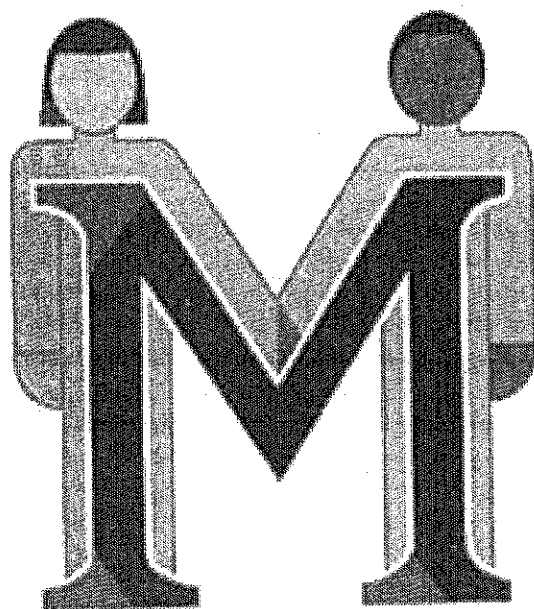


MOULSHAM INFANT SCHOOL



**COMPLIMENTS,
CONCERNS &
COMPLAINTS POLICY
& PROCEDURES**

Introduction

At Moulsham Infants we recognise that children are more likely to be happy at school and to achieve their best, if their parents/carers take an active interest in their education and welfare during the time the child is at school. We value the involvement of parents/carers in the life of the school and offer many opportunities for them to take part in their child's education whilst at Moulsham Infant School.

Compliments

These are always welcome and very encouraging to teachers and staff. The school encourages feedback opinions from pupils and parents and this can happen in various forms from an email, a letter or our pupil and parent surveys. In practice this dialogue is continuous, sometimes directly and also indirectly, for example through the Parents' Association. It may not always be possible to act immediately but pupils and the school always benefit so please don't hold back.

Concerns

It is natural that parents may, occasionally, be concerned about an aspect of their child's education or welfare at school. This could include issues concerning the school's approach to aspects of the curriculum, homework, behavioural problems or any other issue.

The school welcomes enquiries from parents about any matter. Teachers and staff will explain the school practices, policies, and how they affect the pupils. The vast majority of concerns will be handled by the class teacher or by the subject leader if this is more helpful. If in doubt, keep asking until you are completely satisfied as all staff are eager to help.

The usual format is to speak to the child's class teacher in the first instance, or to contact the school office to arrange an appointment to discuss your concern with whoever you wish. At all times the staff will help to resolve a problem. If occasionally parents feel they must state their concern formally, this too is not a problem. The school has defined

procedures for handling complaints so don't be embarrassed if you feel an issue warrants more attention.

Complaints

The procedure is again to speak to the child's class teacher in the first instance, or contact the school office to arrange an appointment to discuss your complaint with whoever you wish. Any complaints that are anonymous against a member of staff will not be looked at. The school's policy is to follow the Local Authority (Essex County Council) and Department for Education guidelines when handling concerns and complaints. Just ask if you would like advice or a copy. It would be unusual to deviate from these procedures but the school always retains discretion in these matters. The nationally accepted procedure is divided into 3 stages.

How does the Staged Approach Work?

The staged approach is designed to ensure that every effort is made to deal with complaints informally at academy level in partnership with the complainant. The formal stages should only be triggered in exceptional circumstances.

-Stage 1 is the informal stage. In the case of a complaint by a parent, the class teacher will receive the first approach and the majority of issues should be resolved at this stage. In the case of a complaint by a member of the public, the academy office should be the first point of contact. A decision will then be made as to which member of staff is best placed to deal with the complaint.

-Stages 2 and 3 are formal stages involving the Headteacher and governing body.

Principles and Procedures

Our principle aim is to deal with complaints:

- Openly
- Fairly
- Promptly
- Without prejudice

- Be simple to understand and follow
- Be focused on outcomes
- Have established time limits for action
- Keep people informed at all stages
- Where necessary, respect people's desire for confidentiality
- Be carefully monitored and evaluated
- Provide information to the academy's senior leadership team so that the academy's procedures can be improved.

An Overview

Stage One

Discuss concerns informally with the relevant teacher.

Stage Two

Discuss concerns formally with the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher.

Stage Three

Make a formal complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors to investigate the complaint.

