

EASTWAY PRIMARY SCHOOL



Complaints Policy & Procedure 2022

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Eastway Primary School Complaints Procedure

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires schools to establish a formal complaints procedure. The procedure must make provision for complaints from different categories of person i.e. governors, parents, guardians, pupils and the general public.

General Principles:

- This procedure is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school, or the services that it provides.
- An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- To enable a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, any matter raised more than 3 months after the event, being complained of, will not be considered.

If you have a concern or complaint

We would like you to tell us about it. We welcome suggestions for improving our work in the school. Be assured that no matter what you want 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.

What to do first

Raising a concern or complaint

1) Informal Stage

Most concerns can be sorted out quickly by speaking with your child's class teacher. All staff will make every effort to resolve your problem informally. They will make sure that they understand what you feel went wrong, and they will explain their own actions to you. They will ask what you would like the school to do to put things right. Of course, this does not mean that in every case they will come round to your point of view but it will help both you and the school to understand both sides of the question. It may also help to prevent a similar problem arising again. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information and it is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved by this informal stage. In the case of serious concerns it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Head teacher (or to the Chair of the Governing Body, if the complaint is about the Head teacher). If you are uncertain about who to contact, please seek advice from the school office or the Clerk to the Governing Body.

What to do next

2) Formal Stage

If you are dissatisfied with the teacher's response (or with the Head teacher's initial reaction if she has already been involved) you can make a complaint to the Head teacher or Chair of Governors. This should be made in writing. A complaint form is provided to assist you. You should include details which might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and

copies of relevant documents. It is very important that you include a clear statement of the actions that you would like the school to take to resolve your concern. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed. Help with this is available from the section on independent advice below. If your complaint is about an action of the Head teacher personally, then you should refer it to the Chair of Governors now.

Please pass the completed form, in a sealed envelope to the school office. The envelope should be addressed to the Head teacher, or to the Clerk to the Governing Body, as appropriate. The Head teacher (or Chair of Governors) may invite you to a meeting to clarify your concerns and to explore the possibility of an informal resolution. If you accept that invitation, you may be accompanied by a friend, if you wish; to assist you in explaining the nature of your concerns. It is possible that your complaint will be resolved through a meeting with the Head teacher (or Chair of Governors). If not, arrangements will be made for the matter to be fully investigated, using the appropriate procedure. In any case you should learn in writing, usually within 5 days of the school receiving your formal complaint, of how the school intends to proceed. This notification should include an indication of the anticipated timescale. Any investigation will begin as soon as possible and when it has been concluded, you will be informed in writing of its conclusion. The Head teacher (or Chair of Governors) 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.

If you are still unhappy

The problem will normally be solved by this stage. However, if you are still not satisfied you may wish to contact the Chair of the Governing Body to ask for referral of your complaint to the Complaints Committee of the Governing Body. It will then be heard by a group of three Governors who have no previous knowledge of the problem and so will be able to give it a fresh assessment. You will be invited to attend and speak to the committee at a meeting which the Head teacher will also attend.

Further action

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 Ombudsman (in rare circumstances but particularly in relations to admissions) or the Secretary of State for Education and Skills.

Independent Advice

Parents and carers can receive independent advice from both the National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations and the Advisory Centre for Education, 1c Aberdeen Studios, 22 Highbury Grove, London N5 2DQ. Both organisations may offer advice but will not support individuals in pursuit of a complaint. You may also seek support from a local Parent Support Group.

Review Process

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, you may request that the Governing Body reviews the process followed by the school, in handling the complaint. Any such request must be made in writing to the clerk to the Governing Body, within 10 school days of receiving notice of the

outcome, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure. The procedure described below will be followed.

1. Any review of the process followed by the school will be conducted by a panel of 3 members of the Governing Body.
2. This will usually take place within 10 school days of receipt of your request.
3. The review will normally be conducted through a consideration of written submissions, but reasonable requests to make oral representations should be considered sympathetically.
4. The panel will first receive written evidence from the complainant.
5. The panel will then invite representatives of the school (usually the Head teacher or the Chair of the Governing Body panel that has considered the matter), as appropriate, to make a response to the complaint.
6. The panel may also have access to the records kept of the process followed.
7. The complainant and the school representative(s) will be informed in writing of the outcome, usually within 5 school days of the panel meeting.
8. The matter will then be closed as far as the school is concerned.

Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints

Eastway Primary School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, 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.

Eastway Primary School defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- 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
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- 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 and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the 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 Head teacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an '*unreasonable*' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the Head teacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Eastway Primary 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, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from Eastway Primary School.



Eastway Primary School Complaints Procedure

Please complete and return to the Head teacher who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Daytime telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give details of your complaint:

What action, if any, have you already 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 at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official Use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date