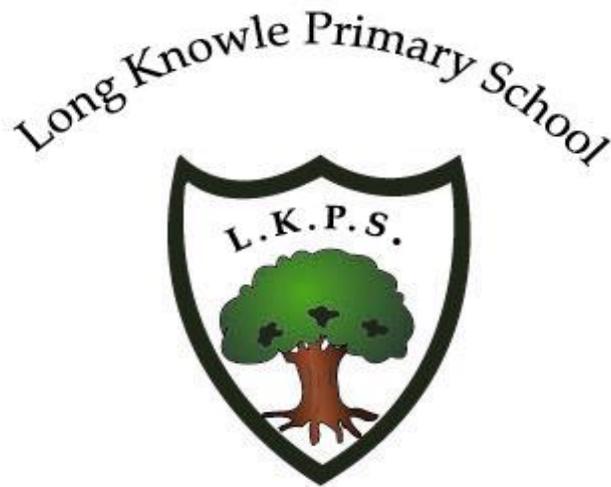


Long Knowle Primary School



COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE September 2021

LONG KNOWLE PRIMARY SCHOOL COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

The Governing Body of Long Knowle Primary School adopted this Complaints Policy and Procedure at the Full Governing Body Meeting on 8.11.18. The aim of this policy is to resolve a complaint or issue of concern as informally as possible and to move to formal procedures only as a last resort.

Each stage of the procedure might require more than one meeting to resolve the issue, only proceeding to the next stage when one or other (or both) sides cannot reach agreement.

Parents who wish to proceed to Stage Two will have access to the Chair of Governors. It is important that other governors are not involved at this stage unless it is absolutely necessary. The reason for this is the matter has to be taken to the Governors' Complaints Panel. Because he/she will almost certainly have been involved from the outset, the Chair of Governors will not be a member of the Complaints Panel.

RATIONALE

Long Knowle Primary School aims to be a place where mutual respect of all children and adults in the school community is obvious at all times.

The main purposes of the complaints procedure are:

- to resolve problems;
- to give parents a means to raise issues of concern and have them addressed.

This procedure is intended to allow parents or other stakeholders to raise a concern or complaint relating to the School, or the services that it provides. The underlying principle is that concerns ought to be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures.

The member of staff with responsibility for the operation and management of the School Complaints Procedure is known as the School's 'Complaints Coordinator'. The Complaints Coordinator at Long Knowle Primary School is the Head Teacher.

The Governing Body's Complaints Procedure does not replace the arrangements for dealing with certain types of complaint that fall outside the remit of the Governing Body's Complaints Procedure. A number of other procedures already exist:

- Admissions Procedures;
- Child Protection Procedures;
- Staff Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures;
- Exclusions Procedures;
- Special Educational Needs Procedures;
- Procedures for querying public examination results.

An **anonymous** concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

To enable a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, any matter raised more than 3 months after the event will not be considered.

Stages of Complaint

Stage 1

Initial concerns

- 1.1 In most cases a staff member will receive the first approach, as an **expression of concern** and it will be resolved at this level. The person with the concern or complaint may be referred to another member of staff at this point for advice or support. This may be to a more senior member of staff.
- 1.2 The Governing body wishes to state clearly to all parents that complaints and concerns must be expressed to the appropriate member of staff in a polite, reasonable and courteous manner. If staff are approached aggressively, threatened or verbally abused, the school has a right to have a 'Section 547' notice served. The Governing Body reserves the right to ban the perpetrator totally from the premises and police would be notified in the case of defiance.
- 1.3 Such expressions of concern will be logged by staff members on a blue 'concerns' form (see appendix); these will be shared with the Head Teacher and/or Deputy/Assistant Heads; these logs will be held centrally by the Complaints Coordinator.

Formal procedures

Formal procedures only need to be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising concerns remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

THE FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Stage 2 - complaint heard formally by the Head Teacher (Complaints Coordinator)

- 2.1 Where a matter is more serious, or else an informal approach has failed to resolve the issue, it may be raised formally as a complaint. This should be done in writing (see appendix). On receipt of the complaint the School will normally arrange a meeting with the complainant to clarify details of their concerns and of the resolution that is being sought.
- 2.2 The Head Teacher will seek to resolve the complaint/concern by meeting with the complainant and investigating the complaint.
- 2.3 Where the complaint concerns the Head Teacher, the Head Teacher will refer the complaint to the Chair of Governors. The Chair (or nominee) will then conduct Stage 2. (Where the complaint is against the Chair of Governors, the Vice Chair of Governors (or nominee) will then conduct Stage 2.
- 2.4 The complainant will be given a written outcome of the investigation within 10 working days.

If following Stage 2 the complainant is not satisfied with the way his/her complaint has been handled, the complainant can request a meeting with the Chair of Governors. This request must be made in writing and submitted to the School Administrator. Alternatively the complainant can submit a written complaint to the Chair. This should also be submitted to the School Administrator.

