



Greenway Primary and Nursery School

Complaints Policy

Date approved: 21 November 2019

Date of review: Autumn term 2020

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for Greenway Primary & Nursery School's ('the school's') Complaints Procedure. The Complaints Procedure provides clear processes for the handling of complaints by both informal and formal means. **This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Complaints Procedure.** For clarity, where there is a reference to a parent bringing a complaint within the accompanying Complaints Procedure this should also include any person entitled to bring a complaint under the terms of this policy.

Principles

The key principles of handling complaints effectively at the school are:

- To deal with your complaint honestly and politely;
- To encourage resolution of complaints by informal means wherever possible;
- To ensure that the complaints procedure is easily accessible and publicised;
- To ensure that the complaints procedure is impartial and simple to understand;
- To make every effort to handle complaints swiftly and in accordance with the time limits set out in the Complaints Procedure;
- To keep parties informed of progress, in particular of any delay affecting time limits;
- To ensure that a full and fair investigation is carried out and that all aspects of the complaint are fully addressed in the response;
- To ensure confidentiality at all times; and
- To apologise if we have made a mistake and to tell you what we are going to do to put things right

The Complaints Procedure does not cover the following:

- Child protection procedures;
- Appeals about admissions;
- Consideration of representations to the Governing Body's Disciplinary Panel against an exclusion from school; and
- Staff disciplinary procedures.

Relationship to other policies

The school's Complaints Policy and Procedure should be read in conjunction with Greenway's Behaviour Policy and Greenway's Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan. The Complaints Procedure does not cover cases in which one member of staff makes a complaint about another. If such cases cannot be resolved by informal means, the complainant should invoke the staff Grievance Procedure.

How to Comment or Complaint – we care about what you think

Each day the school makes many decisions and tries hard to do the best for all the children. Your comments - either positive or negative - are helpful for future planning. You may want to talk to us about a particular aspect of this school, though not actually make a complaint - you just want to get something 'off your chest'.

If you are dissatisfied about the way your child is being treated, or any actions or lack of action by us, please feel free to contact us using the details listed below.

Greenway Primary & Nursery School

Website: www.greenway.herts.sch.uk/

Email: admin@www.greenway.herts.sch.uk

Telephone: 01442 866249

Roles and responsibilities

Head teacher

The Head teacher will be the complaints coordinator. If the complaint is against the Head teacher, it will be dealt with by the Chair of Governors.

The Head Teacher is responsible for dealing with the concern or potential complaint in accordance with Stage 1 of the published Procedure and will always endeavour to resolve the matter informally by offering parents a full discussion with the member of staff who is best able to help. This **may** involve the Chair of Governors working with the Head teacher to investigate the complaint.

Chair of Governors

If the complaint is not resolved at Stage 1 of the Procedure, the Chair of Governors is responsible for arranging for the complaint to be investigated and considered under the arrangements set out in the Complaints Procedure. This will usually involve a Panel of Governors appointed to act on behalf of the Governing Body.

The Chair of Governors is also responsible for writing to the parents to confirm any actions agreed by the Governing Body as a result of any recommendations made by the Panel of Governors.

Panel of Governors

The Panel of Governors is responsible for hearing the complaint at Stage 2 of the Formal Process in accordance with the Complaints Procedure. The Panel should reach findings on the matter and issue a confidential report to the Governing Body, setting out both its findings and any recommendations it wishes to make to the Governing Body.

The Chair of the Panel of Governors is responsible for notifying the parents of the findings of the Panel. The Panel of Governors is also responsible for sharing its report with the Governing Body and making any recommendations arising from the hearing for consideration by the Governing Body.

Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for approving the arrangements for investigating and considering complaints.

The Governing Body is also responsible for examining the Panel's report following a Stage 2 hearing and for considering any recommendations made by the Panel of Governors.

How to make a complaint

In the first instance – informal stage

If you have a concern about anything we do, or if you wish to make a complaint, you can do this by telephone, in person or in writing (by letter or email). We hope that most complaints can be settled quickly and informally, either by putting matters right or by giving you an explanation.

If there is something you are not happy about, or you don't understand why the school are doing something in a particular way, please come in and discuss it with the class teacher or another appropriate member of staff, such as the Inclusion Co-ordinator (INCo) if it is about Special Educational Needs.

We understand that it can feel uncomfortable to question or challenge something, but if you don't tell us what is worrying you we cannot explain what we are doing or try to put it right. If the member of staff you speak to in the first instance is unable to attempt to resolve the matter, you should make an appointment with the Headteacher (see below).

