

### General Principles:

- This procedure is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school, or the service that it provides.
- 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, being complained of, will not be considered.

### Raising a concern or complaint

#### 1. Informal stage

It is normally appropriate to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned. This may be by letter, by telephone or in person by appointment, requested via the school office. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information and it is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved by this informal stage. See Meeting Request form.

In the case of serious concerns it may be appropriate to address them directly to the head teacher (or to the chair of the governing body, if the complaint is about the head teacher).

If you are uncertain about who to contact, please seek advice from the school office or the clerk to the governing body.

#### 2. Formal Stage

If your concern or complaint is not resolved at the informal stage you may choose to put the complaint in writing and pass it to the head teacher, who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately. If the complaint is about the head teacher, your complaint should be passed to the clerk of the governing body, for the attention of the chair of the governing body.

A complaint form is provided to assist you: Formal Complaint form.

You should include details which might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events and copies of relevant documents.

It is very important that you include a clear statement of the actions that you would like the school to take to resolve your concern. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed.

Please pass the completed form, in a sealed envelope to the school office. The envelope should be addressed to the head teacher, or to the clerk of the governing body, as appropriate. If you require support for completing the form please request this from the school office.

The head teacher (or chair) may invite you to a meeting to clarify your concerns and to explore the possibility of an informal resolution. If you accept that invitation, you may be

accompanied by a friend or representative (family or professional) if you wish, to assist you in explaining of the nature of your concerns.

It is possible that your complaint will be resolved through a meeting with the head teacher (or chair). If not, arrangements will be made for the matter to be fully investigated, using the appropriate procedure. In any case you should learn in writing, usually within 5 days of the school receiving your formal complaint, of how the school intends to proceed. This notification should include an indication of the anticipated timescale.

Any investigation will begin as soon as possible and when it has been concluded, you will be informed in writing of its conclusion.

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, you may request that the governing body reviews the process followed by the school, in handling the complaint. Any such request must be made in writing to the clerk to the governing body, within 10 school days of receiving the notice of the outcome and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure. The procedure described below will be followed. A Review Request form is provided for your convenience.

### **Review Request**

Any review of the process followed by the school will be conducted by a panel of 3 members of the governing body. This will usually take place within 10 school days of receipt of your request.

The review will normally be conducted through a consideration of written submissions, but reasonable requests to make oral representations should be considered sympathetically.

Date of Policy: Nov 2014

Review Date: Nov 2017

Signed

Chair of Governors

Date:

Knightsfield School: Meeting Request Form  
Knightsfield School: Formal Complaint Form  
Appendix 1: Governing body meetings  
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Appendix 3: Summary of Process to resolve Complaints

### Knightsfield School: Meeting Request Form

I wish to meet..... to discuss the following matter:

Brief details of topic to be discussed:

Dates/times when it would be most convenient for a meeting:

Your name:

Relationship with school (e.g. parent of a pupil on the school roll):

Pupil's name (if relevant to the matter to be discussed):

Your address:

Telephone numbers  
Daytime: Evening:

Email address:

Signed:..... Date:.....

(Please complete this form and return it to the school office.)

School use:  
Date form received: Date response sent:  
Received by: Response sent by:

**Knightsfield School: Formal Complaint Form**

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 your of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name:

Relationship with school (e.g. parent of a pupil on the school roll):

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

Your address:

Telephone numbers  
Daytime: Evening:

Email address:

Please give concise details of your complaint, including dates, names of witnesses etc.), to allow the matter to be fully investigated:

You may continue on a separate piece of paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of additional pages attached:

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? (i.e. who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?)

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

Signed..... Date.....

School use:  
Date form received:  
Received by:  
Date acknowledgement sent:  
Acknowledgement sent by:

Complaint referred to: Date:			
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**Knightsfield School: Complaint Review Request Form**

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 your of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name:

Your address:

Telephone numbers  
Daytime: Evening:

Email address:

Dear Sir

I submitted a formal complaint to the school on ..... and am dissatisfied by the procedure that has been followed.

My complaint was submitted to ..... and I received a response from ..... on .....

I have attached copies of my formal complaint and of the response(s) from the school.

I am dissatisfied with the way in the procedure was carried out because:

You may continue on a separate piece of paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of additional pages attached:

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

Signed..... Date.....

