

## **A14/E7: COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES**

**This Policy includes the Early Years Foundation Stage and Breakfast, Tea Time and Holiday Clubs and only applies to children who currently attend Stretton School.**

Stretton School aims to provide every child and family a warm, friendly and caring environment where children can learn and develop. Children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and careful attention to their wishes and needs. The school recognises the importance of working within the framework for Every Child Matters and the outcomes outlined within it:

To be Healthy

To Stay Safe

To Enjoy and Achieve

To Make a Positive Contribution

To Achieve Economic Well-being

We welcome suggestions on how to improve the school at any time and we will endeavour to resolve any concerns or problems as quickly as possible.

Parents of pupils and prospective pupils may request details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

### *Stage 1 - Informal Resolution*

If a parent is unhappy about any aspect of the school's provision, they should firstly address this worry or anxiety with their child's class teacher or Key Person. In many cases, the matter will be resolved immediately. The member of staff concerned will make a written record of the complaint, to include the date on which it was reported. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage and all records are kept confidential. Should the matter not be resolved within 10 working days, or in the event that the class teacher or Key Person and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed to a Stage 2 of this procedure. Stretton School believes that most complaints can be sorted out at an early stage and it is in the best interests of the school and the parents that all complaints are taken seriously and confidentially.

If a parent is not happy with any aspect of school life, the school aims to achieve a resolution as rapidly as possible. In order to achieve this, concerns should be brought to the attention of the school promptly.

### *Stage 2 – Formal Resolution*

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmistress. The Headmistress will acknowledge the written complaint within 5 working days and decide upon the appropriate course of action which may include further investigations to be carried out.

The Headmistress will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Parents will be informed in writing of the decision and reasons for the decision within 10 working days from the date of the acknowledgement letter.

### *Stage 3 – Panel Hearing*

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to the Chair of the School Advisory Board, who has been appointed to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. Letters should be addressed to The Chair of the School Advisory Board, c/o Stretton School at the School address. The letter will be forwarded to the Chair in term time and during the holidays. The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The DfE gives the following guidance on the identity of the independent panel member: “Our general view is that people who have held a position of responsibility and are used to analysing evidence and putting forward balanced arguments would be suitable.” Examples of persons likely to be suitable are serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the Police Force.

Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the School Advisory Board. The Chair of the School Advisory Board, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and within 21 working days. If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 7 working days prior to the hearing. The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.

Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 7 working days of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and recommendations, if any, will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headmistress, the Proprietor, the School Advisory Board and, where relevant, to the person complained of.

The time taken to deal with each stage of the complaints procedure is assuming that the complaint is dealt with during term time working days. Complaints received during holiday periods will be dealt with as quickly as possible, but may take longer.

If any complaint is against either the Headmistress or Deputy Head Teacher, it should be made informally to them. If it is not resolved informally, it should be made in writing to whichever person the complaint is against. If it is then not resolved, a Panel Hearing will be called.

If a parent wishes to make a complaint about the Early Years Provision, they may do so to Ofsted by either submitting a complaint on line via the Ofsted website, by telephone or in writing. Complaints can only concern the fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, not any provision outside these requirements. The school will investigate written complaints relating to their fulfilment of the EYFS requirements and notify complainants of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint. The record of complaints must be made available to Ofsted and ISI on request.

Contact details are as follows:

**Ofsted**

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Helpline: 0300 1231231

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/parents](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/parents)

The Independent Schools Inspectorate

CAP House

9-12 Long Lane

London

EC1 9HA

Tel no: 0207 6000 100

### *Record of Complaints*

A written record will be kept of all formal complaints and whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a Panel Hearing. Actions will be recorded regardless of whether the complaint is upheld.

### *Confidentiality*

Confidentiality is an important issue for pupils, parents and staff and it is essential that any complaint is treated with respect. The School will keep correspondence, statements and records relation to individual complaints confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them. Parents often seek assurances of confidentiality before expressing their concerns if, for example, they feel that their child may suffer in the classroom because they have raised issues about a member of staff. It should be made clear to all concerned that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on their

children. The question of confidentiality should be discussed sensitively and on an individual basis with parents. It may be possible to deal with the problem without naming individuals. However, even if no names are given, the source of the complainant may still be clear. Depending on the nature of the complaint and on the circumstances, it may be impractical to investigate without identifying the member of staff or pupil.

Staff members are rightly concerned that they should know about complaints which might be damaging to their reputation. Such complaints will be known only to them and to those who have been consulted. Staff will be helped to deal with complaints which are made about them, and support will be provided for staff against whom the complaint is made.

Agreed and approved by the School Advisory Board

Date: December 2015 & December 2016

Review Date: December 2017