



*“Children are our future: let us all join hands and walk there with them”*

## **LOW HILL NURSERY SCHOOL COMPLAINTS POLICY**

### **Rationale**

We strive to provide a good education for all our children. The Headteacher and staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents or guardians. The following policy sets out the procedures that the school follows in such cases.

If any parents are unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or have any concerns relating to the school, we encourage them to talk to the child’s key worker immediately.

### **Aims**

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints, and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding. In all cases we put the interests of the child above all else. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

### **Definition:**

At Low Hill Nursery School , we undertake to provide a friendly and safe environment in which all children will be helped to achieve their potential, both academically and socially. We recognise that sometimes things can go wrong and parents, carers and members of the public may need to make a complaint or raise concerns they have with the school.

This policy tells you what to do if this happens.

### **INFORMAL STAGE**

Most complaints/issues can be resolved informally and quickly by discussion with the member of staff concerned or the Headteacher. Alternatively parents/carers can write to the member of staff or the Headteacher outlining the issue clearly.

Any complaint/issue that is put in writing should be written clearly outlining all the issues and what is hoped that the preferred outcome should be. All complaints will be acknowledged in writing within 3-5 working days.

Parent/carers should make an appointment to discuss their concerns with the member of staff who knows about the issue or incident. If the complaint relates to a child ideally the member of staff concerned should be directly involved with the child for example, teacher and/or practitioner.

The member of staff will usually write notes during the meeting. Parents/carers can ask for a copy of these notes.

## **FORMAL STAGE**

There are three formal stages:

### **Stage 1**

If a parent/carer is still dissatisfied after the informal stage, they, or the member of staff can refer the matter to the Headteacher. This can be done in writing, as this will often make the situation clear to all involved parties.

The Headteacher will offer a meeting with the parent/carer or other complainant at a mutually convenient time. At the meeting, and through discussion, the Headteacher will clarify what the issues are. The hopes of what the parent/carer is trying to achieve will also be discussed. Together all parties will agree an acceptable outcome. This should be to the satisfaction of all parties involved. These should be written down and agreed by all parties so there is no misunderstanding. Again parents/carers should be given a copy of this.

If the issue is complex the Headteacher may need to speak to other staff and interested parties to investigate the concerns. This should happen within 10 school days. If this timescale cannot be met the Headteacher should inform the parent/carer that this will take longer, explain the reasons for this and give a timescale for when the investigation will be completed.

### **Stage 2**

After meeting with the Headteacher if the complaint is still not resolved to the parent/carer's satisfaction, the complaint can be referred to the Chair of Governors. This can either be in writing to the Chair at the school/centre address, or alternatively the school/centre can ask the Chair of Governors to contact the parent/carer direct. The Headteacher can also refer the complaint to the Chair of Governors.

If the Headteacher is the subject of the complaint, the complaint should go straight to the Chair of Governors and miss out stage 1. The Chair of Governors may ask for the complaint to be put in writing (if this has not already happened).

The Chair of Governors will offer to meet with the parent/carer or other complainant, at a mutually convenient time.

The Chair of Governors has 15 school days to investigate the complaint. If it cannot be resolved within this time, the Chair will inform the complainant and explain why it is taking longer. Reasons for this may be that the complaint is complex and needs more time or someone involved is absent through sickness or holidays. The Chair of Governors should, however, give a realistic timescale for when the complaint should be resolved. The Chair should inform the complainant of when it is expected that the investigation should be completed.

### **Stage 3**

If the complaint is still not resolved to the parent/carer's satisfaction, or Chair of Governors feels that it is necessary, s/he can set up a complaints committee to consider the complaint. The Chair of Governors will decide if this is appropriate.

If the Chair of Governors can resolve the complaint there is no need to hold a Complaints Committee meeting. As far as possible it is recommended that Complaints Committees are a last resort.

The Chair of Governors can appoint an investigating officer to gather evidence and conduct preliminary interviews on the Chair's behalf. The investigating officer will provide a detailed report of his/her investigation of the complaint. Parents/carers should be given a copy of this report. It is

important that the investigating officer is seen as impartial. So whilst the investigating officer is another governor, s/he cannot be a member of the associated complaints committee.

The complaints committee is made up of three members of the school/centre's governing body. Sometimes Governors need to be brought in from other school/centres' governing bodies because the school Governors are 'tainted' because they have prior knowledge of the complaint.

The complaints committee should meet at a time convenient to all parties. The complainant, the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors and any member of staff the complaint is about will be invited to the meeting. Any person invited can bring a friend or supporter if they wish. The complaints committee will consider any written material, and also give the person making the complaint and the Headteacher, Chair of Governors and staff an opportunity to state their case and to question others present. The committee will ensure that all present are treated fairly. The meeting will be minuted by the clerk to Governors and everyone present will be given a copy of the minutes.

The committee will give its decision, in writing, within five school days after the meeting, along with the reasons for their decision.

We deal with all complaints in accordance with procedures laid down by the LEA. If the school itself cannot resolve a complaint, those concerned can refer the matter to the LEA.

All parents have the right, as a last resort, to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education, if they still feel that their complaint has not been properly addressed.

If a complaint is not from a parent/carer of a pupil of the school (an example being a member of the public) these should be made directly to the Headteacher, preferably in writing.

### **Monitoring and review**

The Governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Headteacher logs all complaints received by the school, and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis.

Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

This policy is reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.

All complaints will be recorded formally by the school/centre in a central log and held for 3 years.

It should be noted that school/centres do not need to consider complaints made more than one year after the incident/situation. If a complaint is made about an issue that is over a year old the school/centre will write to the complainant explaining why this is the case.

I confirm that I have read and agree to the above.

Signed:

Print Name:

Date:

Date Approved by Governors:

Chair of Governors Signature