School use:  
Date form received:  
Received by:  
Date acknowledgement sent:  
Acknowledgement sent by:

Complaint referred to: Date:			
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## Appendix 1

### Governing Body Meetings

#### a. Complaints panel

If the school receives a formal complaint about one of the limited number of matters that is not dealt with by another statutory process, it may be necessary to convene a governing body panel to consider the matter and formulate a response.

The complaint is likely to relate to matters such as:

- The content or the application of a governing body policy;
- School facilities;
- Services that the school provides.

If a governing body committee already has delegated power with respect to a policy that is being complained of, a panel of members from that committee should be convened. Otherwise the clerk should convene a panel of 3 governors, who have not previously been involved with the complaint.

The complainant should submit the details of her concerns, in writing, to the clerk. The clerk will seek similar written responses from the school, where this is necessary.

A meeting of the panel will take place, usually within 10 school days, to consider the matter. The complainant (who may be accompanied by a friend if they wish) and representative(s) from the school (who may also be accompanied by workplace colleagues or representatives from their professional associations) may be invited to attend this meeting in order to clarify the matter. As the panel meeting is intended to be investigatory, rather than adversarial, the persons giving evidence or making representations to the panel will normally attend separately.

When the panel has collected sufficient information, it will deliberate and then inform the complainant, the head teacher and the governing body of the outcome, in writing.

Consideration of the complaint by the governing body and school, save for any actions that are agreed, will terminate at this point.

If the complainant is not satisfied that the appropriate procedure has been followed, they may request a review of that process by another panel of the governing body.

#### b. Review meeting

Any review of the process followed by the school will be conducted by a panel of 3 members of the governing body. This will usually take place within 10 school days of receipt of a written request.

The review will normally be conducted through a consideration of written submissions, but reasonable requests, from any of the parties, to make oral representations should be considered sympathetically.

The panel will first receive written evidence from the complainant.

The panel will then invite representatives of the school (usually the head teacher or the chair of the governing body panel that has considered the matter), as appropriate, to make a response to the complaint.

The panel may also have access to the records kept of the process followed.



The complainant and the school representative(s) will be informed in writing of the outcome, usually within 5 school days of the panel meeting.

The matter will then be closed as far as the school is concerned.

## Appendix 2

### Model Letters

#### a. Response to spurious complainant

Dear

Following receipt of your communications and careful consideration of the same, I regret that I am unable to deal with this matter under the Governing Body's complaints procedure as:

(It will be appropriate to include SOME of the following statements.)

- You have not identified any specific actions of which you might complain.
- Your concerns are presented as conclusions rather than specific actions of which you complain.
- The concerns that you identify relate to historical actions and any evidence which might have enabled an objective investigation of your complaint is no longer available.
- The substance of your complaint has been addressed under this procedure already.
- The concerns that you raise do not fall within the scope of this procedure.
- You have not identified any potential sources of evidence which might allow the matter to be investigated.

If you wish my decision to be reviewed then you may take advantage of the procedure set out in the school's formal complaint procedure, by writing to the Clerk of the Governing Body.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher  
Or Chair of Governing Body

## **Model Letters**

### **b. Acknowledgement of receipt of formal complaint and invitation to meet**

Dear

I have received your formal complaint, dated ..... I am grateful that you have brought this to my attention.

The school and governing body take any complaint most seriously. Therefore I would like to meet with you as soon as possible, so that I may understand the details of your concerns more clearly. You are welcome to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend, if you would find this helpful. Please telephone the school office in order to arrange an appointment / I can offer you an appointment at ..... on ..... Please let me know if this is convenient.

I hope that we will be able to resolve your concerns through our meeting, but if not I will ensure the appropriate investigation takes place. This should begin within 5 days of our meeting.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher  
Or Chair of Governing Body

**Model Letters**

**c. Acknowledgement of receipt of formal complaint referred by a third party (e.g. LA, Diocese, MP)**

Dear

I have received a copy of the documentation that you sent to ..... setting out a complaint about ..... This has been passed to the school as it has responsibility for these matters.

The school governing body take any complaint most seriously. There I would like to meet with you as soon as possible, so that I may understand the details of your concerns more clearly. You are welcome to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend, if you would find this helpful. Please telephone the school office in order to arrange an appointment / I can offer you an appointment at ..... on ..... Please let me know if this is convenient.

Meanwhile, I would be grateful if you would complete and return the formal complaint form that is enclosed, along with details of the school's complaint procedure.

