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|  | **SLINGSBY SCHOOL****Complaints Procedure** | **Date for Review****January 2020** |

**Background**

The Education Act 2002 requires Governing Boards of schools to have a procedure to deal with complaints about the school and any facilities or services that the school provides. The procedure must also be publicised.

From 31 July 2012 under section 45 of the Education Act 2011, the duty on Local Authorities to consider complaints about the curriculum, sex education and religious worship in maintained schools was removed.

Also, from 1 August 2012 complaints about maintained schools not resolved by the school that would have been considered by the Local Government Ombudsman or the Local Authority should now be addressed to the Secretary of State for Education.

This document sets out the procedure that Slingsby Community Primary School will follow to investigate any concerns or complaints that are made against it.

There is a difference between a concern and a complaint. A concern may be defined as ‘an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought’. A complaint may be defined as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action’.

**General principles:**

* The procedure is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school or the services 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. Any matter raised more than 30 working days after the event, being complained of, will not be considered.

A summary of the process in place follows the order of events as listed below. At Slingsby School we insist that a concern or complaint is raised within 30 working days of it arising.

Informal Stage

Formal Stage

If the complainant still remains dissatisfied after receiving the Governing Body’s response, the matter can be referred to the Secretary of State.

The Governing Body Complaints Panel reviews the process that has been followed if the complainant is dissatisfied after the Head Teacher’s/CofG investigation

The Head teacher investigates the complaint/ if about the Head teacher, the Chair of Governors investigates

**Raising a concern or a complaint**

**Informal stage**

It is normally appropriate to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned. This may be by letter, telephone or in person by appointment only, 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 or concerns will be resolved at the informal stage.

In the case of more serious complaints or concerns, it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Head Teacher, or to the Chair of the Governing Body if the concern or complaint is about the Head Teacher. (Mrs S Wigby Ashurst chair@slingsby.n-yorks.sch.uk)

If you are uncertain about who to contact, seek advice from the school office or the Clerk to the Governing Body. (01653 628370/admin@slingsby.n-yorks.sch.uk). Please **do not discuss** the nature of the complaint with the Clerk as this will breach the code of confidentiality that Clerk’s must uphold.

**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 it is investigated appropriately. If the complaint is about the Head Teacher, your complaint should be passed via the school office to the Senior Teacher. This should be marked for the attention of the Chair of the Governing Body. The Senior Teacher will pass on your correspondence to the Chair of Governors.

You should include details that 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 you feel you would like the school to take to resolve your concern. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed.

The Head Teacher (or Chair) may invite you to a meeting to clarify your concerns and explore the possibility of an informal resolution. If you accept that invitation, you may be accompanied by a friend/family member, if you wish, to assist you in explaining the nature of your concerns. In the interests of impartiality and fairness, any person accompanying you must understand their role is purely that of support to you, and should come themselves with unbiased opinions or views. The Head Teacher will have a representative of the Governing Body present at the meeting, plus a note taker to record actions only.

It is usual and expected that your complaint will be resolved through a meeting with the Head Teacher (or Chair). You will learn in writing, within 5 days of the school receiving your formal complaint, of how the school intends to proceed. This notification will include an indication of the anticipated timescales.

Any investigation will begin as soon as possible, and when it has been concluded, you will be informed, in writing, of its conclusion. This should be within 20 working days from when the complaint was received. Please bear in mind that complaints sent at weekends or during holidays will not be acknowledged or addressed until the recipient has received and read them. Complaints raised outside of term time or on the last day of a school term will be considered to have been received on the first day of the following term after the holiday period. Slingsby CP School operates its complaints process during working days.

**Review process by the Governing Body**

In the very rare event that you are dissatisfied 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 Chair of the Governing Body via the school office, within 5 school days of receiving notice of the outcome, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure.

Any review of the process followed by the school will be conducted by a panel of two to three members of the Governing Body complaints panel, depending on availability, who will have no prior knowledge of the complaint. 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 will be considered sympathetically.

You will be informed, in writing, of its conclusion. This should be within 20 working days from when the complaint was received.

If you still feel dissatisfied, you will need to refer the matter to the Secretary of State using the details as listed below. Please note however, that The Secretary of State’s powers are delegated to the school complaints unit (SCU). The SCU will only consider cases where the Governing Body has acted unlawfully or unreasonably. It will only overturn a decision in extreme circumstances. If, however, it decides that a school has not followed its published procedures, it has the power to direct that the process is re-visited.

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| Telephone | 0370 000 2288 |
| Online | [www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus) |
| Letter | DFE, School Complaints Unit, Second Floor, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester. M1 2WD |

***We view all complaints in a positive way, as it helps the school improve its practices. However, persistent complainants will be dealt with via the Serial, Persistent and Unreasonable Complaints Policy.***

***Slingsby Community Primary School*: Meeting request form**

I wish to meet *[insert name of the member of staff]* to discuss the following matter:

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| Brief details of topic to be discussed: |
| Dates/times when it would be most convenient for a meeting: |

Your name:

Relationship with school (eg 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. Thank you.**

*School use:*

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| *Date form received:* | *Received by:* |
| *Date response sent:* | *Response sent by:* |