



## **Complaints Procedure**

### **Introduction**

Governing bodies are required under the Education Act 2002 to have in place and publicise a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school. Springfield School is committed to providing an excellent service to its stakeholders and would want any concerns to be addressed promptly and effectively.

There is a difference between a concern and a formal complaint; in the vast majority of circumstances it is in everyone's best interest that the concern is addressed informally. Complainants should follow the stages outlined below.

### **Stages of the Complaints Procedure**

#### **Stage 1 (informal): concern heard by an appropriate staff member**

If you have a concern, please contact the school reception and ask to discuss your concern with an appropriate member of staff; this might be the Tutor, Head of Year or Head of Department, for example. If you are unsure who the appropriate member of staff is, please outline your concern with the school's Receptionist who will forward your concern to the correct person.

#### **Stage 2 (formal): complaint heard by the Headteacher**

If you do not believe that your concern has been resolved, then the next step would be to make a complaint in writing to the Headteacher. It is advised that in your letter/email you clarify:

- the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- what has happened so far and who has been involved;
- and what you believe would put things right.

#### **Stage 3 (formal): complaint heard by the Chair of Governors**

If you are not satisfied by the response of the Headteacher (of if the complaint is about the Headteacher), then please write to the Chair of Governors to request that the complaint is considered further.

## **Stage 4 (formal): complaint heard by the Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel**

This is the last school based stage of the complaints process. If the complainant remains dissatisfied by the Chair's response, then s/he can write to the Clerk to the Governors giving details of the complaint and request that it is heard by an appeal panel. Three governors who have not previously been involved in the process will hear the complaint (appendix 1).

The decision of the appeal panel is final. If the complainant contacts the school again regarding the same issue, then the Chair of Governors is able to inform them that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter is now closed. Further correspondence regarding the same issue may be recognised as vexatious and there will be no further obligation on the part of the school to respond.

## **Resolving Complaints**

Further to a fair and thorough investigation (at any stage of the procedure), it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following in order to achieve resolution:

- an acknowledgement that the complaint is valid in whole or in part;
- an apology;
- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently;
- an explanation of the steps that have/may be taken to ensure that the issue will not happen again;
- an undertaking to review school procedures.

The procedure will endeavour to identify areas of agreement between the parties. However, there may be circumstances where the evidence does not uphold the complaint.

## **Time Limits**

The school will endeavour to consider and resolve complaints as quickly and as efficiently as possible. The school should:

- acknowledge receipt of complaints within five working days;
- and respond fully within 10 working days for a stage 2 complaint, 15 working days for a stage 3 complaint and 20 working days for stage 4 complaint.

In most circumstances the time limits cited above are realistic. However, where further and/or complex investigations are necessary, new time limits can be set.

*Note that complaints regarding Portsmouth City Council services including school admissions and children's social care should be directed to the Council's Corporate Complaints Service. For advice, go to [www.portsmouth.gov.uk](http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk) or contact [cityhelpdesk@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:cityhelpdesk@portsmouthcc.gov.uk).*

Review date: Spring 2018