I hope that we will be able to resolve your concerns through our meeting, but if not I will ensure the appropriate investigation takes place. This should begin within 5 days of our meeting.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher  
Or Chair of Governing Body

## Model Letters

### **d. Acknowledgement of receipt of formal complaint and advising complainant that the matter has been referred**

Dear

I have received your formal complaint, dated..... I am grateful that you have brought this to my attention.

However, the matters that are of concern to you are the responsibility of the governing body / pupil discipline committee / LA / Diocese / service provider, so I have forwarded your documentation to ..... You should be contacted, in the near future, to be advised of how they intend to proceed.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do let me know.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

## Model Letters

### **e. Acknowledgement of receipt of formal complaint and advising complainant that the matter is being dealt with under a confidential school procedure**

Dear

I have received your formal complaint, dated..... I am grateful that you have brought this to my attention.

The school and governing body take any complaint most seriously. Therefore I have initiated an immediate investigation. It is possible that the investigator will wish to meet with you to clarify the evidence that you have provided so far. If so, he /she will write to you to make suitable arrangements.

As your concerns relate to the conduct /capability of a member of staff, the investigation will be carried out under the school's personnel procedures. This means that the detail of the procedure and its' outcome must remain confidential to the school and the member of staff concerned.

OR

As your concerns relate to the behaviour of a pupil, the investigation will be carried out under the school's pupil conduct and disciplinary procedures. This means that the detail of the procedure and its' outcome must remain confidential to the school and the parents of the child concerned.

In due course, I may be able to provide you with some information about the outcomes of the investigation and the processes that have been followed, but in any event I will let you know when the matter has been concluded.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do let me know.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher  
Or Chair of Governing Body

**Model Letters**

**f. Notification of decision regarding formal complaint**

Dear

Following receipt of your complaint and careful consideration of all the available relevant evidence, I / the panel have / has concluded that:

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, so the complaint cannot be upheld. If you are able to provide additional evidence forthwith I / we will reconsider this decision.

OR

- The concern is not substantiated by the evidence in that .....

OR

- The concern was substantiated in part / in full as .....The school will review its' practices / procedures ..... with the intention of avoiding any reoccurrence. Parents will be informed in due course of any policy changes.

OR

- In order to address fully the matters investigated, the school has initiated appropriate internal procedures. Due to the nature of these procedures, their outcome must remain strictly confidential. We are confident, however, that the circumstances that gave rise to your complaint should not recur.

OR

- In order to address fully the matters of concern that you identified, the panel recommended that the governing body should review its' ..... policy, as a matter of urgency. We are confident that this should prevent similar concerns arising in future.

I hope that we may now put this matter behind us and work together for the benefit of your child's progress.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher  
Or Chair of Governing Body

**Model Letters**

**g. Review outcome notification**

Dear

Having carefully considered your representations in the context of the relevant evidence, the Governing Body Complaints Review Panel has concluded that the school followed the relevant procedure appropriately in respect of your complaint.

Summary of reasons .....

Therefore, the matter is now closed as far as the school is concerned.

OR

Having carefully considered your representations in the context of the relevant evidence, the Governing Body Complaints Panel has concluded that the school followed the relevant procedure appropriately in respect of your complaint except .....

Therefore, the following action will be taken: .....

Once this action has been completed the school will consider the matter closed.

OR

Having carefully considered your representations in the context of the relevant evidence, the Governing Body Complaints Panel has concluded that the school followed the relevant procedure appropriately in respect of your complaint except .....

However the panel determined that this procedural failure did not affect the outcome of the consideration of your complaint so, while we regret this error, we will now consider this matter to be closed as far as the school is concerned.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Complaints Review Panel  
c.c. Headteacher  
Chair of Governing Body



## **Raising Concerns and Resolving Complaints**

From time to time parents and others connected with the school, will become aware of matters which cause them concern. To encourage resolution of such situations the Governing Body has adopted a "School Complaints Procedure".

The procedure is devised with the intention that it will:

- Usually be possible to resolve problems by informal means
- Be simple to use and understand
- Be non-adversarial
- Provide confidentiality
- Allow problems to be handled swiftly through the correct procedure
- Address all points at issue
- Inform future practice so that the problem is unlikely to recur.

Full details of the procedure may be obtained from the School Office or from the Clerk to the Governing Body.

### Summary of Process to Resolve Complaints