We trust that we will be able to sort out your worries but sometimes this is not possible. In this case, there is a next step.

First step - formal stage

Request a meeting with the Headteacher who will investigate your complaint and aim to inform you of the outcome **within 10 school days (2 weeks)**.

If your first contact is with individual Governors, they will advise you to take up your concerns with the appropriate member of staff or Head teacher. A Governor should not be made aware of a potential complaint as they may be required to sit on a Panel in the event of a formal hearing (Stage Two) and should be impartial.

If your complaint is about the Head teacher, you should **write to the Chair of Governors**.

If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) you might find it helpful to talk to our Inclusion Co-ordinator (INCo) or your child's named Special Needs Officer at the Local Authority. The SEND Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS – formerly Parent Partnership) may also be able to help you.

Second step - formal stage

If you remain dissatisfied following Stage 1 and wish to take your complaint further, you will be asked to complete a form or write a letter addressed to the Chair of Governors. In the letter you should:

- ☐ Make it clear why you are complaining.
- ☐ Say who you have spoken to already.
- ☐ Explain what you want to happen as a result of your complaint.

The Chair of Governors will arrange for your complaint to be considered and investigated under the arrangements approved by the Governing Body. This should involve a Panel of Governors at a hearing where the Complainant and the Respondent are invited to attend. If the Chair of Governors/another Governor has been involved in discussions to help settle the matter at Stage 1, he/she should arrange for another Governor to take charge of the

situation. Neither the Chair of Governors nor the Governor in charge should sit on the Panel themselves and they should instead ensure that a Panel is convened in line with the timeframes and guidance set out in the school's complaints procedure. The Governor in charge of investigating the complaint may ask to meet you to discuss your concerns. It is not advisable for a Panel to investigate and conclude matters without giving the Complainant and Respondent the opportunity to respond. Therefore, a formal hearing with all in attendance is most preferable.

You should make sure that the Governors' Complaint Panel is provided with any written information or evidence you intend to use in a formal hearing. You may bring a friend, representative or interpreter to any meeting if you wish. The Chair of the Panel may invite to the meeting any person who may help establish the facts of the complaint. The Chair should tell you who this person is before the meeting.

If any member of staff is required by the Governing Body to attend a meeting, they will have the opportunity to be accompanied or represented as they wish. A member of staff named in a complaint may also choose to attend a meeting, even if not required to do so by the Governors. They may be represented. If this happens, we will inform you in advance.

When the Panel has fully investigated your complaint, the Chair of the Panel or the Governor in charge of the investigation will write to you to tell you the findings. These findings will be reported to the Governing Body. The Chair of Governors will then write to you confirming the outcome of your complaint and any agreed actions to be taken. Our Governing Body will aim to deal with your complaint **within 28 school days (5½ weeks)**.

Further recourse

Most complaints are resolved by this process. Should your complaint not be resolved, you may complain to the Secretary of State at the Department for Education:

The Secretary of State
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Website: www.education.gov.uk
Telephone: 0370 000 2288

In the case of complaints about **Special Educational Needs provision**, you may complain further to the Local Authority. This should be done by writing to the Children's Services Complaints Manager.

It should be noted however that if you wish to pursue this route, you must do so within **20 working days (4 weeks)** of receiving the written outcome of the hearing into your complaint. After **20 working days (4 weeks)**, neither the school nor the Local Authority is under any obligation to investigate or progress your complaint any further

Useful contacts

Advisory Centre for Education POhWER

Education Advice & Training Hertlands House

72 Durnsford Road Primett Road

London Stevenage

N11 2EJ SG1 3EE

Web: www.ace-ed.org.uk Web: www.pohwer.net

Phone: **0300 0115 142** Phone: **0300 456 2370**

Children's Legal Centre National Youth Advocacy Service

Riverside Office Centre (NYAS)

Century House North Egerton House

North Station Road Tower Road

Colchester Birkenhead

Essex Wirral

CO1 1RE CH41 1FN

Web: www.childrenslegalcentre.com Web: www.nyas.net

Phone: **0345 345 4345** Phone: **0345 345 4345**

Special Educational Needs & Disability Information Advice Support Service (SENDIASS)

Web: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/sendias

Email: SENDIASS@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Phone: **01992 555847**

Monitoring and evaluation

The Governing Body will review the Complaints Policy and Procedure annually. It will also monitor and review complaints made in respect of the school on an annual basis at the last meeting of the summer term.

