



Euston Street P.S. & Nursery Unit

Complaints Policy (INTERIM)

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Who is responsible for this document	Principal, SLT, SMT, staff, BoG
Issued to	Staff, BOG, parents
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Euston Street Primary School & Nursery Unit

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Mission

'Achieving Excellence Together'

'To work together for excellence in: our learning; our school; our community; and our future'.

Our purpose therefore is to be an excellent school. We continually strive for excellence in every area of school life. To achieve this aim we must always have the right school **vision and values** and these must be at the heart of all that we do, including our School Development Plan.

Vision

In order to achieve excellence in each aspect of school life, our vision is:

'To create a safe, happy learning community. A community where together, we inspire and equip our pupils so that they fulfil their potential, use their talents and follow their dreams now and always.'

Values

We believe that our school is a place where the child is at the centre.

'We value kindness, integrity, hard work and mutual respect.'

Good attendance at school is essential for a pupil's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life.

Introduction

The purpose of this policy, as with all of our policies, is to support us as we strive for excellence in every area of school life. To achieve this, we must always have the right school **vision and values** and these must be at the heart of all that we do, including our engagement with parents and guardians.

This policy outlines the procedures that are followed when dealing with an issue pertaining to a concern and or a complaint to ensure that they are dealt with and resolved as best possible for all concerned, in a clearly agreed, efficient and sensitive fashion.

This policy has been developed following training by the Education Authority and in consultation with pupils, staff, parents and Governors.

CONTENTS

1. Purpose of the policy
2. Aims of the policy
3. What parents and staff can expect from the procedures
4. School Complaints Procedure – 'At a glance'
5. Scope of Complaints Procedure
6. Making a complaint
7. Unreasonable complaints

Purpose of the policy

Mission Statement:

'To work together for excellence in: our learning; our school; our community; and our future'

The purpose of this policy, as with all policies, is to support us being an excellent school as we continually strive for excellence in every area of school life. To achieve this, we must always have the right school **vision and values** and these must be at the heart of all that we do, including our engagement with parents and guardians.

Our school is a place where the pupil and their family are important. The purpose of the policy is to make it clear how to make a complaint to help create a place where the pupils and members of the school community feel safe, valued and respected. The policy also helps parents and staff build trusting, positive relationships with each other. Staff understand the importance of courtesy and professionalism. Our parents understand the importance of respect and communication with school.

Aims of the policy

- This policy aims to:
- Always support our parents;
- Issue clear guidance on the process of making a complaint;
- Encourage a resolution as quickly as is possible;
- Try and resolve all matters in a reasonable timeframe;
- Take reasonable and appropriate action to try and resolve the issue;
- Keep all parties informed throughout;

- Respect confidentiality;
- Be sensitive about and reflective on all matters.

What parents and staff can expect from the procedures

Responsibilities and Rights of the parent/guardian

Parents have the right to:

- Receive and have access to the policy and procedure;
- Expect professional conduct and courtesy from staff;
- Reasonable and appropriate action being taken to resolve issues;
- Being kept informed;
- Have someone accompany but not represent the parent at any meetings;
- Issues being dealt with in a reasonable timeframe;
- Confidentiality;
- Clear explanations of decisions made.

Parents responsibilities include:

- Being respectful to staff at all times;
- Communicating with staff as soon as possible about any issue;
- Providing accurate information about the issue;
- Following the procedures;

Responsibilities and Rights of staff

Staff have the right to:

- Receive and have access to the policy and procedure;
- Expect respect and courtesy from parents at all times;
- Reasonable and appropriate action being taken to resolve issues;
- Being kept informed;
- the issue being dealt with in a reasonable timeframe;
- Confidentiality;
- Having someone accompany but not represent them at meetings;
- Clear explanations of decisions made.

- Staff responsibilities include:
- See aims

We have systems in place that encourage everyone to speak regarding a concern as soon as possible. We believe the most concerns can be dealt with effectively if discussed at the early stages. Staff and parents always exercise mutual respect when meeting or talking on the telephone to resolve matters of concern. This will also help to avoid any dissatisfaction.

Most issues will be addressed simply through teacher and parent/guardian discussion. Open communication and regular engagement is vital to the effective management of the school. All policy documents are available on the school website, sent home in full or shortened versions and hard copies are available from the school office when requested. All concerns are taken seriously and dealt with consistently and as quickly as is possible.

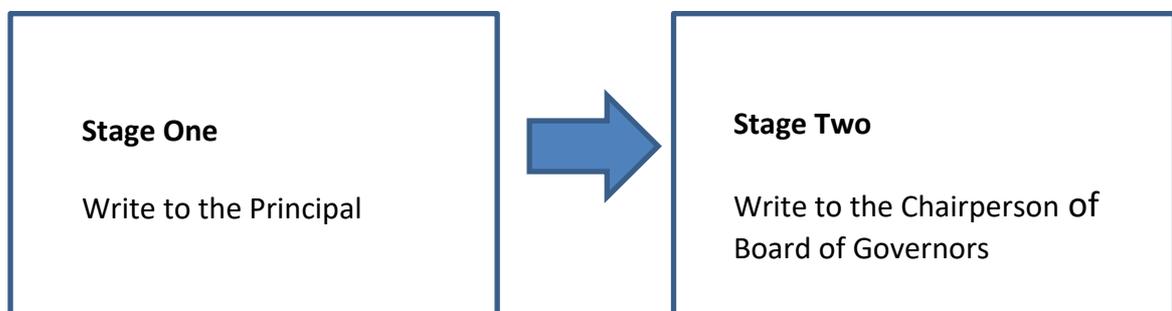
Procedures to resolve matters quickly without formal written complaint to principal.

We welcome open and respectful communication with our staff by:

1. Talking with the class teacher
2. Talking with Mrs Devlin Head of Years 1 – 4 (Foundation & Key Stage 1)
3. Talking with Mrs McKersie Head of Nursery
3. Talking with Mrs Hudson Vice-Principal and Head of Years 5 – 7 (Key Stage 2)
4. Talking with the Mr Armstrong Principal

4. School complaints procedure 'At a glance'

2 stages of the complaints procedure



Time Limit

Please contact the school as soon as possible, unless there are exceptional circumstances, complaints will normally only be considered within 6 months of origin of the complaint to the school.

Stage One

When making a complaint, contact the school Principal who will arrange for the complaint to be investigated.

If the complaint is about the Principal, proceed to Stage Two.

The school requires complaints to be made in writing, where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support you with this process.

Please provide as much information as possible including;

- name and contact details
- what the complaint is about
- what has already been done to try to resolve it and
- what you would like the school to do to resolve the complaint.

The complaint will **normally** be acknowledged within 5 school working days.

A response will **normally** be made within 20 school working days of receipt of the complaint. This response will be issued in writing by the Principal and will indicate with reasons whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

These timeframes will need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods. Responses will not be made in this timeframe for complaints submitted during holiday periods.

Stage Two

If you remain unsatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1, the complaint may be progressed to Stage 2 which is overseen by the Board of Governors.

If the complaint is unresolved after Stage One, write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors (*care of the school*). Where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support the complainant with this process. The Chairperson will convene a committee to review the complaint. Please provide as much detail as possible as indicated above.

The complaint will **normally** be acknowledged within 5 school working days.

A final response will **normally** be made within 20 school working days from date of receipt of the complaint. The response will be issued in writing by the Chairperson of the committee.

These timeframes will need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods. Responses will not be made in this timeframe for complaints submitted during holiday periods.

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO)

If following Stage Two you remain dissatisfied with the procedure of your complaint, you can refer the matter to the Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO). Please note the Ombudsman cannot change the outcome of the response, they can only seek to ensure that procedures were followed correctly. The Ombudsman provides a free, independent and impartial service for handling complaints about schools in Northern Ireland. You have the right to complain to the Ombudsman if you feel that you have been treated unfairly or have received a poor service from a school and the procedures were followed correctly.

A complaint should normally be referred to NIPSO within six months of the final response from the School. The school must advise in its concluding letter that the complaint may be referred to the NIPSO if you remain dissatisfied.

Contact details for NIPSO are:

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

Progressive House

33 Wellington Place

Belfast

BT1 6HN

Freepost: FREEPOST NIPSO

Telephone: 02890 233821

Freephone: 0800 34 34 24

Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk

Web: www.nipso.org.uk

5. Scope of the Complaints Procedure

The Complaints Procedure sets out how any expression of dissatisfaction relating to the school will be managed. By taking concerns raised seriously at the earliest possible stage, it is hoped that issues can be resolved quickly and effectively.

Some examples of complaints dealt with;

- not following school policy
- communication delays/lack of communication
- difficulties in staff/pupil relationships.

Complaints with separate established procedures

Some examples of statutory procedures and appeal mechanisms are listed below.

The list is not exhaustive. The Principal/ Chair of Governors will advise on the appropriate procedure to use when the complaint is raised.

Matters may still be referred to NIPSO, if it is felt that maladministration has occurred.

Exceptions	Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions / Expulsions / Exclusion of children from school 	Contact www.eani.org.uk Director of Operations and Estates Sara Long
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN) 	Contact www.eani.org.uk Director of Children and Young People’s Services Dr Clare Mangan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Development Proposals 	Contact www.eani.org.uk Director of Education John Collings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection / Safeguarding 	Contact www.eani.org.uk Director of Children and Young People’s Services Dr Clare Mangan

Anonymous Complaints

The school will not normally investigate anonymous complaints, unless deemed by the Chairperson of the Board of Governors to be of a serious nature. The decision of whether to deal with such complaints will be at the discretion of the Board of Governors.

Timeframes

Where concerns are raised with the relevant Teacher or Principal, a response will normally be provided during the meeting or within an agreed timeframe.

Stage 1 – Normally acknowledge within 5 school working days, response normally within 20 school working days

Stage 2 – Normally acknowledge within 5 school working days, response normally within 20 school working days

If, for any reason, the review of a complaint takes longer to complete, you will be informed of revised time limits and kept updated on progress.

These timeframes will need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods. Responses will not be made in this timeframe for complaints submitted during holiday periods.

6. Making a complaint

The school requires complaints to be made in writing. Where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support the complainant with this process.

7. Unreasonable Complaints

The school is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain.

There will be occasions when, despite all stages of the complaints procedure having been completed and the complaint having been reviewed by the Ombudsman, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If they try to re-open the same issue, the Chair of Governors will inform them that the procedure has been completed and that the matter is now closed.

If the complainant repeatedly continues to contact the school with the same issue it may choose not to respond.

If the complainant makes unfounded or spurious allegations, then the school may choose not to respond.

A copy of this policy is on the school website and a hard copy is also available upon request from the office with 24 hours' notice.

Covid-19

Under restrictions in school it may not be possible to meet face-to-face with parents. The school will endeavor to make sure that the parents are contacted by telephone and or email in the first instance.