

# **Norfolk Community Primary School Complaints Policy**

## **Introduction**

From 1 September 2003 governing bodies of all maintained schools and maintained nursery schools in England are required, under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides. The law also requires the procedure to be publicised.

The guidance does not cover those matters already provided for by existing statutory procedures, which include:

- Admissions to schools
- Exclusions
- Special educational provision
- School reorganisation
- Curriculum – including public examinations, school records on individual pupils etc
- Grievances by staff
- Child abuse

This document sets out the school's procedure for addressing complaints. It should be used only when informal attempts to resolve problems have been unsuccessful. If you have any concerns about the school or the education provided, please discuss the matter with your child's class teacher at the earliest opportunity. The school considers any concerns very seriously and most problems can be resolved at this stage. It may not always be possible to speak to your child's teacher straight away, so please telephone or call at the office or the inclusion room (Room 15) to make an appointment if necessary.

## **Aims and Objectives**

The school will give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them fairly and honestly. We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and aim to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding. Any documents or procedures will be:

- be easily accessible and publicised
- be simple to use and understand
- be impartial
- be non-adversarial
- allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress
- ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary e.g. advice and conciliation officer
- respect people's desire for confidentiality, wherever possible (some information sharing may be necessary to carry out a thorough investigation)
- address all points of issue, providing an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- provide information to the school's senior management team so that services can be improved.

## **Formal Complaints Procedure**

### **Stage 1**

If you feel that a concern has not been addressed through informal discussion with the class teacher and you wish to have the matter formally investigated by an appropriate person from the school, please complete a complaint form (Annex 1). If you would like help completing the form, the school will be happy to provide the assistance of someone unconnected with the complaint.

If the matter is about:

- the day-to-day running of the school
- the interpretation of school policies
- the actions or inactions of staff at the school

It will be investigated by the appropriate member of the senior management team – normally the person who has overall responsibility for the aspect of school that is the subject of the complaint.

If the matter is about:

- school policies as determined by the governing body
- the actions or inactions of the governing body
- the Headteacher

It will be investigated by the Chair of Governors.

The person carrying out the investigation will review the way in which the complaint has been handled by the school and ensure that the issues have been dealt with properly and fairly. He/she will normally write to you with the outcome of this process within 15 working days of receiving the complaint.

If it becomes apparent that the complaint is a disciplinary or capability issue, then the matter will be dealt with by following the appropriate procedure rather than the complaints procedure. You will be notified if this is the case with your complaint and notified of the procedure under which your complaint is being dealt with and appropriate action will be taken following this procedure.

## **Stage 2**

If you are not satisfied with the result from Stage 1, you may choose to refer your complaint to Stage 2 of the procedure. This must be done in writing to the school within 15 working days of the completion of Stage 1.

At this Stage, the complaint will be considered by either the Chair of Governors, or a panel of 3 governors depending on who carried out the investigation in Stage 1 : -

- A. If Stage 1 was investigated by the Headteacher or a senior member of staff nominated by the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will consider the manner in which the complaint was addressed and decide whether it has been properly dealt with. The general principle is that the school should be able to produce documentary evidence to show that the complaint has received fair and proper consideration within the school's procedure. If they have any concerns, they may ask the Headteacher to re-open the investigation. The complainant will be kept informed of any delay.

If the complainant is not satisfied after the Chair of Governors has completed their review, a panel of 3 governors will meet to consider the complaint and make a final decision about it on behalf of the governing body.

- B. When Stage 1 has been investigated by the Chair of Governors Stage 2 will be carried out by a panel of 3 governors, who will meet to consider the complaint and make a final decision about it on behalf of the governing body.

In either A or B, the panel will consist of governors who have no detailed prior knowledge of the complaint, or connection with the complainant. The meeting will normally take place within 15 working days of your request.

You will have the opportunity to submit written evidence on the complaint prior to the meeting of the panel and also to attend, accompanied by a friend/partner if you wish to put your case. The Headteacher will be given the

same opportunities. The panel will write to you with its conclusion within five working days of the meeting.

The decision of the panel is final. If you are still not satisfied, you may wish to put your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills.

## **Monitoring and Review**

The governing body monitors the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Headteacher logs all formal complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. The Headteacher reports these to Governors 3 times per year.

## **Availability**

A copy of this procedure is available to all parents on request.

## Summary of Model Complaints Procedure for Areas of Headteacher's Responsibility

### Informal

Complaint at school level – complainant should try and resolve the problem with the school (See Appendix One).



**Resolved ?**



**Yes.** No further action



**No.** Complainant is given copy of the complaint form and offer of support in completing it



### Formal – Stage 1

Form received by school

Is complaint about areas of Headteacher's responsibility or governing body's responsibility?



