

Reviewed May 2024
Next review May 2027
Author: Mrs C Westgate



Hudson Road Primary School

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Hudson Road Primary School Complaints Policy

Hudson Road Primary School is committed to providing a safe, stimulating, consistent and accessible service to children and their parents/carers. We always aim to provide high quality services for everyone but accept that sometimes things do not always go to plan. In such circumstances, we want to know so that we can put them right and learn from any mistakes.

Under normal circumstances the Headteacher, or Designated Deputy will be responsible for managing complaints. If a complaint is made against the Headteacher then the Governing Body will conduct the investigation. (See Stage 3).

Complaints Regarding Local Authority Statutory Provision

Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 states that the governing body of a school shall establish procedures for dealing with all complaints relating to the school, other than those to be dealt with in accordance with any other statutory provision.

As a result this procedure does not cover concerns about the following, for which there are separate arrangements laid down by law.

The complaints information for statutory provision covered by the local authority is available at <https://www.togetherforchildren.org.uk/aboutus/complaints>

Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.

<http://www.hudsonroad.org.uk/>

We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. See Hudson Road Whistle Blowing Policy and procedures.

Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.

Information on complaints about the following areas is available through

<https://www.togetherforchildren.org.uk/schools>:

- The school curriculum, collective worship and religious education and the provision of information required by law
- Matters relating to the suspension or exclusion of pupils from school where there are separate arrangements in place
- School admissions

For complaints concerning

- Home to school Transport - <https://www.togetherforchildren.org.uk/families/school-transport>
- Education and Health Care Plans and provision for special educational needs and disabilities <https://www.togetherforchildren.org.uk/professionals/send-local-offer>

Complaints Regarding Hudson Road Primary School

This policy tells you how to go about making a complaint about a matter relating to Hudson Road Primary School. It also gives you information about how your complaint will be handled. This policy should be used in conjunction with the DFE guidance (Best Practice Guidance for School Complaints Procedures-updated 15/1/21).

It applies to all complaints from parents/legal guardians and other members of the local community who may be affected by the management, actions or conduct of the school. However it does not include complaints about the professional conduct of staff – these are handled under a separate procedure, and you should contact the Head Teacher for further details.

In all other cases your complaints will be dealt with by the school and will follow the steps laid out in this policy. However, you should be aware that in making a complaint there is the possibility that you may trigger the need to refer the matter in whole or in part to other agencies responsible for certain matters relating to the welfare of children. For example, if your complaint involves child abuse, the Head Teacher has a professional right and duty to apply other procedures relating to the provisions of the Children's Act.

The Stages of a Complaint

This policy sets out the three stages to resolve a complaint. Not all complaints will need to go through all three stages – that is a matter to be agreed between you and the school. These stages are:-

- Informal resolution usually by teaching or other school staff
- Complaint heard by the Head Teacher
- Consideration by the Governing Body

The Governing Body, Head Teacher, teaching and other staff welcome and encourage constructive dialogue with parents and other concerned parties about matters relating to the school. We believe that in most situations it is in everybody's interest, especially the child's, that complaints are resolved early and informally by identifying the issue to the Class Teacher. It is important, however, that all complaints and complainants are dealt with according to the principles and steps set out in this policy. If you have already raised your concerns elsewhere, then you should advise whoever you have contacted that you will be dealing with your concerns through this complaints procedure.

Our School Complaints Coordinator is Mrs Angela Carling, School Business Manager.

The Complaints Coordinator is responsible for the following:

- Acknowledging receipt of the complaint
- Effective recording of all complaints received
- Monitoring responses
- Ensuring responses are made within a reasonable timescale

Core Values

The Governing Body will give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them fairly and honestly. We will provide you with sufficient opportunity for your complaint to be fully discussed and aim to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding.

Our procedure aims to:

- Be easily accessible
- Be simple to use and understand
- Be transparent, open and honest
- Respect the confidentiality of all those involved
- Allow swift handling with established time limits for action and for keeping people informed of progress

- Be non – confrontational
- Ensure a full and fair investigation

Complaint Stages in Detail

Stage One- Complaint heard by Staff Member

If a parent/carer has a complaint about some aspect of an activity or about the conduct of a member of staff, it will often be possible to resolve the problem by simply speaking with the individual concerned. As a school we are committed to open and regular dialogue and we welcome all comments on its services, regardless of whether they are positive or negative. The aim here is to resolve a complaint at the earliest possible opportunity via informal resolution by way of a discussion with the relevant class teacher or Key Stage Leader.

If that member of staff did not feel comfortable investigating the complaint, or the complaint was about that staff member then the Complaints Coordinator can ask another staff member to investigate the complaint or immediately escalate the complaint to stage 2.

The Head Teacher will ensure that she and her staff make sufficient time available to resolve concerns. A formal appointment is not usually necessary at this stage, but please bear in mind that the needs of all the children at the school have to come first and that therefore, there are times that are unsuitable for discussions. Either you or the Class Teacher may feel that an appointment is necessary in some cases, particularly if more than one member of staff needs to be involved. This would always be at a mutually convenient time and will be arranged by the Complaints Coordinator.

