

MARLBOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL



Reviewed Autumn 2014

Complaints Policy

From time to time most of us will wish to complain about a service we are receiving.

This policy sets out how this process may be managed in this school.

Attached to this policy is a Procedure for dealing with Governing Body hearings and a copy of the text that is disseminated to parents.

In order to make this procedure as smooth and easy to manage as possible our policy is:

- to provide an effective means of allowing people to complain at the appropriate level about the quality and nature of the service provided
- enable issues to be settled as close to the source of the complaint as possible
- provide a formal complaints procedure when the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome
- ensure a quality service through monitoring complaints

In order to facilitate the delivery of this service the school will:

- provide information in as many different formats and through as many media as practicable
- offer help in making or following up both written and spoken complaints

- take all complaints seriously
- deal quickly and sensitively with complaints
- inform complainants about the progress of complaints
- encourage complainants to seek support if they wish
- keep accurate records
- provide written reports which summarise the investigation procedure, the findings and any conclusions
- treat all with respect and dignity and observe strict confidentiality

Procedure for dealing with the hearings by Governing Bodies

This procedure can be used for any hearing relating to staff or pupil matters and is equally applicable whether it is a first or second stage hearing. The purpose of this lengthy procedure is to allow transparency, equity and accountability.

The procedure follows the pattern of a court tribunal hearing. This is appropriate as a governing body is a quasi-legal process. If followed this procedure should prevent accusations that the governing body made decisions behind “closed doors” or “favoured” the head teacher. In cases such as these the governing body has to act fairly but also has to be seen to act fairly.

Stage 1: Responding to the request for a hearing by the Governing Body

1. The hearing is fixed within ten days of receiving the request for a hearing.
2. The person requesting the hearing is informed of their right to attend and to bring a friend to act in a supportive capacity.
3. The meeting is held at a time that suits the party (ies) concerned.

Stage 2: Preparing for the hearing

1. The governors involved in the hearing should have had no prior involvement with the complaint.
2. The head (or member of staff representing the school) shall not join the meeting prior to the start of the hearing.
3. The head and person requesting the hearing should be brought into the hearing together. This is intended to re-assure the complainant that they will receive a fair hearing. The Chair should welcome all concerned and try and put them at their ease.

Stage 3: Hearing the Case

1. The person requesting the hearing should outline their case, presenting any written evidence they may have. This may be submitted in advance if preferred. The chair will then ask the Head if there are any points of accuracy that need to be clarified. Governors should then be invited to question the person presenting the complaint.

2. The Head is next invited to outline the school case and present any written evidence that may be available. This can also be submitted in advance. The Chair should then ask the complainant if there are any points of accuracy that need to be clarified or if any facts are disputed. Governors should be invited to question the Head.

Stage 4: The Summation

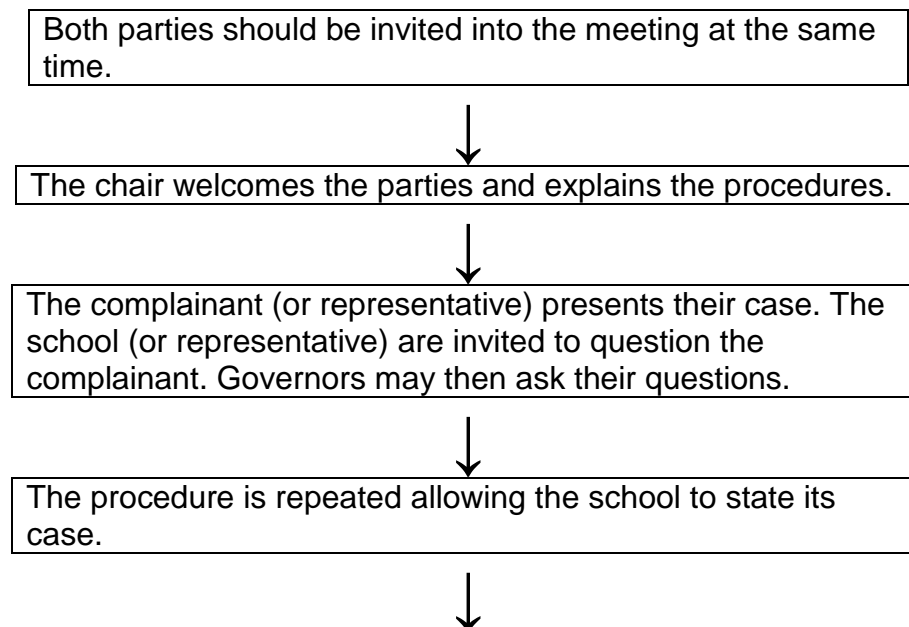
1. The Head should be invited to summarise his position.
2. The complainant may next summarise his/her case. The complainant will be allowed the final word although care must be taken to warn him/her that they must not say anything defamatory, inflammatory or introduce new evidence. If this does occur then the Chair must intervene and either ask for the statement to be withdrawn or suspend the hearing pending a fresh investigation.

