

CANTRELL PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL



Complaints Policy

March 2022

Cantrell Primary School Complaints Policy

How we will deal with your concerns and complaints:

Each day this school makes many decisions and strives to do the best for all the children. Your comments, either positive or negative, will help our strategic planning. We require that all communication with the school be respectful and courteous. Any contravention to this will result in the removal of communication channels with school staff.

You may want to talk to us about a concern, though not actually make a complaint. If you are dissatisfied about the way your child is being treated, or any actions or lack of action by us, please feel free to contact us.

We will ensure that:-

- Your complaint will be dealt with honestly, politely and in confidence;
- Your complaint will be investigated thoroughly and fairly;
- If your complaint is urgent we will prioritise;
- We will provide you with an update at each stage;
- We will accept responsibility and apologise if we have made a mistake;
- You will be informed what we are going to do to put things right;
- You will receive a clear written reply to formal complaints within **28 school days**.

How to raise a concern in the first instance – the informal stage

Should you have any concerns, please raise them, you can do this:- □

by telephone;

- in person;
- in writing, by letter or email: admin@cantrell.nottingham.sch.uk

Concerns - Stage 1

We endeavour to resolve concerns quickly and informally. Please discuss this with the class teacher or another appropriate member of staff, such as the Special Educational Needs Coordinator if it is about Special Needs.

Concerns – Stage 2 (optional)

If the member of staff you speak to in the first instance is unable to resolve the matter, please make an appointment with the relevant person, for example the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Head of Year or Business Manager.

How to make a complaint - the formal process:-

Complaints - Stage 1

Request a meeting with the Headteacher who will investigate your complaint and aim to inform you of the outcome **within 10 school days**.

Please note that governors should not be made aware of a potential complaint as they may be required to sit on a Panel in the event of a formal hearing (Stage 2) and should be impartial.

If your complaint is about the Headteacher, please **write directly to the Chair of Governors**.

Complaints - Stage 2

Should you be dissatisfied with the outcome following Stage 1 and wish to escalate your complaint further, please write a letter to the Chair of Governors and include the following:- □ A clear explanation of your complaint;

- Identify the process you have followed to date and state who you have spoken to, including dates/times and why you are dissatisfied;
- A clear explanation of what you recognise to be a successful outcome as a result of your complaint.

The Chair of Governors will arrange for:-

1. The complaint to be investigated and the complainant will be provided with a copy of the investigation outcome. Any evidence the complainant wishes to have considered must be provided to the investigating officer. The investigating officer may be any member of the governing body with no conflict of interest or through an external provider. Should the complainant then wish, the report will be received by;
2. A panel of governors. The panel should consist of three governors with no prior knowledge of the complaint. The decision of the panel is the final stage in school.

Following the investigation the Chair of the Panel will write to inform you of the outcome of your complaint and any agreed actions to be taken.

The Governing Body will aim to deal with your complaint **within 28 school days**.

**** Please note complaint panels/appeal panels may include governors from other schools within Nottingham Schools Trust.***

Further Recourse

Most complaints are resolved by this process. Should your complaint not be resolved, you should refer your complaint to:-

The Secretary of State
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT
Website: www.education.gov.uk
Telephone: 0370 000 2288

Unreasonable Complainants

We are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. Although we do not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

This school defines unreasonable complainants as '*those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints*'.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:-

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:- □ maliciously;

- aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowing it to be false;
- using falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the number of communications with a school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and request this be addressed. For complainants who excessively contact the school causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include a formal ban prohibiting an individual from the school.