

The TLC Nursery Federation
Chalvey Nursery School & Slough Centre Nursery School

Policy for dealing with Complaints about the school.

We recognise that there are no regulations which prescribe governor's involvement in dealing with complaints. In general, the need to maintain a strategic overview, rather than a day to day operational involvement, should remain paramount. Governors need to avoid prior knowledge of any issues which might later be considered by an appeal panel of governors.

Informal Stage

- Parents/ carers should feel free to raise their concerns with the Home Base/Group staff or other appropriate member of staff either in person, by telephone or in writing.
- The school is committed to responding as quickly as possible to any issues raised i.e. staff will listen to parent's concerns & seek to reach a speedy & satisfactory resolution.
- Complaints will, where possible, receive a response to their concern within 3 schools days. If this is not possible to meet this deadline they will be informed of when a response will be made.
- If, after attempting to resolve the issue informally, a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome they will be provided with information about the school's formal complaints procedure (go to stage 1).
- Exceptions - any complaint which involves a claim for compensation or an allegation of misconduct about a particular member of staff should be put in writing to the Headteacher. A complaint about the conduct of the Headteacher should be made in writing to the Chair of Governors. The governing body should consider appointing a designated governor (with LA support if necessary) to investigate the complaint.

Formal Stage 1: Headteacher

- The complaint should be put in writing to the Headteacher
- Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged within 2 school days & will specify how the complaint will be investigated, by whom & the timescale within which a full response will be made.
- The Headteacher will ensure that a full response is made within 10 school days. If the timescale needs to be extended, parents will be informed.
- The Headteacher should nominate a senior member of staff, who has no prior involvement with the complaint, to investigate. This allows the Headteacher to retain a degree of detachment & independence from the complaint.

- During the investigation the Headteacher, or nominated person, may contact the complainant to clarify details of the complaint & speak to other persons as necessary.
- A complainant will be allowed the opportunity to meet with the investigating officer & to be accompanied by a friend or relative to speak on their behalf or to make their case.
- The Headteacher or nominated person investigating the complaint will interview relevant witnesses & take statements from those involved.
- If the complaint involves a pupil, he/she should also be interviewed, normally with a parent/carer present. In some cases this may not be possible & a member of staff with whom the pupil feels comfortable e.g. key person, should also attend the interview.
- The investigating officer should keep written records of all meetings & telephone conversations undertaken as part of the investigation together with any other relevant documentation.
- A full written response will be made to the complainant who may be offered a further meeting to explain how the investigation was carried out & how decisions were reached.
- The complainant will be advised that if they are dissatisfied with the outcome they may refer the matter to the governing body (go to Stage 2). This should be done in writing to the Chair of Governors within 10 school days of receipt of the letter from the Headteacher.

Formal Stage 2: Appeal to Panel of Governors

- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 there will be a further & final right of appeal to a specially convened panel of governors.
- Appeals should be lodged with the Chair of Governors within 10 school days of receipt of Stage 1 decision.
- The panel will hear within 20 working days of receiving the complaint & the complainant & the Headteacher will be informed of the date, time & venue of the hearing.
- The panel will comprise of at least 3 governors who have had no previous knowledge of or involvement with the case. The panel should not include staff governors.
- The panel will appoint its own chair, normally the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Governors. The chair of the panel will ensure that the appeal hearing is minuted.
- The panel will consider the way the complaint has been investigated & handled by the school. The panel will carry out a review of the investigation carried out at Formal Stage 1. It will hear the report of the investigating officer at Formal Stage 1 & any submissions on that report by the complainant. The review should not entail a rehearing of the case.
- It will be open to the governors to uphold the complaint &/or direct a different remedy to that decided upon by the investigating officer at Stage 1.

- The complainant may be accompanied by a friend or relative to speak on their behalf or help present their case.
- The decision of the panel is final & will be communicated in writing to the complainant & the Headteacher within 3 school days.
- If the complainant believes that the matter has not been dealt with fairly they may ask Slough Borough Council to examine the process which has been followed.
- Slough Borough Council does not have the power to set aside the decision of the governors' panel. It may only comment on the fairness of the process.
- A further stage of appeal can be taken to the Secretary of State for Education, but only on the grounds that the governing body or Slough Borough Council is acting or proposing to act unreasonably or illegally.

Slough Borough Council should be informed of any complaint which reaches Stage 2. The panel may request that an officer from the LA attend the appeal hearing to offer procedural advice. Any such advice will take the form of a recommendation to the panel.