Please remember that teaching staff will not always be able to spot the concerns and anxieties of children or their parents/guardians. Where these are drawn to their attention, they will always listen, explain and try to identify a mutually agreeable remedy. They may need to involve other members of staff – for example those with particular responsibility for SEND or medical needs- and this will be explained to you.

Stage Two- Complaint heard by Headteacher

If informal discussions of a complaint or problem have not produced a satisfactory resolution to the situation, parents/carers should put their complaint in detail and in writing to the Headteacher using the form included in this policy. Relevant names, dates evidence and other important information on the nature of the complaint should be included. As part of the school's consideration of your complaint, you may be invited to a meeting to discuss the complaint. If you wish, you can ask someone to accompany you to help explain the reasons for your complaint.

The Headteacher will keep written and dated records of all meetings and telephone conversations and other related documentation. The Headteacher may delegate the task of collating evidence but the decision and response will always be from the Headteacher.

If the Headteacher has good reason to believe that the situation has child protection implications, they should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead and ensure the local Children's Services department is contacted, according to the procedure set out in the Child Protection Policy. If any party involved in the complaint has reason to believe that a criminal offence has been committed, then they will contact the Police.

The Headteacher will arrange a time to meet the parents/carers concerned and any other relevant individuals, such as members of staff, to discuss the complaint and any response to it.

Occasionally, where necessary, the Class Teacher or member of staff may immediately refer a matter to the Head Teacher for her involvement. The reason for this will always be explained to you. In addition, matters can be referred to the Head Teacher under the following circumstances:

- If the original complaint remains unresolved after a period of 2 weeks it should automatically be referred.
- If agreement cannot be reached on the way forward following discussion with the Class Teacher.

Stage Three- Complaint heard by the Governing Body Complaints Appeal Panel

If your concern has already been through Stages 1 and 2 and you are not happy with the outcome, or your complaint is in relation to the Head teacher, the next step is to make a formal complaint to the Governing Body.

You should contact the school's Chair of Governors via the Clerk to the Governing Body, by letter or by e-mail, enclosing a copy of the written complaint originally submitted, indicating which matters remain unresolved. No new complaint may be included. Written correspondence should be sent to:

Clerk to the Governing Body of Hudson Road Primary School
c/o Governor Support Team,
Together for Children
Education Services
Bunny Hill Centre
Hylton Lane
Sunderland
SR5 4BW

If you prefer to e-mail your complaint to governor@togetherforchildren.org.uk

The Chair of Governors will then convene a meeting of the Governing Body Complaints Appeal Panel. The Governing Body Complaints Panel should consist of 3 to 5 governors and should **not** include all of the school's governors. One of the governors should be appointed as the Chair of the Complaints Panel. This does not necessarily have to be the Chair of Governors. None of the governors on the panel should have had any prior involvement in the complaint.

The panel hearing should be held in private and the aim should be to resolve the complaint, achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant and assure the complainant that his/her concerns have been taken seriously. The Complaints Panel should aim to reach an outcome in respect of the complaint (i.e. upheld, partially upheld, not upheld, unable to substantiate), decide and agree on appropriate action to be taken as a result of the complaint and make recommendations to change processes/procedures to ensure problems of a similar nature do not recur.

Should the Governing Body agree to hold a Complaints Appeal Panel meeting, you will be informed of the date, time and place of the meeting by letter from the Clerk to the Panel. The

letter will also explain what will happen at the meeting and inform you that you are entitled to be accompanied to the meeting. All parties are given the opportunity to see any written documentation and to comment on it. With agreement of the Chair of the Committee, the Headteacher may invite members of staff directly involved in matters raised by you to attend their meeting. As a general rule, no evidence or witnesses previously undisclosed should be introduced into the meetings by any of the participants.

The Chair should also ensure that the complainant is informed of the Panel's decision, in writing, within 15 working days of the Panel hearing. This letter should inform the complainant of their right of appeal to The Department for Education should they remain dissatisfied.

Stage 4

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 3.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Hudson Road Primary School. They will consider whether Hudson Road Primary has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD.

Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body monitors the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly and to consider whether any changes are needed to the school's systems, policies or procedures as a result of any complaints raised.

All formal complaints received by the school are logged and a record is kept of how they are resolved.

See Appendix 1 –Formal Complaints form

Appendix 1

Hudson Road Primary School Complaint Form

Your name:

Address:

.....

.....

Contact tel no:

Pupil's name:

Relationship to pupil:

Please give full details of your complaint (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary):

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint (i.e. who did you speak to and what was the response)? :

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....
.....

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

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details:

.....
.....
.....

Signed:

Date:

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO MRS ANGELA CARLING (SCHOOL COMPLAINTS CO-ORDINATOR) WHO WILL ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT AND EXPLAIN WHAT ACTION WILL BE TAKEN.

OFFICIAL USE

Date received:

By who:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Complaint referred to:

Date: