

MODEL SCHOOL COMPLAINTS' POLICY

This policy should be used in conjunction with the DfES Guidance (School Complaint Procedure - 22 May 2003) and alongside the school's Home/School Agreement.

Introduction:

The majority of issues raised by parents, or pupils, are concerns rather than complaints. Sharmans Cross Junior School is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without recourse to formal procedures. However, in those instances where a parent doesn't feel a concern has been addressed, or it is of sufficient gravity, then the school's formal complaints' procedure should be used. The prime aim of Sharmans Cross Junior School's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner.

"Schools might wish to nominate a member of staff to have responsibility for the operation and management of the school complaints procedure. They could be termed the school's 'complaints co-ordinator'. In smaller schools this may often be the Headteacher."

DfES Guidance

The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve parental complaints.

The Sharmans Cross Junior School Policy has four main stages.

In summary they are as follows: -

- Stage 1 - A concern is raised informally with an appropriate member of staff. If the matter is not resolved, then it goes to: -
- Stage 2 - The school receives a formal written complaint. If the matter is not resolved, then the complaint goes to: -
- Stage 3 - The Headteacher hears the details of the complaint and arranges a further investigation. If the matter is still not resolved then the complaint goes to: -
- Stage 4 - The Governing Body's Complaints' Appeal Panel for a formal hearing of the complaint.

Stage 1 - Raising a concern

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will resolve the concern. Apart from the school's normal Parental Consultation Evenings, or other arranged meetings with specific staff, the school requests that parents make their first contact with their child's Class Teacher, Head of

Year (or designated member of staff). On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case there will be an informal but informed response within a day or two. It is anticipated that the vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way.

Stage 2 - Making a complaint

Formal complaints should be put in writing and sent to the School, addressed either to the Headteacher or a designated member of staff. The complaint will be logged, including the date it was received. The School will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within two days of receiving it. In many cases this response will also report on the action the school has taken to resolve the issue. Alternatively, a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. This meeting will normally take place within five working days of the receipt of the formal complaint but in any case within no more than ten working days. If, on the other hand, it is felt that the matter is too serious to be dealt with at this stage, then the matter will be passed directly to the Headteacher * (see Stage 3 below). The aim will be to resolve the matter as speedily as possible.

Stage 3 - Further Investigation

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 2, or it is felt that the matter is too serious to be dealt with at Stage 2, the Headteacher, or another designated member of staff, will undertake a further investigation. Following the investigation, the school will normally give a verbal or written response within five working days but in any case within no more than ten working days.

* **N.B.** In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of the Headteacher, both the Governing Body and the Headteacher will be informed of the complaint and the Governors will arrange for the matter to be further investigated. The school will normally give a response within five working days but in any case within no more than ten working days.

Stage 4 - Appeal

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 3, then the school will advise the complainant of the right to refer the complaint to the Governing Body. Complainants should send their written complaint to the Chair of Governors asking for the matter to be considered by the Governors' Appeal Panel with delegated powers to hear complaints. The hearing will normally take place within ten working days of the receipt of the written request for Stage 4 investigation.

The aim of the Appeal panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the Panel's decision in writing within three working days after the date of the hearing. The letter will also contain details of any further rights of redress available.

N.B: -The Governors' appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints' process.

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council operates a complaints procedure that can be obtained from Steve Rice, Communications Manager - Customer Feedback (telephone 0121 704 6761). In respect of school complaints, the Council will only consider any complaint if the school procedure, as set out in the document, has been fully exhausted.