Stage 3 - Complaint heard by the Chair of Governors

- 3.1 The complainant should provide written details to the Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint. This will be a copy of the original complaint form (see 2.1)
- 3.2 The Chair will acknowledge receipt of the complaint.
- 3.3 Following investigation, the Chair will write to the complainant with the outcome of the investigation, usually within 10 working days. If the investigation is likely to take longer, the complainant will be informed.

If following Stage 3 the complainant is not satisfied with the way his/her complaint has been handled, the Chair of Governors will convene a meeting of the Governing Body Complaints Panel to meet with the complainant to seek further clarification. Neither the Chair nor Headteacher can be part of this Complaints Panel.

Stage 4 - Complaint heard by the Governors Complaints Panel

- 4.1 The Governors Complaints Panel hearing is the last school-based stage of the Complaints Procedure.
- 4.2 Individual complaints will not be heard by the whole Governing Body at any stage, as this could compromise the impartiality of any other panel set up under any other procedure.
- 4.3 The panel may consist of between three and five members of the Governing Body. The Head Teacher and Chair of Governors should not be members of this panel, which must be independent and be impartial. The panel should elect their own Chair and appoint a clerk.
- 4.4 The complainant will be invited by letter to attend a meeting of the Complaints Panel.

Remit of the Complaints Panel

- 4.5 The panel can:
 - dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
 - uphold the complaints in whole or in part;
 - decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
 - recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.
- 4.6 It is important that the Appeal Panel is independent and impartial and that it is seen to be, so no governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- 4.7 The aim of the hearing, which will be held in private, will be to resolve the complaint, where appropriate, and achieve reconciliation between School and the complainant. However, it is recognised that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour.
- 4.8 The Panel Chair will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible. Care will be taken to ensure that the layout of the room is informal and not adversarial in tone.
- 4.9 Governors sitting on the panel will have been informed about the School's Complaints Procedure.

Roles and responsibilities

4.10 The role of the **Chair of the Governing Body** will be to ensure that:

- The correct procedure has been followed;
- If a hearing is appropriate, notify the clerk to arrange the panel;
- The relevant HR provider has been informed if a staffing issue has been identified.

4.11 The school will ensure the panel meeting will be clerked. The role of the **Clerk** will be to:

- set the date (within 20 working days), time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible;
- collate all written material and send it to the parties 10 working days in advance of the hearing;
- meet and welcome the parties as they arrive at the hearing;
- record the proceedings;
- notify all the parties of the panel's decision.

4.12 The role of the **Chair of the Panel** will be to ensure:

- The remit of the Panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity to put their case without undue interruption;
- the issues are addressed;
- parents and others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at their ease; and, are encouraged to bring someone as support;
- the hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy;
- the Panel is open minded and acting independently;
- no member of the Panel has a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure;
- each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions;
- written material has been supplied by all parties;
- if a related issue arises at the hearing it would be useful to give all parties the opportunity to adjourn to consider the related issue and then comment on it;
- new issues raised in the hearing should be dealt with separately from this Panel meeting;

Checklist for Panel hearing

4.13 The Panel will take account of the following points:

- the hearing is as informal as possible;
- witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence;
- after introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint;
- the Head Teacher, or other presenter nominated by the Chair, may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken;
- the Head Teacher, or other presenter nominated by the Chair, is then invited to explain the School's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses;
- the complainant may question both the Head Teacher, or other presenter nominated by the chair, and the witnesses after each has spoken;
- the Panel may ask questions at any point;
- the complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint;

- the Head Teacher is invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint;
- the Chair explains that both parties will hear from the Panel within 5 working days.
- both parties leave while the Panel decides on the issues.

Notification of the Panel's decision

- 4.14 The Chair of the Panel will ensure that the complainant is notified of the Panel's decision, in writing, with reasons clearly defined in plain English, within 5 working days of the meeting.
- 4.15 In case the complainant is not satisfied that the Complaints Procedures were conducted properly and fairly they should contact the Department for Education for further advice.

Date: September 2021

This policy was adopted by the Full Governing Body on 8.11.18

To be reviewed annually by the Full Governing Body – next review September 2022

Long Knowle Primary School

Informal Concern Log (Stage 1)



Parent' name	Child's name	Year group	Date
Complaint made to:		Signed:	
Brief details of complaint:			
Staff response/action taken, and by whom?			
Outcome: Complaint resolved	Outcome: Complaint referred to:		
Referral:		Signed:	
Parent seen Date/Time			
Action taken			
Outcome:			

Long Knowle Primary School

Complaint Form (Stage 2)



Please complete this form and return it, via the School Office, to the Head Teacher (or clerk to the Governing Body), who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage of the procedure

Your name:

Relationship with school (eg parent of a pupil on the school role):

Pupil's name (If relevant to the complaint):

Your address:

Telephone numbers

Daytime:

Evening:

E-mail address: