

A copy of this guidance is available to all staff and parents and is published on the school website. This policy is reviewed annually by the Governors' Communications Committee.

### **Contacts**

William Dean:	Co-Headteacher
Becca Lewis:	Co-Headteacher



**HIGHGATE**  
PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Formal Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors in a sealed envelope, via the school office.

Before completing this form, please read the school's Complaints Policy which can be obtained from the school office or on the website at [www.highgateprimaryschool.co.uk/our-school/policies](http://www.highgateprimaryschool.co.uk/our-school/policies)

Your Name:	
Pupil's Name:	
Your relationship to pupil:	
Address:	
Daytime telephone:	
Evening telephone:	
Details of your Complaint:  (please continue overleaf if necessary)	

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Whom did you speak to, when, and what was the response)?	
What actions do you feel might resolve the issue?	
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, give details.	
Signed:	
Date:	

**Official Use:**

Date complaint received:	
Date acknowledgment letter sent:	
Letter referred to:	
Date:	

## Appendix 2: Flow Chart

