



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Archibald First School

1. Introduction

1.1 At Archibald First School we have a vision of 'Having Fun, Achieving Excellence' and strive to develop all children into successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. The staff and governors work very hard to ensure that our vision is realised, but we accept that sometimes things don't always go as planned.

1.2 Legislation requires us to have in place a formal complaints procedure. The law also requires this to be published. This document is intended to fulfil that purpose.

1.3 A 'concern' may be treated as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.

A complaint is 'an expression or statement of dissatisfaction about actions taken or a lack of action which requires a response'.

Examples could include:

- Complaints about a staff member
- Dissatisfaction with a school policy
- Poor standard of teaching
- Inaccurate information being provided

It's in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to follow formal procedures. We will take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

1.4 If a complaint has already been dealt with, or the matter should be handled under other procedures (e.g. Child Protection, SEND, Whistleblowing, Staff Discipline, Safeguarding, Admissions and Exclusions) it will not be considered under this procedure.

1.5 Anyone is able to make a complaint under this procedure, including parents, children and young people, members of the local community and other users of the school facilities.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1.6 If a parent wishes to complain and their child has left the school, then any concerns must be raised within a 12-month period otherwise they will not be considered.

1.7 Investigation of any complaints made anonymously will be at the Headteacher's discretion.

1.8 Complaints about the school **MUST** be made to the school itself, not to the Local Authority.

1.9 The school will follow Local Authority guidance in dealing with malicious, vexatious or persistent complaints.

2. The Complaints Procedure and Timescales

There are three stages to the school complaints procedure, as detailed below. The timescales for each stage are also shown. Complaints received at any stage of the procedure will be **acknowledged within 3 school days**.

The timescales are calculated in school days, so do not include school holidays, bank holidays or teacher training days. If we require longer than the published timescales to investigate your complaint we will let you know, to ensure you are kept informed throughout the process.

2.1 **Stage 1** – the complaint is addressed and responded to by the class teacher. We would encourage parents to speak to their child's class teacher if they have any concerns as many issues can be addressed and resolved at this stage. Stage 1 complaints should be able to be addressed and resolved within **5 school days** from the date the complaint is acknowledged.

2.2 **Stage 2** – if the complaint can't be resolved by the class teacher, the class teacher should refer the complainant to the headteacher and inform the headteacher of the complaint and the steps taken to date. In some circumstances complaints can go straight to stage 2 (for example, if the complaint is about the member of staff who you would need to speak to at stage 1, or the complaint is of a sufficiently serious nature).

Stage 2 complaints should be able to be addressed and responded to within **10 school days** from the date the complaint is acknowledged. These complaints are taken very seriously by the headteacher and any such complaint is investigated thoroughly and **responded to in writing**. Most complaints are resolved at this stage.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

2.3 **Stage 3** – a complaint that has not been resolved at stage 2 can be escalated to stage 3. In addition, complaints about the headteacher would also be raised at stage 3.

Complaints are required to be put in writing to the Chair of Governors at this stage, the complainant stating the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far. If necessary, the Chair of Governors will convene a Governing Body Appeals Panel to investigate the complaint. Stage 3 complaints should be able to be responded to in writing within **25 school days** from the date the complaint is acknowledged.

3. Next steps

Stage 3 is the end of the school complaints procedure. If complainants remain dissatisfied then they have a legal right to approach the **Secretary of State** if they believe the Governing Body is acting, or proposing to act, unreasonably. In this situation, the Secretary of State would only investigate if they believed the school had either acted unreasonably or failed to carry out a statutory duty.

If the complaint is about the School Curriculum or Religious Education or Collective Worship the **Local Authority** may be able to investigate once the school procedures are exhausted. **There is no other role for the Local Authority to play in complaints of any other nature about schools.**

Complaints can also be made to **Ofsted** who have the power to investigate certain types of complaints from parents and carers. This helps Ofsted to decide whether or not to inspect a school.

4. Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

5. More Information

More detailed information can be found on the Newcastle City Council Website at <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/schools-learning-and-childcare/about-our-schools/making-complaint-about-school>

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy was reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body. The policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the Leadership Support Committee.

Date of last review: Autumn 2019

Date of next review: Autumn 2022