

**Emmaville Primary School**

# **Complaints Policy**

**2018-2020**





## Complaints Policy and Procedures

| Date         | Review Date  | Coordinator     | Nominated Governor |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| January 2018 | January 2020 | Avril Armstrong | Bill Purvis        |

We believe that Emmaville Primary School provides an excellent education and that the Headteacher and school personnel work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents and others. However, we are obliged under section 29 of the Education Act 2002 to have in place clear procedures to deal with complaints made against the school or individuals connected with it.

We are aware that under the Education Act 1996 parents have the right to complain directly to the Local Authority about any matter relating to the school's curriculum and any issue relating to the general education that we provide.

We have a duty to publish the complaints procedure in the school handbook and on the school website with hard copies available from the school office.

We believe that we can keep complaints to a minimum by forging strong positive relations with everyone connected with the school and by having in place very good lines of communication.

### Aims

- To deal with any complaint against the school or any individual connected with it by following the correct procedures.
- To deal with all complaints thoroughly and by being open, honest and fair when dealing with the complainant.
- To work with other schools to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

### Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

### Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body has:

- a duty to have in place a complaints procedure;
- delegated powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel and visitors to the school are aware of and comply with this policy;

- responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all equalities legislation;
- nominated a designated Equalities governor to ensure that appropriate action will be taken to deal with all prejudice related incidents or incidents which are a breach of this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly;
- responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to parents;
- responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

## **Role of the Headteacher**

The Headteacher will:

- ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- work closely with the link governor;
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy;
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy

## **General Concerns and Complaints**

### **First Contact: Referral to the class teacher or Headteacher**

The complainant should initially raise any concern directly with the class teacher informally at a mutually agreed time. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response from the class teacher they should:

- ❖ Raise any concerns that they have directly with the headteacher, preferably in writing
- ❖ The headteacher will investigate the complaint via discussions with the parent and those involved.
- ❖ Once all of the relevant facts have been established, the headteacher will produce a written response to the complaint and/ or may wish to speak to the parent/ carer to resolve the matter directly.

- ❖ The response will document the decision reached and the reasons for it. Where appropriate, it will also include what action the school will take/has taken to resolve the complaint.
- ❖ As far as is reasonable this will take place within 10 school days of the initial complaint being received by the headteacher.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the headteacher's response then they have the option to put their complaint in writing within 10 school days of the headteacher's response, addressing their correspondence to the Chair of Governors, either via the school in a sealed envelope or addressed to:

Chair of Governors, Emmaville Primary School

C/O Governor Support Service,

Dryden Centre, Evistones Road

Gateshead, NE9 5UR

It is helpful at this point if the complainant can indicate in writing how they would like the matter to be resolved and what outcome they would like to see achieved.

### **Second Contact: Referral to the Chair of Governors (Bill Purvis)**

- ❖ The chair of governors will acknowledge the complaint in writing within five school days of receipt. The chair will provide an opportunity for parents to meet with them to discuss the complaint.
- ❖ The chair will conduct an investigation into the complaint. If a pupil/student needs to be interviewed as part of the investigation it shall only be done with the parent's consent; and an appropriate adult will be asked to be present during the interview. The chair may request an independent officer to assist them with the investigation if they feel this is appropriate.
- ❖ The Chair will decide, on the basis of the information gathered, whether the complaint is justified in whole or in part and decide on the appropriate action, if any, to take.

- ❖ All decisions will be recorded in writing within 10 school days of the chair completing his investigation, as far as is reasonably practical, and a copy provided to the complainant. The letter to the complainant will offer the right of appeal to the governing body complaints committee (Vice Chair of Governors, Fiona McGee, to chair this committee.)

If the complaint relates to the Chair of Governors or Governing Body the complainant should write directly to the Clerk to the Governing Body (Debbie Todd) at the above address who will consider how to best address the complaint.

### **Third Contact: Referral to the Governing Body Complaints Committee**

- ❖ If the complainant wishes to appeal they must do so in writing to the Vice Chair of Governors (via the school or at the above address for Governor Support Service) within 10 school days.
- ❖ The complainant will be offered the opportunity to attend a meeting where they will have the opportunity to discuss their complaint with the committee (minimum of three governors, not previously involved) and why they are not satisfied with the chair's decision. The chair will also attend this meeting.
- ❖ The complaints committee will consider the issue and write to inform the complainant within 10 school days of their decision.

### **Vexatious Complaints**

There may be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the chair of governors will inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

### **Anonymous Complaints**

The governing body will not consider anonymous complaints. Any anonymous complaints will be retained and the number reported to governors to enable governors to monitor any patterns of complaints.

## **Complaint regarding the Curriculum and General Educational Provision**

All curriculum and general educational provision complaints will be dealt with by the Local Authority in line with their set complaints procedures.

## **Raising Awareness of this Policy**

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- the School Prospectus
- the school website
- the Staff Handbook
- school events
- meetings with school personnel
- communications with home such as weekly newsletters
- reports to parents and Headteacher reports to the Governing Body

## **Training**

We ensure all school personnel have equal chances of training, career development and promotion.

Periodic training will be organised for all school personnel so that they are kept up to date with new information and guide lines concerning equal opportunities.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

## **Monitoring and Review**

- The Headteacher logs all complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. Governors discuss this log annually.
- A continuous process of self-evaluation by the governors will monitor the process of dealing with complaints.
- Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy.

- The governing body will review the policy on a three year cycle (or more often if required) and monitor the number of complaints received, how these were addressed and any action taken.

### Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the coordinator, the Headteacher and the nominated governor.

A statement of the policy's effectiveness and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be presented to the Governing Body for further discussion and endorsement.

|                                 |                 |              |              |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Headteacher:</b>             | Avril Armstrong | <b>Date:</b> | January 2018 |
| <b>Chair of Governing Body:</b> | Bill Purvis     | <b>Date:</b> | January 2020 |

## Emmaville Primary School Process for General Complaints

