


# Peel Common Primary School

## General Complaints Policy

<b>Date of Policy:</b>	December 2024
<b>Date of Next Review:</b>	December 2025
<b>Review Cycle:</b>	Every Year
<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	

## **Rationale**

This policy is intended to set out how the school will deal with general complaints. Parents should feel able to express their views knowing that they will be dealt with fairly.

This policy does not cover those aspects of school life where the law sets specific complaints procedures i.e. admissions, exclusions, complaints about the delivery of the National Curriculum and the provision of collective worship and religious education.

## **Aims**

To provide parents with an accessible and easily understood procedure for complaints. We would encourage parents to express their views at the earliest opportunity and through the appropriate channels. Parents should be assured that making a complaint would not adversely affect their child.

## **Procedure Stage One - informal complaint**

1.1 The vast majority of concerns and complaints can be resolved informally. There are many occasions where concerns are resolved straight through the class teacher, the administration staff, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors depending on the nature of the complaint.

1.2 If the person first contacted cannot deal with the matter immediately it will be recorded with date, name, contact address or telephone number and the nature of the complaint. (See Appendix 1)

1.3 On certain issues, the Headteacher may decide to deal with concerns directly at this stage.

1.4 If the complaint relates to the Headteacher, the parent is advised to contact the Chair of Governors.

1.5 Complaints made informally to governors will be referred to the Headteacher or to the Chair of Governors where appropriate.

1.6 The person dealing with the complaint must make clear to the complainant what action/monitoring of the situation will take place, putting this in writing only if this seems the best way of making things clear.

1.7 Where no satisfactory solution has been found the complainants will be advised of how they can make a formal complaint.

## **Stage Two - Formal complaint to the Headteacher**

2.1 When a formal complaint is made it must be in writing, it will then be acknowledged in writing within 3 working days.

2.2 The Headteacher (or designate) acknowledges the complaint in writing within 3 working days of receiving the written complaint. The acknowledgement will give a brief explanation of the school's complaints procedure and a target day for providing a response to the complaint. This should normally be within 10 working days: if this proves impossible, a letter is sent explaining the reason for the delay and giving a revised target date.

2.3 The Headteacher (or designate) provides an opportunity for the complainant to meet with them to supplement any information provided previously. It is made clear to the complainant that if they wish they may be accompanied to any meeting by a friend, relative representative, or advocate who can speak on their behalf, and asked if they have any special requirements the school needs to be aware of e.g. wheelchair access, signing etc.

2.4 If necessary the Headteacher (or designate) should interview witnesses and take statements from those involved. If the complaint centres on a pupil, the pupil should also be interviewed. Pupils would normally be interviewed with parents/guardian present. In some situations, circumstance may prevent this e.g. where this would seriously delay the investigation of a serious/urgent complaint or where particular circumstances mean that a pupil has specifically said they would prefer that parents or guardians were not involved. In such circumstances another member of staff with whom the pupil feels comfortable should be asked to attend. If a member of staff is complained against, the needs of that person should be borne in mind.

2.5 The Headteacher (or designate) must keep written records of meeting, telephone conversations and any other relevant documentation.

2.6 Once all relevant facts have been established, the Headteacher (or designate) should then produce a written response to the complainant, or may wish to meet the complainant to discuss/resolve the matter directly.

2.7 A written response will include a full explanation of the decisions and the reasons for it. Where appropriate, this includes what action the school will take to resolve the complaint. The complainant is advised that should s/he wish to take the complaint further s/he should notify the Chair of Governors within 5 weeks of receiving the outcome letter.

2.8 If the complaint is against the Headteacher, or if the Headteacher has been very closely involved at stage 1, the Governors Complaints Panel should consider carrying out all the stage 2 procedures.

### **Stage Three - Formal Complaint to Governors**

3.1 Upon receipt of a written request by the complainant for the complaint to proceed to stage 3, the procedures outlined below will be followed.

3.2 The Clerk to the Governing body should write to the complainant to acknowledge receipt of the written request. The acknowledgement should inform the complainant that the complaint is to be heard by three members of the school's Governing Body within 20 working days of receiving the complaint. The letter should also explain that the complainant has the right to submit any further documents relevant to the complaint. These must be received in time for the documents to be received by the full members.

3.3 The Clerk to the Governors should arrange to convene a Governor's Complaints Panel elected from the members of the Governing Body.

3.4 The Clerk to the Governors will ensure that the Panel hears the complaint within 20 working days of receiving the letter in 3.1. All relevant correspondence regarding the complaint will be given to the members of the governor's complaints panel. If the correspondence is extensive, the Chair of the Panel may prepare a thorough summary to send to the panel members.

