Complaints 2026- 2027
St. Michael in the Hamlet Primary School

Intent

All issues will be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible, and resolved informally if appropriate, to minimise impact on all parties.

The complaints process will be maintained as impartial, non-adversarial and confidential.

Any formal complaints will be responded to in writing and to an agreed timeline.

The school will always act in the best interests of the child, and will make amends and enforce actions if complaints are upheld so as to improve provision for all children. Any agreement that the school could improve provision is not an admission of negligence, but an acceptance that improvements could be made.

Actions in response to a complaint will be outlined in a letter to the complainant. However, any responses to a complaint that include sanctions to members of staff cannot be detailed, to remain compliant with employment law.

In the case of spurious complaints or those used in a vexatious manner, the mechanism for responding to these complaints will be different, and will only outline why the complaints are not to be investigated.

Aims

To show parents and the wider community that the school cares about what they think.

To contribute towards School Improvement. Underlying issues may emerge from a complaint so monitoring and reviewing complaints can be a useful tool in evaluating school performance, leading to change and improvement.

To inform good practice for respond to parental concerns, as well as concerns from members of the wider community: complaints are managed in a structured way, preventing concerns developing into battles because they are handled badly.

To prevent bad feeling developing if a problem remains unresolved.

To prevent complaints becoming protracted where a complainant tries to reopen the same issue.

To protect all sides of a dispute by providing a fair hearing. Our school is a Rights Respecting School whereby all respect the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child and the responsibilities that come with those rights.

Procedure

School staff make many decisions every day and we try hard to do our best for all our pupils. Parental views and those of the wider community help us plan for the future, inform us of our strengths and help us find ways to improve.

If parents/carers are unhappy with the way their child is being treated, or with any aspect of school, or if there are concerns about any actions or lack of action, the parent / carer is encouraged to contact school as soon as possible. This can be done by telephone, in person or in writing. Parents / carers can ask for a friend or adviser to speak on their behalf.

If members of the wider community are unhappy with any aspect of the school, they are encouraged to contact the school as soon as possible. This can be done by telephone, in person or in writing. Most concerns or complaints can be sorted out quickly either by putting things right or by explaining school's actions.

The procedure has four stages with time limits to ensure that complaints are dealt with as quickly as possible.

At Stage 1 (Informal Stage), the complaint is made to the child's Class Teacher. If this is not possible, then it should be made to a more senior member of staff. N.B. If a concern involves the Head Teacher, the complaint should be made to the Chair of Governors, using the School's Complaint Form, which can be obtained from Mrs Ellison in the Junior Office or electronically using the form below. The Chair of Governors will respond directly to the complainant by letter.

At the end of Stage 1, if a complaint is not resolved, parents can complain formally to the Head Teacher. This should be done as soon as possible after the event to allow it to be effectively investigated, but within 3 months of the last incident.

At Stage 2 (Formal Stage) the complaint should be made in writing to the Head Teacher, using the School's Complaint Form, (Appendix 1) which can be obtained from Mrs Ellison in the Junior Office. The Head Teacher will fully investigate the complaint and then send the complainant a letter with an explanation or the actions the school will take to put things right. This will be done within 10 school days from receipt of the School's Complaint Form.

Occasionally, the complainant still feels dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint.

At Stage 3 (Formal Stage) they have a right to explain their concern to the Chair of Governors. A parent/ carer / other complainant should contact the Chair of Governors not more than 5 school days after receiving the letter from the Head Teacher. This should be done in writing using the School's Complaint Form, (Appendix 2) obtained from Mrs Ellison in the Junior Office.

The Chair of Governors will investigate the complaint and will respond to the complainant in writing detailing the outcome of their investigation. This will be done within 10 school days from receipt of the Complaint Form.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation by the Chair of Governors, the Complainant can appeal to the Governors' Complaints Panel, Stage 4 (Formal Stage), which is the Final School Based Stage.

Stage 4 (Formal Stage). The complainant should write to the Clerk to the Governing Body, Mr. Terry Brown (School Governor Services, Liverpool Innovation Park (LIP), Edge Lane, Liverpool, L7 9NJ (Terry.Brown@liverpool.gov.uk). This should be done not more than 5 school days after receiving the letter from the Chair of Governors, giving details of the complaint and asking that it is put before the Governors' Complaints Panel. The Chair, or if the Chair has been involved at any previous stage in the process, a nominated Governor, will convene a Governor Complaints Panel. The panel will be drawn from the Governing Body and should consist of 3 Governors (not staff Governors). The Complaints Panel is the final school based stage of the complaints process and is not convened merely to rubber stamp previous decisions.

N.B. Individual complaints would not be heard by the Governing Body at any stage, as this could compromise the impartiality of any panel set up for a disciplinary hearing against a member of staff following a serious complaint.

If the complaint is complex, the Chair of Governors (or in the absence of the Chair, a nominated governor) can appoint an independent investigating officer to gather evidence and conduct preliminary interviews. The investigating officer will then support the Governors' Complaints Panel during their investigation.

The Governors' Complaints Panel will consider any written material, and also give the person making the complaint and the Head Teacher and staff an opportunity to state their case and to question the other side. The Panel will ensure that all present are treated fairly.

The Panel will give a decision as soon as possible after the hearing, and will confirm it in writing, along with the reasons for their decision. The letter will also explain the right of appeal to an external body if the complaint is not accepted. Any parent still not satisfied may contact the Secretary of State for Education. Complainants are advised to write to: - The School Complaints Unit (SCU) Department for Education 2nd Floor Piccadilly Gate Manchester M1 2WD. Copies of all correspondence about concerns and complaints are kept and treated in confidence. Parents have a legal right to have a copy of any records concerning their child.

Flowchart of Procedure for Dealing with Parental Complaints

Stage 1

Complaint addressed by Child's Class Teacher or another appropriate staff member
N.B. If the complaint involves the Head Teacher, the complainant should write to the Chair of Governors, via the School Office.

→ Issue Resolved

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Issue Not Resolved

Stage 2

Appendix 1
Complaint in writing using School's Complaint form (Appendix 1) to Head Teacher (Note: must be registered within three months of last incident). HT will investigate and will respond in writing to the complainant with 10 school days from receipt of the Complaint Form.

→ Complainant satisfied with decision

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Issue Not Resolved

Stage 3

Appendix 2
Complaint in writing using School's Complaint form to Chair of Governors. (Appendix 2) (Not more than 5 school days after receiving letter from the Head Teacher) Chair of Governors will investigate and will respond in writing to the complainant within 10 school days from receipt of the Complaint Form.

→ Complainant satisfied with decision

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Issue Not Resolved

Stage 4

This is the Final School Based Stage The complainant should write to Clerk to the Governing Body, Mr. Terry Brown, School Governor Services, Liverpool Innovation Park (LIP), Edge Lane, Liverpool, L7 9NJ or email Terry.Brown@liverpool.gov.uk (not more than 5 school days after receiving the letter from Chair of Governors.) Governors' Complaints Panel to investigate and respond to complainant within 10 working days from receipt of the Complaint.

→ Parents retain the right to pursue their complaint to the Secretary of the State for Education, if they remain dissatisfied with the findings of the Complaint Panel. The School Complaints Unit (SCU) Department for Education 2nd Floor Piccadilly Gate

Formal Stage
(Stage 2) APPENDIX 1
Please complete and return to Mrs Ellison (complaints co-ordinator) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Name:
Pupils Name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address: Postcode: Daytime Contact Number: Evening Contact Number:
Please give details of the complaint:
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint (who did you speak to and what was their response)?

What actions do you feel you might resolve the problem at this stage?
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details
Signature: Date:
Official use:
Date acknowledgement sent:
Received by:
Complaint referred to:
Date:

Formal Stage
(Stage 3) APPENDIX 2
Please complete and return to Mrs Ellison (complaints co-ordinator) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Name:
Pupils Name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address: Postcode: Daytime Contact Number: Evening Contact Number:
Please give details of the complaint:
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint (who did you speak to and what was their response)?

What actions do you feel you might resolve the problem at this stage?
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so please give details
Signature: Date:
Official use:
Date acknowledgement sent:
Received by:
Complaint referred to:
Date:

Further information

Useful resources and external organisations

- National Governors Association

Other relevant departmental advice and statutory guidance

- Section 29 of the Education Act 2002
- Governors Handbook other departmental resources How to complain about a school - Advice for complainants

Policy reviewed: September 26
Next review date: Autumn 27