



Ghyll Royd School and Pre-School
A foundation for life

Complaints Policy

Policy Leader: Mr David Martin

Policy review completed by the Headteacher on

05/01/2017

Name of Headteacher

David Martin

Policy review completed by the Governor responsible on

Spring 2017

Name of Governor responsible

Finance and Facilities Committee

Date to be reviewed

Spring 2018



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Ghyll Royd School and the Pre-School (Early Years Foundation Stage) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Introduction

Ghyll Royd School and Pre-School has long prided itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents of existing pupils at the School or Pre-School and/or prospective pupils do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure. Ghyll Royd will make the complaints procedure available to all parents of pupils and of prospective pupils on the school's website and in the school office during the school day. Members of Staff with a complaint or grievance should refer to the staff handbook.

What constitutes a Complaint?

A Concern is an issue raised as a source of dissatisfaction, whether informally in conversation, on the telephone, by email or by letter to any member of school or Pre-School staff. A Complaint is a formal, specific, focused, written expression of dissatisfaction by a parent with a real or perceived problem. It is addressed to the Head. It will follow attempts to resolve the grievance at the levels below that of Head, as outlined in Stage 1 below.

A Complaint may be made if a parent thinks that the school or Pre-School has, for example;

- done something wrong
- failed to do something it should have done
- acted unfairly or impolitely.

A Complaint may be made about the school or Pre-School as a whole, about a specific department within the school or about an individual member of staff. It is not helpful to differentiate between 'formal' and 'informal' complaints. Informal complaints can easily escalate into a formal complaint if not addressed quickly and with sensitivity.

Serious issues may be raised in an informal and friendly way and apparently trivial issues in an adversarial manner.

Complaints against staff need particularly sensitive handling. Matters relating to the Head will be referred to the Chair of Governors

Dealing with Concerns

All Concerns and Complaints need to be handled seriously, sensitively and as quickly as possible, and although holiday time and other factors can exceptionally affect the timescales, all will normally be acknowledged immediately and fully dealt with within 14 days. A gentle expression of concern or a simple query may grow into a painful matter if the complainant feels that he/she has been brushed aside.

Equally, issues with the potential to become acutely difficult may dwindle and fade if they are handled well at the initial stage. An unresolved problem may become a festering dispute or a confrontation. Procedures need to be flexible to handle both formal complaints and the informal raising of issues and concerns.

Recording of Concerns & Complaints

Last year's complaints were recorded in the newsletter dated 14th September 2016 as follows: "The three complaints last year related to the school. Two complaints were resolved at the informal resolution stage 1. One complaint was heard at a Complaints Panel Hearing. Over the school year 2015-2016 we have addressed a number of concerns and made amendments to our school menu.

All Concerns & Complaints must be recorded and the central log will contain the following Information:

- date when the issue was raised
- name of parent
- name of pupil
- brief statement of issue
- staff member handling the issue
- brief statement of outcome

Notes on all school and Pre-School concerns and complaints should be maintained and kept together in the Head Teacher's Office, they should be regularly reviewed by the Head. The files should contain simple but clear notes of all conversations with parents about any source of dissatisfaction. This applies to friendly chats and to telephone conversations, as misunderstandings easily arise. There should be a clear statement of what is concerning the complainants. The notes can be agreed with parents. The written records should indicate whether the complaints are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. All notes and correspondence, statements and records are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under 162A of the 2002 Act requests access to them. Ghyll Royd will make available to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils and provide details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's Key Worker, Form Teacher or the appropriate Subject Teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means, to the parents' satisfaction. If the individual teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for a consultation to be arranged with the relevant Headteacher.
- Complaints made directly to a Headteacher will usually be referred to the relevant member of staff unless it is deemed inappropriate.

- The member of staff will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within seven days or in the event that there is a failure to reach a satisfactory resolution then the parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- If the complaint is against the Headteacher, then the complaint should be put in writing to the Chair of Governors who will handle the procedure if there is no informal resolution.
- In most cases, the Chair of Governors will meet with or if possible, speak to the parents concerned, normally within seven days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Chair of Governors to carry out further investigations.
- The Chair of Governors will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Headteacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents and the Headteacher will be informed of the decision in writing.
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Clerk to the Governors who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of three persons; two being Governors, not more than one of whom will be a Parent Governor and neither will be directly involved with any matter detailed in the complaint; and a person independent of the management and running of the school.
- Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Board of Governors. The Clerk to the Governors, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within fourteen days.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than three days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
- After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within fourteen days of the Hearing.
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headteacher, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of.

Contacts for Complainants

Parents with children in the Early Years setting are able to contact **Ofsted** if they wish to make a complaint:

Telephone: 0300 123 4666

Address: Ofsted, 5th, 6th and 7th Floors, Picadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

Parents can also contact the **Department for Education**:

Telephone: 0370 000 2288

online <https://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus>

In the academic year 2014-15 there were 3 complaints/concerns made and resolved.