

TATWORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL
POLICY ON PARENTAL COMPLAINTS

Reviewed and Ratified by the Full Governing Body on 17 March 2016
Date of Next Review: March 2018

Introduction

Good communication is an important part of the vital partnership between home and school. Parents, staff and Directors of the Board of Governors working together leads to a shared understanding and a good atmosphere in school. There should be a strong sense of everyone working together in the best interests of the child.

General principles

The aims and procedures of the school are set out in the Parent Handbook and Website. In addition most newsletters remind parents to come in and inform the school should any problems or concerns arise.

The school always aims to deal with any complaint as quickly and as smoothly as possible. If an immediate response is not possible, clear time limits will be given to the parent, eg: 'we will respond by the end of the week'.

Parents are encouraged to make their child's class teacher or the Principal their 'first port of call' over any issue. They will look into the issue and, if necessary, report back at a later date detailing what actions have been followed. In these situations everyone benefits if concerns are sorted out quickly. Sometimes misunderstandings occur; again these are best dealt with promptly as delay usually makes matters worse. All parental concerns will be dealt with in the shortest possible time.

Staff who are implicated in a complaint must feel that they are being treated in a fair way and that they have an opportunity to present their case. There is a crucial balance to be maintained between supporting staff and investigating a complaint thoroughly and impartially. Any staff implicated in any complaint would be well advised to seek guidance and support from their trade union or professional association.

When investigating any formal written complaint, all correspondence and conversations will be treated with discretion. Parents must feel that their complaint will not penalise their child. All parties involved must recognise that some information may need to be shared with others in order for the issues to be fully investigated. The Principal and Directors of the Board will disregard any anonymous complaints.

The Procedure

- 1 Parents/Carers are encouraged to raise any concerns with the class teacher or the Principal.
- 2 The issue should be raised with the appropriate member of staff who will follow the agreed procedure (eg: Policy on Behaviour & Discipline, Safeguarding Policy etc.). A record will be made of any action taken by the Academy and the response made to the complainant.
- 3 If the complainant remains dissatisfied they are then advised to take the complaint to the Principal who will investigate the matter and respond in writing (within a mutually agreed timescale).
- 4 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response from the Principal they should write to the Clerk to the Governors stating that they wish to make a formal complaint.
- 5 The Clerk will convene a Panel of no less than 3 Governors. All members of this Panel will have had no prior knowledge of the specific complaint. The date of the Panel meeting should be within 15 working days of receiving the complaint proforma. The complainant may bring a friend/relative to the Panel to support them if they so wish.

- 6 After meeting with the complainant, the Panel will review and/or investigate the Principal's handling of/response to the complaint and decide if it was appropriate and fair. They may wish to meet with any staff or witnesses who can provide further information.
- 7 The Panel will deliberate and then write back to the complainant within 15 working days explaining their decision. Within that document, there will be advice as to how to proceed if the complainant remains dissatisfied. This would normally include writing to the Department for Education and/or the 'Education Funding Agency', EFA.

In conclusion

These procedures exist so that parental complaints can be heard. Parents have rights as do pupils, staff and governors. The overriding aim is for any complaint to be properly, promptly and fairly dealt with.

These procedures rarely have to be followed and only have to be when normal discussions seem to have failed to resolve an issue. All dialogue between home and school should be as positive as possible and be in the best interests of the child.

Contacts

The Principal may be contacted via his e-mail address: SClarke5@educ.somerset.gov.uk

The Clerk to the Governors
c/o Tatworth Primary School
School Lane
Tatworth
Chard
Somerset
TA20 2RX

Tel: 01460 220565