3.5 The Clerk to the Governors will write and inform the complainant, Headteacher, any relevant witnesses, and members of the Panel at least 5 working days in advance, of the date, time and place of the meeting. The notification to the complainant should also inform him/her of the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend/advocate/interpreter. This letter will also explain how the meeting will be conducted and the complainant's right to submit further written evidence to the Panel.

3.6 If either party wishes to introduce previously undisclosed evidence or witnesses, it is in the interests of natural justice to adjourn the meeting so that the other side has time to consider and respond to the new evidence.

3.7 The meeting will allow for:

- The complainant to explain their complaint and the Headteacher to explain the school's response
- The Headteacher to question the complainant about the complaint and the complainant the Headteacher and/or other members of staff about the school's response.
- Panel members to have the opportunity to question both the complainant and the Headteacher
- Any party to have the right to call witnesses (subject to the approval of the Chair) and all parties having the right to question all witnesses
- Final statements by both the complainant and the Headteacher

3.8 The Chair of the Panel will explain to the complainant and the Headteacher that the panel will now consider its decision, and a written decision will be sent to both parties within 15 working days. The complainant, Headteacher, other members of staff and witnesses will then leave.

3.9 The panel will then consider the complaint and all the evidence presented and (a) reach a unanimous, or at least majority, decision on the complaint and (b) and decide upon the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint and (c) where appropriate, suggest recommended changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not happen again.

3.10 A written statement outlining the decision of the Panel must be sent to the complainant and Headteacher. The letter to the complainant should explain whether a further appeal can be made, and if so, to whom.

Scope: This policy applies to staff, parents and governors.

# **Peel Common Primary School and Nursery**

## **Complaints Procedure**

### **Guidance for Parents**

#### **If you have a concern or complaint**

We would like you to tell us about it. At Peel Common Primary School and Nursery, we welcome suggestions for improving our work. Be assured that no matter what you are wanting to tell us, our support and respect for you and your child in the school will not be affected in any way. Please tell us of your concern as soon as possible. It is difficult for us to investigate properly an incident or problem which has happened some time ago.

#### **Stage one: The first contact**

Most concerns or complaints can be sorted out quickly by speaking to your child's class teacher. You can contact the Headteacher or Chair of governors if you feel that this is more appropriate. It is usually best to discuss the problem face to face. You may need an appointment to do this and can make one by ringing or calling into the school office. You can take a friend or relation to the appointment with you if you would like to.

We hope we can resolve your problem informally. We will make sure that we understand what you feel went wrong and will explain our own actions to you. We will ask what you would like the school to do to put things right and explain what we intend to do. Of course this does not mean that in every case you will be satisfied with our response, but it will help us all to understand the situation. It may also help to prevent a similar problem arising again.

#### **Stage two: Headteacher's investigation**

If you are dissatisfied with a teacher's response, you can make a formal complaint to the Headteacher in writing. (See Appendix 2) The complaints policy is available from the school office should you wish to see it.

The Headteacher will ask to meet you for a discussion of the problem. You can take a friend or someone else with you if you wish. The Headteacher will conduct a full investigation of the complaint and may interview any members of staff or pupils involved. You will receive a written response to your complaint.

#### **Stage three: Governors review**

If your complaint is about an action or decision of the Headteacher, then you should refer it to the Chair of Governors in writing via the school office. The Chair of Governors will arrange a meeting of the Governors' Complaints Panel to investigate your complaint. The complaints panel will conduct a full investigation of the complaint including interviews with those involved. You will receive a written response to your complaint.

#### **Stage four: Review by Local Authority**

Complaints about school problems are almost always settled within schools, but in exceptional cases it may be possible to refer the problem to an outside body such as the Local Authority or the Secretary of State for Education. If the LA are not able to resolve your problem they will explain what you can do next.

## Appendix 1

### Record Keeping Form

Notes from Parent Meeting (Telephone/Face to Face)	
<b>Name of Parent:</b> <b>Name of Child:</b> <b>Class:</b> <b>Teacher:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Notes:</b>	<b>Actions:</b>
	<b>Follow up:</b>
<b>Completed by:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Copies to:</b>	

## Appendix 2

### Formal Complaints Form

Please complete and return to the Headteacher and/or the Chair of Governors who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.	
Your Name	
Pupil's Name	
Your relationship to the pupil	
Address	
Postcode	
Daytime Tel. Number	
Evening Tel. Number	
Please give details of your complaint here (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)	
What actions, if any have you 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?	
Are you attaching any paperwork?	
Signature	
Date	
<b>For Office Use only</b>	
Date acknowledgement sent	By Whom
Complaint referred to:	Date:

