



**Leighfield**  
Primary School

Learning for Life

# **Leighfield Primary School Complaints Policy**

Adopted by the Advisory Board

## PURPOSE

**Leighfield Primary School** believe that constant feedback helps self-improvement and can raise standards. Pupils, parents or other adults who have concerns or complaints should feel that they can voice their concerns.

## OVERVIEW

**Leighfield** takes any concern or complaint seriously and with confidentiality. All concerns and complaints will be treated promptly and sympathetically.

**Leighfield** aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any concern or complaint.

It is believed that if an informal complaint or concern is taken seriously at an early stage it will reduce the need to take it to a formal complaint. We seek to resolve such matters by informal means wherever possible. The procedure for this option is included in the complaints procedure.

The **Executive Headteacher and Head of School** will ensure that:

- this complaints policy and the complaints procedure are available and easily accessible to all parents, pupils and staff.
- all formal complaints are dealt with in the first instance by the Head of School or a member of the leadership team, who will document the complaint (names, dates, times, events) and acknowledge receipt in writing within three working days.
- the complainant receives an explanation, either verbal or written, of the action taken within ten working days following the complaint. A written note is made of this and kept on file.

All **Staff** are expected to encourage pupils, parents and carers who have concerns to follow the complaints procedure.

The **Executive Head and Advisory Board** will ensure the following:

- if a complainant is not satisfied with the action taken by the Head of School then the Executive Headteacher will hear the complaint.
- On receipt of the complaint, the Executive Headteacher will inform the Head of School, investigate the complaint, and write to the complainant within ten working days, explaining the action taken.
- where the complaint is against the Head of School or Executive Headteacher, the complainant may wish to contact the Advisory Board first.
- if the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the Executive Headteacher then a formal complaint may be made to the Advisory Board. Within 15 working days of receiving the written complaint a Complaints Committee, comprised of at least three people not directly involved in the matters of the complaint, will meet to consider it. The complainant will be given seven working days' notice of the meeting, and may take a friend or other person to provide support at the meeting. Within seven days of that meeting the complainant will be informed of the decision, the

reasons for it, and any action to be taken by the school. The decision of the complaints committee is final.

If the **Advisory Board** does not comply with this procedure or with the duty imposed on it by the funding agreement, the complainant may refer this to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) to investigate.

**The EFA will not investigate** complaints that are, for example:

- about the quality of education or leadership, or concerns affecting the school as a whole. These should be raised with Ofsted
- about discrimination. These should be raised with the Equality Advisory Support Service
- about data protection. These should be raised with the Information Commissioner's Office
- about exam malpractice or maladministration. These should be raised with the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) and relevant awarding body
- about criminal behaviour. These should be raised with the police
- being, or have been, considered by a court or similar body
- about employment matters. These should be raised through the school's grievance procedure, or taken to an Employment Tribunal
- about safeguarding or child protection matters. These should be taken up with the academy's Local Safeguarding Children's Board
- about a child or young person's Statement of Special Educational Need where there is another route of appeal, for example the First Tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Service formerly the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST)

## **ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

All complaints and the action taken will be documented and a summary included in the **Head of School** termly report to the Advisory Board, with advice on any implications for policies.

## Appendix 1

### Details of complaints process

- Stage 1** Discussion with relevant teacher. This may be over a period of time. The teacher and complainant may want to consult with third parties. The teacher should keep written notes and agree any follow up.
- If not resolved, or the complainant or staff member feels that there would be difficulty in discussing the matter, then
- Stage 2** Discussion with Head of School. This may be over a period of time. The Head of School and complainant may want to consult with third parties. The Head of School should keep a written record. Any follow up should be agreed. Copies of notes to be kept by the Head of School who should also call for the teachers notes, if applicable.
- If not resolved, then
- Stage 3** Informal discussion with the Executive Headteacher. Notes must be kept. Copies to be held by the Executive Headteacher with a copy to the Head of School and complainant. A response will be given within 10 working days.
- If not resolved, then
- Stage 4** It should be checked that persons wishing to make a formal complaint are aware of, or given a copy of, the School's Complaints Procedure. A request should be made for the complainant to set out the complaint in writing as a letter (if there is any difficulty with this then the school will give all help possible to ensure an oral statement is clear and agreed).
- This formal complaint to the Advisory Board will be sent to the Chair of the Advisory Board. Within 15 working days of receiving the written complaint the Advisory Board will organise a committee, comprised of at least three people not directly involved in the matters of the complaint, who will meet to consider the complaint.
- The complainant will receive 7 working days' notice of the meeting and may take a friend, or other person, to provide support at that meeting (this friend is not to speak unless nominated by the complainant and agreed with the chairman). Within 7 working days of that meeting the complainant will be informed of the decision, the reasons for it and any action to be taken by the school. The decision of the committee is final.

All complaints and the actions taken will be documented and a summary included in the Head of School's termly report to the Advisory Board.

## Appendix 2

### Advisory Board PROCEDURES

The Chair, (or nominated Advisory Board member), will convene a complaints panel. A chair of the panel should already have been nominated.

The committee will comprise of 3 or 5 Advisory Board members who are not directly involved in the matters of the complaint. A chairman will be appointed. It is recommended that the Clerk attends, welcomes the parties attending, records the proceedings and notifies all parties of the panel's decision.

The panel must be fully up to date on the complaints procedure and have read the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCFS) current guidelines. The panel chair will provide these.

The Head of School can attend.

The complainant should attend, with their child if necessary, and a friend or supporter (who cannot speak unless nominated by the complainant and agreed by the Chair of the Panel).

The hearing will not be intimidating in its style.

Witnesses can be invited to give evidence but should not be present for any other part of the hearing.

After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint and is then followed by their witnesses.

The Head of School can question both the complainant and the witnesses.

Panel members can ask questions at any point.

The Head of School then can explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses.

The complainant may ask both the Head of School and the witnesses' questions after they have spoken.

The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.

The Head of School is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.

Both complainant and Head of School leave whilst the panel decides on the issues.

The chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within 7 days.

The final decision and any further actions to be taken will be provided in writing to all relevant parties.

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