



Sir John Lillie Primary School

Complaints Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the Sir John Lillie Primary School ("SJL") Complaints Policy. It details the procedure for complaints within SJL. This policy is reviewed on an annual basis or as circumstances require.

The School's Governors and the Headteacher are committed to providing the best educational experience they can for all pupils attending this school. They recognise the value to all concerned of dealing fairly, speedily and effectively with any complaint against their decisions, actions or omissions, which a pupil or a parent or other aggrieved person may have. To this end, they have adopted the underlying principles and procedures set out in this document.

2. FRAMEWORK OF PRINCIPLES

Our complaints procedure:

- Encourages resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible.
- Is easily accessible and publicised.
- Is simple to understand and use.
- Is impartial.
- Is non-adversarial.
- Allows swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress.
- Ensures a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary.
- Respects peoples' desire for confidentiality.
- Addresses all the issues and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary.
- Provides information to the school's senior management team so that services can be improved.

3. DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT

A school complaint can be made by a person or persons with a legitimate interest in the school, but not employed at the school, who experiences dissatisfaction about the standard of teaching of members of the teaching staff, or about conduct, actions or omissions of members of the teaching or non-teaching staff employed at the school.

4. DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINANT

A complainant is someone:

- Who allegedly has been wronged.
- Whose child/children has been wronged (i.e. parent or carers or other person with parental responsibility)
- Representing a person in one of the above groups, for example a Councillor.

Where a complainant is a pupil under the age of 18 years, the complaint may be pursued by, or on behalf of, the child's parent or carer. Where someone other than a pupil or a parent/carers is pursuing a complaint on his or her behalf, this can be done with the express consent of the pupil or parent concerned.

5. TYPES OF COMPLAINTS

Statutory/Established Procedures

Where there are established or statutory or other procedures for dealing with complaints, those will be followed. Areas to which this applies include:

- Admissions to schools.
- Exclusions
- Special education provision
- School re-organisation
- Matters concerning the curriculum under section 19 and 23 of the Education Reform Act 1988
- Complaints by school staff or prospective staff
- Child protection
- Public examinations
- School records on individual pupils

Complaints Not Covered By Established or Statutory Procedures

Stage 1 – Informal Stage

All complaints, however received, should be reported to the Headteacher. The Headteacher may refer the complaint to an appropriate member of staff to resolve the matter. That member of staff will have a duty to inform the Headteacher of any issues not resolved after discussion with the complainant. The complainant can, if they so wish, contact the Education department with their concern at this informal stage. Parents should be encouraged to settle the matter with the Headteacher, class teacher or designated staff member. The majority of straightforward complaints and problems are likely to be resolved at this point.

Stage 2 - Chair of Governors/Education Department

The second stage is where the parent/carer is not satisfied with the informal response or feels it is not appropriate to contact the Headteacher. They should be advised to take up the matter in writing with the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors can, if they wish to do so, ask the Education department to undertake a formal investigation and provide a detailed report. If the Chair of Governors undertakes the investigation at stage 2, they will be exempt from sitting on any complaints committee convened to hear a complaint escalated to stage 3. The outcome at this stage may be:

- No further action with reasons given.
- Action within the Headteacher's own powers.
- Referral to the appropriate committee of the governing body for consideration.

Stage 3 – The Governing Body

The third stage will be where the parent/carer is not satisfied with the outcome of the stage 2 investigation response. They should be advised to put their concerns in writing to the clerk to the Governing Body for consideration by a governors' Complaints Committee. The Committee would meet within 10 working days for the complaint being received by the clerk.

A panel of three governors with delegated powers would convene to hear the complaint at a meeting attended by the complainant, the Headteacher and witnesses. Written evidence is submitted in advance to all parties and verbal evidence given at the hearing. The committee's decision is final and will be notified to all parties as soon as possible after the meeting. The outcome will be one of the following:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or part.
- Uphold the complaint in whole or part.
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.
- Recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not occur.

Timescales

The following limits should apply to all complaints handed under the school's complaints procedure:

- Stage 1:** It is reasonable that parents/carers seeking to resolve matters of concern to them should receive a response within **15 working days** of making initial contact, unless there is good reason not to do so. The response should offer the complainant a full explanation or set out the steps that are proposed to resolve the complaint.
- Stage 2:** Should be responded to within **15 working days** from receipt of complaint escalation.
- Stage 3:** Should be responded to within **20 working days** from receipt of complaint escalation.

Further Stages

Following the governor's complaints committee at stage three, it is open to the complainant to pursue their complaint with the secretary of State for Education or the office of the Ombudsman. The Governing body will give full consideration to any recommendations or directions the Secretary of State may make. The complainant will be advised of this course of action should they remain dissatisfied with a decision made by the governors' committee.

The local Government Ombudsman covering Hammersmith & Fulham is based at:

21 Queen Ann's Gate, London, SW1H 9BU

Telephone: 020 7915 3210

Fax: 020 7233 0396

Website: www.lgo.org.uk

All complaints are dealt with in accordance to our Equal Opportunities policy regardless of gender, race or disability. For more information on equal opportunities, please refer to SJL's "Equal Opportunities" policy.