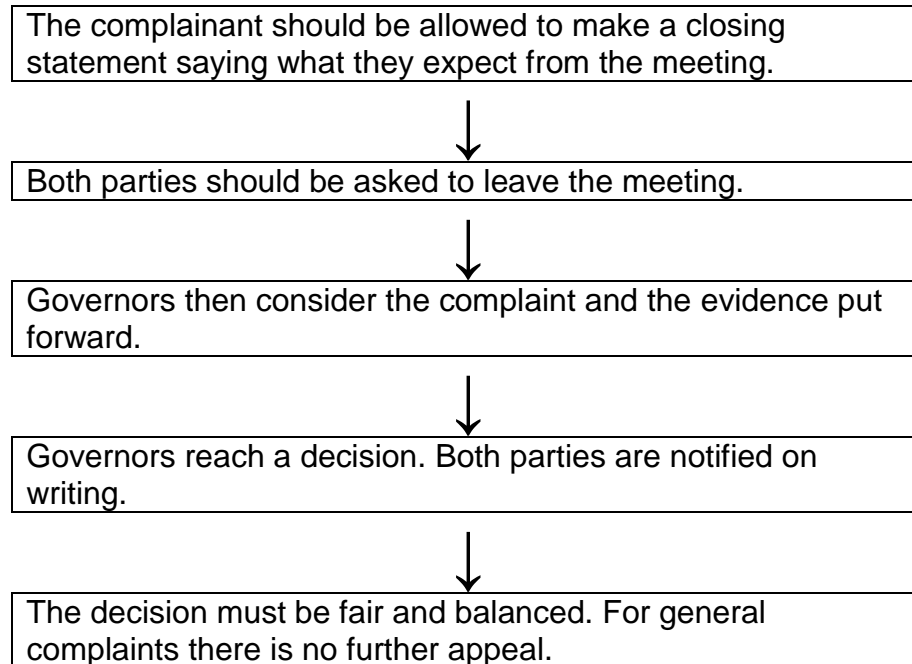
Stage 5: Making the Decision

1. Both parties should be asked to withdraw together and informed of when and how the decision will be relayed to them. Governors can either ask them to wait for a verbal report or dismiss them and inform them in writing within seven days.

NB. It is important to remember that people will be nervous and that sometimes people who feel threatened may act aggressively. Governors should take care to behave in a calm, measured and controlled fashion. However abuse or intimidation must not be permitted. If this should occur and persists despite a warning, then Governors should have no hesitation in abandoning the meeting.

Procedure for an Appeal Hearing





LETTER TO PARENTS

Marlborough Primary School Complaints Procedure

Dear Parent/Carer

It is the aim of our school to provide first class educational opportunities for the pupils of the school and to do so in a friendly and supportive manner.

However from time to time there may be things that cause you concern and you may wish to make a complaint.

How to make a complaint

We hope that we can resolve any complaints about any aspect of the school speedily and amicably with your child's class teacher. Be assured though that if you are not satisfied you will be treated with utmost dignity, respect, fairness and confidentiality at all times.

You can make your complaint in writing, in person, by telephone or by e-mail. Your details will be recorded and acknowledgement will be sent within 24 hours of receiving your complaint.

If your complaint is against the class teacher, then your first contact should be with that person. He or she will try to resolve the issue but if you are unhappy with the outcome or feel that the teacher did not take your complaint sufficiently

seriously you should contact the Deputy Head Teacher. If you find that you are still not satisfied, then the matter should be referred to the Head Teacher.

If after the intervention of the Head Teacher, you are still not satisfied then you must take up the matter with the Chair of Governors for a “Complaints Appeal Hearing”.

If your complaint is about the head teacher, you must go directly to the Chair of Governors or his / her Deputy.

A fair and thorough investigation will be carried out and a response will be sent to you within twelve working days. At this stage of the procedure you are entitled to involve a friend or representative to accompany you and support you or speak on your behalf, if you feel it may help.

Can I take my complaint further?

If the issue is one that cannot be resolved within the school, you may decide to refer the matter to the Department for Lifelong Learning but you must be aware that the Director for Lifelong Learning has limited powers to intervene.

The address for the Director of Lifelong Learning is:

Director for Lifelong Learning
Plymouth City Council
Plymouth PL1 2AA Tel: 01752 307400

Reviewed: Autumn 2014

Signed: Headteacher

Signed: Chair of Governors

Date: