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Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction

1.1 We believe that our school provides a good education for all our children, and that the teachers and other staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents, guardians and carers. Nonetheless mistakes and misunderstandings do arise occasionally, so the school has a procedure in place to receive and respond to complaints. This policy sets out the procedure that the school follows. The school requests that parents and carers also follow this procedure.

2. Aims and objectives

2.1 At Seven Mills we aim to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any concerns. We listen and give careful consideration to all concerns brought to our attention and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any concern through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, we put the interests of children above all else. We believe this procedure provides sufficient opportunity for any concern to be fully discussed and resolved.

3. How to share a concern

3.1 If a parent, guardian or carer is concerned about anything relating to school life or the education we are providing at Seven Mills, usually the best way of dealing with it is for parents first to discuss it with a child's class teacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; teachers always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before that problem seriously affects a child.

3.2 If after speaking to the class teacher parents still have a concern, or if at the outset parents feel that a concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, then parents should contact the headteacher or other member of the senior leadership team directly for an informal discussion.

3.3 Anyone other than a parent or carer who is concerned about the performance or conduct of the school should contact the headteacher directly.

3.4 In the unlikely event that discussion with the headteacher does not resolve a concern then it may be pursued through the Chair of the Governing Body. The

first step is for parents or carers to have an informal discussion with the Chair, who will make every effort to resolve the issue at this informal stage.

4. What to do if a concern is not resolved through informal discussion

4.1 If anyone feels that their concern has not been resolved through informal discussion, or if a concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, then parents or carers should use the school's procedure for receiving, investigating and responding to concerns using a defined, formal and monitored process. To do so, parents and carers would need to make a formal complaint, as follows.

5. How to make a formal complaint

5.1 A formal complaint has to be made in writing. It should state a) the nature of the complaint and b) how the school has handled the concern so far. The complaint should be addressed and sent to the headteacher; or, if the complaint concerns the headteacher, it should be addressed and sent to the Chair of Governors at the postal address of the school. Any letter for the Chair of Governors will be registered and acknowledged within three school days from receipt of the letter.

5.2 Under this policy, the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors must consider and reply to all formal complaints within 15 working days of receipt (using the school calendar of working days). The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will arrange an initial meeting with the complainant to discuss the complaint, and offer an opportunity for it to be explained in more detail. The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will give at least three school days' notice of this meeting. If for any reason a complaint cannot be resolved within 15 working days the complainant will receive a letter or email explaining the delay, and giving the complainant a date by which they should receive a response from the school.

5.3 At this stage the Headteacher or Chair of Governors may also call a panel of three or more governors to help consider the complaint. This panel will do all it can to hear any evidence and to resolve the complaint at this stage. After the panel has met and considered its decision, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors (or other nominated governor) will inform the complainant of the outcome in writing.

6. Who to appeal to next

6.1 If a complaint was made to the Headteacher and the complainant feels that it has not been resolved, then a complainant may make a formal complaint to the Chair of Governors.

6.2 If a complaint was made to the Chair of Governors and the complainant feels that it has still not been resolved, a complainant is entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education, which will consider if the complaint has been handled correctly under the school's complaints procedure. Further information on this process is available from the Department of Education.

7. Monitoring and review

7.1 The School's Board of Governors monitors formal complaints received by the School in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Headteacher and Chair of Governors register all complaints received by the school and record how they were resolved.

7.2 Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and will make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents, guardians and carers so that they are properly informed about the complaints process.

Policy reviewed by Governors November 2015

Signed.....(Headteacher)

Signed.....(On behalf of Governors)