Headteacher's responsibility –  
Headteacher deals with matter or designates senior member of staff



**Resolved?**



**Yes.** No further action

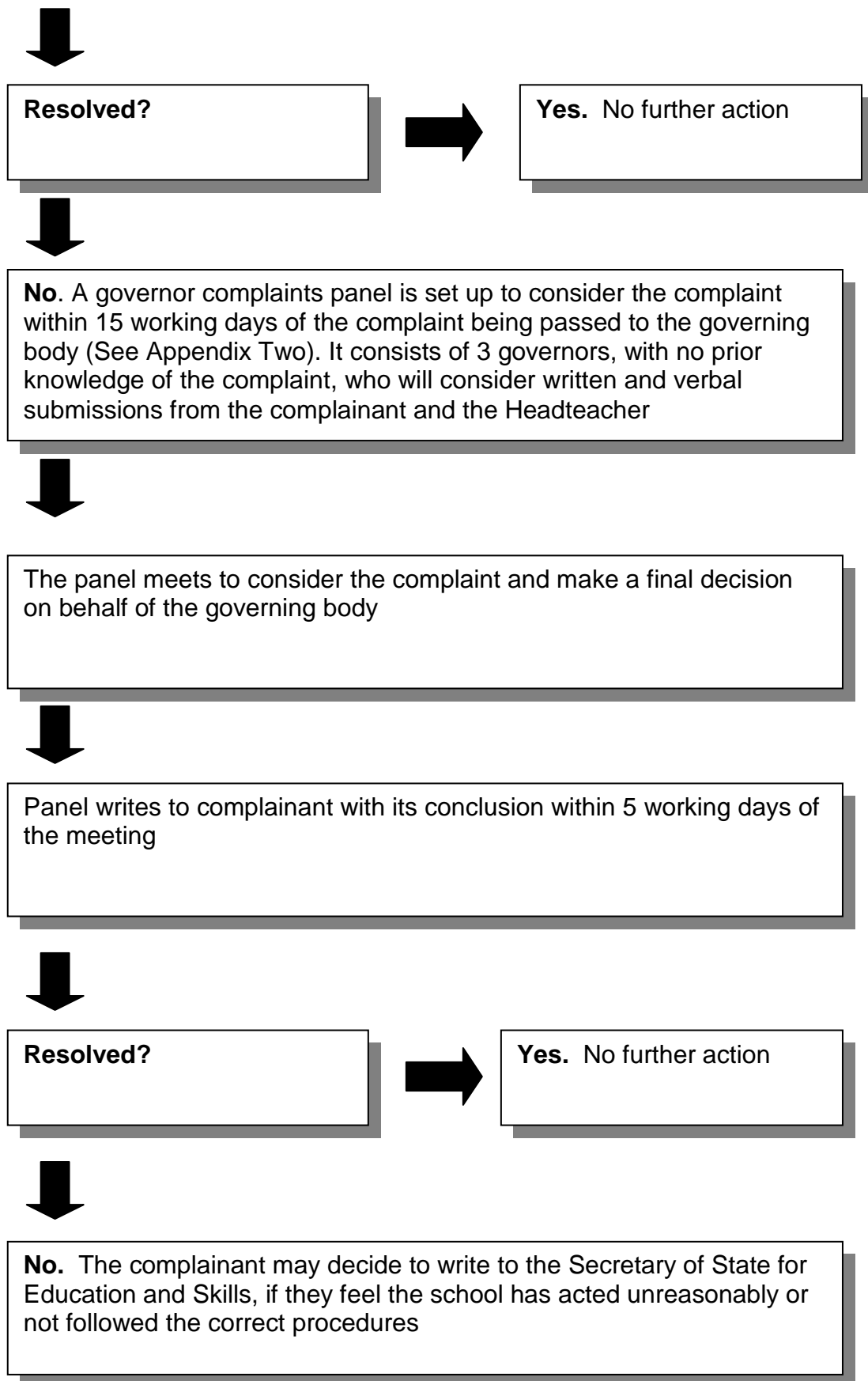


**No.** Complainant wishes to move to Stage 2 of the procedure and notifies the school in writing within 15 working days



### Formal – Stage 2

Complaint form passes to the Chairman or nominated complaints governor to review whether the complaint has been properly dealt with



## Summary of Model Complaints Procedure for Areas of Governing Body Responsibility

### Informal

Complaint at school level – complainant should try and resolve the problem with the school



**Resolved?**



**Yes.** No further action



**No.** Complainant is given copy of the complaint form, a copy of complaints policy and offer of support in completing it (See App One)



### Formal – Stage 1

Form received by school

Is complaint about areas of Headteacher's responsibility or governing body's responsibility?



Governing body's responsibility -  
Chairman deals with matter or designates a governor



**Resolved?**



**Yes.** No further action



**No.** Complainant wishes to move to Stage 2 of the procedure and notifies the school in writing within with 15 working days



### Formal – Stage 2

Complaint form passes to the governing body



A governor complaints panel is set up to consider the complaint within 15 working days of the complaint being passed to the governing body. (See Appendix Two). It consists of 3 governors, with no prior knowledge of the complaint, who will consider written and verbal submissions from the complainant and Chairman of Governors (or



The panel meets to consider the complaint and make a final decision on behalf of the governing body (See Appendix Three and Four)



Panel writes to complainant with its conclusion within 5 working days of the meeting



**Resolved?**



**Yes.** No further action



**No.** The complainant may decide to write to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, if they feel the school has acted unreasonably or not followed the correct procedures



## **Appendix One - complaint form**

**Please complete and return to the school office who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.**

**Your name:**

**Pupil's name:**

**Your relationship to the pupil:**

**Address:**

**Postcode:**

**Day time telephone number:**

**Evening telephone number:**

**Please give details of your complaint.**

**Date of complaint.....**

**What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.**

**(Who did you speak to and what was the response)?**

**What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?**

**Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Official use**

**Date acknowledgement sent:**

**By whom:**

**Complaint referred to:**

**Date:**