

## **RUTHERFORD SCHOOL** **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

In the past academic year there has been 1 formal complaint at Rutherford School.

At Rutherford School, we recognise that sometimes things can go wrong and parents, carers, staff and members of the public may need to make a complaint or raise concerns they have with the school in connection with its staff, working methods, services or facilities.

We can assure everyone that there will be no recriminations as the result of any complaint made. All comments will be dealt with in a positive and confidential manner.

### **1. INFORMAL STAGE**

Most complaints/issues of concern can be resolved informally and quickly by discussion with the member of staff concerned and/or the SMT/Head of School/Line Manager. Alternatively the complainant can write to the member of staff or the Head of School/Line Manager outlining the issue clearly.

Any complaint/issue that is put in writing should clearly outline all the issues and what it is expected the preferred outcome should be. All complaints will be acknowledged in writing within 3 working days.

In the case of any complaint/issue requiring discussion the complainant should make an appointment with the member of staff who knows about the issue or incident.

A member of staff will attend to write notes during the meeting. The complainant can ask for a copy of these notes.

### **2. FORMAL STAGE**

There are three formal stages:

#### **a) Stage 1**

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



The SMT/Head of School will offer a meeting with the complainant, at a mutually convenient time. At the meeting, and through discussion, the SMT/Head of School will clarify what the issues are. The expectations of the the complainant will also be discussed. Together all parties will agree an acceptable outcome. This should be to the mutual satisfaction of all parties involved. This agreement will be formalised and agreed by all parties so there is no misunderstanding. The complainant will be given a copy of this.

If the issue is complex the SMT/Head of School may need to speak to other staff and or other parties involved to investigate the concerns, or, a Manager can be appointed to conduct an investigation into a complaint and prepare a report for the Head of School. This should happen within 10 school days. If this timescale cannot be met the SMT/Head of School will inform the complainant that this will take longer, explain the reasons for this and give a timescale for when the investigation will be completed.

**b) Stage 2**

After meeting with the SMT/Head of School if the complaint remains unresolved to the complainant's satisfaction, it can be referred to the Director of Services. If the complaint is against the Head of School the written complaint can be addressed to:

Mr Keith Minear (Director of Services)  
The Garwood Foundation  
1a Melville Avenue  
  
South Croydon  
  
CR2 7HZ

The Director of Services will offer to meet with the complainant, at a mutually convenient time.

The Director of Services will have 15 school days to investigate the complaint. If it cannot be resolved within this time, the complainant will be informed with an explanation. A realistic timescale for when the complaint should be resolved will be given. The complainant will be notified of when it is expected that the investigation should be completed.

**c) Stage 3**

If the complaint is still not resolved to the parent/carer's satisfaction, or the Director of Services feels that it is necessary, he can set up a Complaint Committee to consider the complaint. This committee will include an independent member. The Governing Body will decide if this is appropriate.

If the Governing Body can resolve the complaint there is no need to hold a Complaint Committee meeting. As far as possible it is recommended that the Complaint Committee is seen as a last resort.

The Governing Body can appoint an investigating officer to gather evidence and conduct preliminary interviews on their behalf. The investigating officer will provide a detailed report of his/her investigation of the complaint. The complainant should be given a copy of this report. It is important that the investigating officer is seen as impartial. Whilst the investigating officer is another governor, s/he cannot be a member of the associated Complaint Committee.

The Complaint Committee should meet at a time convenient to all parties. The complainant, the Head of School, the Chair of Governors, independent member, 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 Complaint Committee will consider any written material, and also give the person making the complaint and the Head of School, Governing Body 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 of the 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, together with the reasons for their decision.

If after this school based process the complaint is still not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, they should write to the Secretary of State for Education, if it is a general complaint.

**It should be noted that schools 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 will write to the complainant explaining why this is the case.

**Finn Emmerson, Senior Manager**

**Jean Simpson, Safeguarding Governor**

**April 2016 to be reviewed in 3 years; April 2019**

# Complaints Process

## Flowchart