Role of the Academy's Complaints Co-ordinator

The academy's Complaints Co-ordinator is Sue Hamnett. She is responsible for the operation and management of the academy complaints procedure and will be able to provide further information on request.

Guidance on Each Stage of the Procedure

There are three stages to this procedure:

Stage 1 is informal.

Stages 2 and 3 are formal.

Any person expressing continued dissatisfaction should be advised of the next stage in the procedure.

Stage One: Discuss concerns informally with the relevant teacher.

- Complainants are advised to speak to the teacher concerned so everyone has a clear picture of the situation from all points of view. Most problems can be resolved at this informal stage.
- If the complainant indicates that he/she would have difficulty in discussing a complaint with a particular member of staff, the complaint may be referred to another member of staff. This member of staff may not necessarily be more senior.
- The member of staff who is dealing with the complaint should ensure that the complainant is reassured that the matter will be investigated and is clear what action has been agreed. All staff should be aware of the need for confidentiality.
- A brief record of any telephone calls, meetings and agreed actions should always be kept although it is not always necessary to provide the complainant with a written record at this stage. The Complaints Co-ordinator/Senior Teacher should monitor these records.
- If either the complainant or staff member feels the matter needs to be taken further, the Headteacher or a senior member of staff should be contacted.

Stage Two: Discuss concerns formally with the Headteacher or a senior member of staff.

- More serious concerns which remain unresolved at the end of Stage 1 should be referred to the Headteacher or a senior member of staff. They will then investigate the matter further. Any meetings that are held with the complainant in relation to the complaint should be arranged within 10 school days. However, more complex complaints may require an extension to this time limit.
- A log of all contacts relating to the complaint should be kept.
- The Headteacher or Senior Teacher should communicate the outcome to the complainant either verbally or in writing. Any agreed actions should be put in writing.
- If, as a result of the investigation, issues arise relating to staff discipline or capability, details should remain confidential to the Headteacher. However, the complainant should be informed that the academy has taken appropriate follow-up action.

Stage Three: Make a formal complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors.

- Governors should only proceed with this formal stage of the Complaint Procedure if they have received a complaint in writing addressed to the Chair of Governors and all previous stages have been exhausted.
- Acknowledgement of the written complaint should normally be sent by the clerk to the governing body within 5 school days.
- It is essential that this process is fair and objective. To avoid a conflict of interest, it is vital that the full governing body does not hear the complaint at this stage. Any governor who has been involved with the complaint at an earlier stage would be unable to give objective consideration to the issue.
- It is for the governing body to agree upon the procedures for the Complaint Panel meeting. However, the governing body will usually convene a small panel of 3 or 5 governors who have not previously been involved in the complaint. The panel will usually meet within 15 school days of receiving the complaint.
- The Chair of the panel should notify the Headteacher and the complainant as to whether they will be invited to attend the panel meeting. Alternatively, the panel may decide to consider written material only. Both parties must be treated equally. For example, if the Headteacher is invited to the meeting, so must the complainant.
- If the complaint relates to a staff disciplinary or capability matter about which the Headteacher has already taken action, the governors should focus on how the original complaint was managed to avoid prejudicing any ongoing disciplinary or capability procedures.
- The Headteacher and complainant should be informed of the Panel's decision in writing within 10 school days.
- This is the final stage in the academy's Complaints Procedure.

The Governing Body's decision is final. However, where the complainant has been through the Academy's internal complaints procedures (with or without recourse to a complaints review panel) and is still unhappy with the outcome or decision of the Governing Body he/she may wish to contact The Education Funding Agency via the schools complaints form at <https://form.education.gov.uk/submitform.php> enclosing full details of their complaint, including correspondence between themselves and the Academy and the Governing Body.

If the complainant believes that the governing body or the Education Funding Agency acted "unreasonably", they can complain to the Secretary of State in the Department for Education under Section 496 of the Education Act 1996. Please note that "unreasonable" is used in a strict sense and means acting in a way that no reasonable school or authority could act in the circumstances. The complainant should write to The Secretary of State, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT.

Since 2007 Ofsted also has powers to investigate certain complaints by parents about their child's school. Complainants should write to Ofsted, Royal Exchange Buildings, St Ann's Square, Manchester.

Policy written:	January 2017
Approved by Staff:	February 2017
Approved by Governors:	February 2017
Reviewed:	February 2020
Date for Review:	February 2023