

Furze Platt Senior School



School Complaints Policy

FURZE PLATT SENIOR SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

At Furze Platt Senior School we value good relations with parents and the community. These good relations are based on mutual respect and a willingness to listen to other points of view. The purpose of this procedure is to provide a structured opportunity to express and resolve concerns and thus to improve the provision for students.

INTRODUCTION

This procedure builds on the legal requirements of Section 409 of the Education Act 1996 and the guidance issued in the Department of Education and Science Circular 1/89: local arrangements for the consideration of complaints. It is in the best interests of all parties that any concern is expressed and resolved quickly and at the earliest possible stage.

The procedure has two possible stages which must begin with the informal stage:

Informal Stage: most concerns are easily resolved informally by discussion with staff at the school; more difficult or complex concerns may take more than one discussion.

Formal complaint to the Governing Body: a formal complaint can be made to the Governing Body only after careful attempts have been made to resolve the matter informally or through mediation.

INFORMAL STAGE

The school is happy to receive suggestions and compliments and talk about concerns that help it to identify areas of success and areas in which it could improve. Where a concern is brought to the school's attention it can almost always be resolved with a single conversation. However, sometimes an issue is more complex and may take more than one discussion to resolve.

1. Any areas of concern should firstly be made through the pupil's Form Tutor, the relevant Head of House or Head of Department, who will liaise with other members of staff in the school, if necessary, according to the nature of the issue. Most matters can be successfully resolved in this way.
2. Occasionally, despite the best efforts of all parties, these discussions do not resolve the concern, which may then become a complaint. In such instances, the complainant will be asked to confirm their concerns in writing to the Headteacher, using the attached Complaint Form. This will be formally acknowledged in writing within 3 working days.
3. Within seven school days the Headteacher has the right of written reply to the written complaint, or may invite the complainant to a meeting in order to try and resolve the issue.
4. Should the issue still not be resolved at this stage, and depending on the nature of the complaint, the school may involve a Governor, or other person nominated by the Governing Body, to act as a mediator. An independent record will be made of any mediation meeting and, where possible, this will be agreed and signed by all parties at the end of the meeting. The mediator would not be involved in any subsequent part of the procedure.

FORMAL COMPLAINT TO THE GOVERNING BODY

A formal complaint would usually only be made if the complainant has:

- Sought to resolve the concern through an informal approach to the school, ie by contacting the relevant Form Tutor, Head of House or Head of Department.
- Allowed reasonable time (normally up to six school weeks) for investigation of the concern.
- Accepted any reasonable offer by the school to discuss the result of the investigation.
- Put the complaint clearly in writing.
- Taken part in any process of mediation offered by the school.

The Governing Body has a Complaints Panel whose responsibility it is to hear and decide about formal complaints that have not been resolved at the informal stage. The complaints panel will comprise two members of the Governing Body and one independent member.

The complainant should write to the Clerk to the Governing Body at the school requesting a meeting of the Complaints Panel. Enclosed with the letter should be a copy of the original written complaint form submitted at the informal stage, indicating which matters remain unresolved. No new complaints may be included.

The Clerk will arrange a meeting of the Complaints Panel at a mutually convenient time for all parties. This meeting will be arranged as soon as possible for a date within 15 – 30 school days of receipt of the complainant's request for a meeting. Details of the formal complaint will be sent to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors (unless the Chair of Governors has previously acted as mediator). The school may have up to 10 school days from receipt of this notification to submit its response to the Clerk.

Any documents from either the complainant or the school to be considered by the Panel, together with the names of any witnesses who might be called, must be received by the Clerk at least 7 school days before the meeting. Copies of all papers submitted as well as the agenda will be sent to the Panel members, the complainant, Headteacher and the Chair of Governors (unless previously acted as mediator). The Headteacher will copy relevant papers to any member(s) of staff named in the complaint.

The complainant will be advised that they can bring a friend, supporter or interpreter to the meeting. The Headteacher may bring a fellow employee or professional representative. Any school staff that are asked by the Headteacher to be present at the Panel meeting also have the right to bring a fellow employee or professional representative. It would not be appropriate for a pupil to attend.

The Complaints Panel will be made up of 3 Governors who have not previously had any significant involvement with the complaint. They will consider the complaint on the basis of the papers they received and what is said at the meeting. In the event of either party not attending the meeting, the Chairperson for the Panel has the discretion to proceed or to adjourn the meeting. The Chairperson will aim to complete all the business within a reasonable timeframe without the need to adjourn to another day.

Once the Panel have heard from both parties, they will adjourn to make their decision. This will have one of the following outcomes:

- Uphold the complaint in full.
- Uphold the complaint in part.
- Dismiss the complaint.

All parties will be advised in writing of the outcome of the meeting within seven schools days of the meeting. Having come to a decision about the complaint, the Panel may refer issues of principle or general practice to another forum e.g. the Governing Body, or to an individual such as the Headteacher.

All information relating to complaints will be confidential except where the Secretary of State or inspecting body requires access to such information.

Complainants will be provided with the relevant details of the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) when a complaint remains unresolved after completion of all procedures within the school.

Adopted Dec 2011
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School Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it to the Headteacher who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name:

Relationship with school (e.g. parent of a pupil on the school's roll):

Pupil's name (if relevant to your complaint):

Your address:

Telephone number:

Mobile number:

Please give concise details of your complaint, including dates, names of witnesses, etc, to allow the matter to be fully investigated:

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? (For instance, who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?)

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

You may continue on a separate sheet of paper or attach additional paperwork.

Please state number of additional pages attached:

Signature:

Date:

For school use only:

Date form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

Complaint referred to:

Date: