

# George Eliot Primary School



## **George Eliot** Primary School

### Complaints Policy

Reviewed by: Lee Duffy (Head of School)

Date: January 2018

Review due: January 2019

# GEORGE ELIOT PRIMARY SCHOOL

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

Reviewed January 2018

At George Eliot Primary School we welcome comments and suggestions for improving our work in the school.

If you have concerns please tell us. Most concerns can be resolved quickly and easily. If, however you wish to make a complaint you can use the following procedure. We will endeavour to deal with your concerns promptly and fairly. All complaints will be treated seriously.

If you wish to have the assistance of an interpreter, please let us know.

### 1. What to do first

Most concerns and complaints can be sorted out quickly by speaking to a member of staff (usually the class teacher) who will try to resolve issues informally. The member of staff will make sure that they understand what you feel went wrong, and will ask what you would like the school to do to put things right. They will also explain their actions.

### 2. What to do next

If you are dissatisfied with the member of staff's response you can raise your concerns with the Phase Leader or Senior Leader. Additionally you may raise the concern with the headteacher in writing or by making an appointment to discuss the issue. You may find it helpful to use our complaints form. The headteacher will ask to meet you to discuss the issue. You may take someone else with you if you wish. The headteacher will investigate the complaint and may interview any staff or pupils involved. You will then receive a written response to your complaint which you may wish to discuss with the headteacher.

### 3. If you are still unhappy

If you are still not satisfied, or if the complaint is about the headteacher you should contact the Chair of Governors c/o the school. The chair, or another impartial governor will try to resolve issues by looking at what has happened so far and suggesting a solution. Of course, this does not mean that in every case they will come round to your point of view but it will help both you and the school to understand all sides of the question. It may also help to prevent a similar issue arising again.

### 4. If you are still not satisfied

You can write to the Clerk to Governors at the school address to ask for referral of your complaint to the Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel. You will need to explain why you are not satisfied and what you expect from a further review. Your complaint will then be considered by a group of three governors who have had no prior direct involvement with the issue and so will be able to give it fresh assessment. You will be invited to attend and speak to the panel and can be accompanied by a friend if you wish. You will receive more information about procedures at this stage when the school acknowledges your request for a panel meeting.

### 5. Further Action

We hope that all concerns and complaints can be settled within school but in exceptional cases it may be possible to refer the issue to outside bodies.

- You could contact **the Local Authority** c/o the Director of Education at Westminster City Council. The LA has no power to re-investigate general school complaints or impose solutions, but will try to help resolve disputes:

Director of Education,

Westminster City Hall,  
64 Victoria Street  
London SW1E 6QP.

- You could contact the **Secretary of State or Education and Skills** if you think the school or LA has acted unreasonably or not fulfilled its legal duties:

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

- **The ombudsman** can look at maladministration of Council functions but will not investigate internal school issues:

The Local Government Ombudsman  
21 Queen Anne's Gate  
London SW1H 9BU

## 6. Vexatious complaints

We will do all we can to help to resolve a complaint against the school but sometimes it is simply not possible to meet all of the complainant's wishes. Sometimes it is simply a case of "agreeing to disagree".

If a complainant persists in making representations to the school – to the Headteacher, designated governor, chair of governors or anyone else - this can be extremely time-consuming and can detract from our responsibility to look after the interests of all the children in our care.

For this reason, we are entitled to close correspondence (including personal approaches, as well as letters and telephone calls) on persistent complainants where we feel that we have taken all reasonable action to resolve the complaint, or where we feel that there is harassment.

If a child is no longer a pupil in the school we will not deal with the complaint.

### 6.1 Who is a persistent complainant?

A persistent complainant is a parent/carer or member of the public, who complains about issues, either formally or informally, or frequently raises issues that the complainant considers to be within the remit of the School and whose behaviour is unreasonable. Such behaviour may be characterised by:

- actions which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious and/or
- prolific correspondence or excessive e-mail or telephone contact about a concern or complaint
- an insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unreasonable outcomes
- an insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner

### 6.2 Harassment

The chair of governors will also close correspondence where there is the unreasonable pursuit of such actions that:

- appear to be targeted over a significant period of time on one or more members of school staff
- cause ongoing distress to individual member(s) of school staff
- have a significant adverse effect on the whole/parts of the school community and/or

## 7. Anonymous complaints

Complaints that are made anonymously will be handled at the discretion of the school and may be considered using other procedures, depending on the nature of the complaint. For example, anonymous complaints relating to (or appearing to relate to) a child protection matter or alleged criminal activity may be referred immediately to the relevant authorities.

## **8. General time limits**

Except in exceptional circumstances, or where it raises a child protection or other legal issue, we will not normally consider concerns or complaints more than 2 months after the event being complained of. The decision of the school as to whether or not to proceed will be final.

Complaints received within 3 days before the end of term will be dealt with upon our return to school.

## GEORGE ELIOT PRIMARY SCHOOL - COMPLAINT FORM

George Eliot Primary School welcomes views, comments and suggestions. Anyone who has a concern can arrange to talk to a member of staff. Most concerns can be resolved quickly and easily. If, however, you want to complain more formally you can contact the headteacher and complete the form below. All complaints will be treated seriously.

**Name**

**Name and class of child**

**Details of the incident or issue about which you are complaining**

- Please give as much information as possible, including details of any witnesses
- Please describe the steps which you have taken so far to try to resolve the matter
- Please give details of what you think should be done to resolve the problem

Signed

Date

Please return this form to either the headteacher or the chair of governors via the school office.