

**Federation of Hirst Wood Nursery &
Saltaire Primary Schools**



Complaints Policy

Approved date: April 2019

Date of review: April 2020

Aim

Hirst Wood Nursery School & Children's Centre and Saltaire Primary School aim to provide high quality education for all children at all times. The schools welcome every child and family and aim to provide friendly, nurturing environments within which all children can learn and develop.

Both Schools believe that children, parents, carers and visitors can expect to be treated with dignity and courtesy, with prompt consideration being given to their needs and wishes. School staff aims to work in genuine partnership with parents, carers and the wider community and welcome suggestions on how to improve their services at any time

This document sets out our policy to responding to any parent, carer or visitor who is uneasy or uncomfortable with any aspects of the school.

This policy should be used in conjunction with the DfE School Complaints Toolkit (2014) and the Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures (2016).

Introduction

Since the 1st September 2003 governing bodies of all maintained Schools and Nursery Schools in England have been required, under Section 29 of the Education Act (2002), summarised in Annex A, to have in place a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their School and to any community facility or service that the School provides. This does not limit complainants to parents or carers of children registered at the school, a complainant could be a member of the wider community or the representative of an ex-pupil. The law also requires the procedure to be publicised.

The majority of issues raised are concerns rather than complaints; however Hirst Wood Nursery School & Children's Centre and Saltaire Primary School are committed to taking these seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without the need for escalation to formal procedures. Conversely, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may choose, or be requested to follow the School's Formal Complaints procedure.

Our prime aim is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. . Any parent, carer or visitor who is uneasy or uncomfortable about any aspect of a School should bring it to the attention of the Headteacher. If this does not have a satisfactory outcome within a reasonable period of time, or if the problem reoccurs, then we would request that you put your concerns or complaint in writing to request a meeting with relevant the Headteacher, or alternatively the Chair of Governors. Should a meeting be requested, either party may be accompanied by a colleague (or friend / partner in the case of the complainant) following which an agreed written record of the discussions will be made and signed by both parties. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. This document outlines the stages that can be used to resolve complaints.

Stages of complaint

Hirst Wood Nursery School & Children's Centre and Saltaire Primary School Policy has four main stages. In summary they are as follows: -

- Stage 1 (informal): concern heard by an appropriate staff member
- Stage 2 (formal): complaint heard by Headteacher
- Stage 3 (formal): complaint heard by Chair of Governors
- Stage 4 (formal): complaint heard by Governing Body Complaints Appeal Panel

Stage 1 – concern heard by staff member

Concerns can be raised with the School at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will hopefully resolve the concern. The school requests that parents/carers initially make contact with their child's class teacher. On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an informal but informed response within 2 school days. The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 1, please write, email or telephone the school within 10 school working days. The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

Stage 2 – complaint heard by Headteacher

The Headteacher may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken. The Headteacher will arrange for the complaint to be acknowledged within 5 school working days of receiving it and a meeting may be requested to discuss the issue in further detail. Following an investigation the Headteacher will endeavour to produce a written response within 10 school working days of sending the acknowledgement. However if a complaint is more complex to review this could be extended to a maximum of 20 school working days. The school will provide you details of the new deadline and an accompanying explanation for any delay. If you are not satisfied with the result at stage 2 please write, email or telephone the school within 10 school working days of receipt of the response. The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

Stage 3 – complaint heard by Chair of Governors

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 2 or the complaint is about the Headteacher, then you will need to write to the Chair of Governors care of either Hirst Wood Nursery School or Saltaire Primary School. The Chair of Governors will arrange for the complaint to be acknowledged within 5 school working days of receiving it and a meeting may be requested to discuss the matter in further detail. Following an investigation, the Chair of Governors will endeavour to provide a written response within 10 school working days of sending out the acknowledgement. However if a complaint is more complex to review this can be extended to 20 school working days. The school will provide you details of the new deadline and an accompanying explanation for any delay. If you are dissatisfied with the result at stage 3, you will need to let the school know within 10 school working days of getting the response. The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

Stage 4 – complaint heard by Governing Bodies Complaints Appeal Panel

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 3, then you will need to write to the Clerk of Governors care of the relevant School giving details of the complaint and asking that it is put before a Complaints Appeal Panel. Should the Chair of Governors have been previously involved at any stage in the process a nominated impartial Governor will convene the Complaints Appeal Panel. The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 school working days of the Clerk of Governors receiving it. The hearing will normally take place within 20 school working days of sending the acknowledgment. The aim of the Complaints Appeal panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the Complaints Appeal Panel's decision in writing within 5 school working days after the date of the hearing. The letter will also contain what you need to do if you wish to take the matter further. The Governors Complaints Appeal hearing is the last School-based stage of the complaints process.

If the matter is still unresolved to your satisfaction then you should bring the matter to the attention of the Local Authority Officers responsible for the relevant School at the following address:

City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Department of Children's Services
Margaret McMillan Tower
Princes Way
Bradford
BD1 1NN

Telephone 01274 432111

Alternatively if you have followed the School's Complaint process and the matter is still unresolved to your satisfaction, you may complain to the Department for Education (DfE) at the following address:

Complaints
Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester, M1 2WD

Telephone 0370 000 2288

Please note that if the nature of any complaint relates to another pupil then the outcome of any investigation will remain confidential. We will not share any confidential information relating to pupils with people who do not have parental responsibility for that pupil.

The Schools regard the lawful and correct treatment of personal information as very important to the successful and efficient performance of its functions and to maintaining confidence between those with whom we deal and ourselves. We ensure that our schools treat personal information lawfully in compliance with GDPR.

Policy for managing serial and unreasonable complaints

Hirst Wood Nursery School & Children's Centre and Saltaire Primary School are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening. The Schools define unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders the consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contacts with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the School that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached. Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an '*unreasonable*' marking. If the behaviour continues, the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Hirst Wood Nursery School & Children's Centre or Saltaire Primary School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months. In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from Hirst Wood Nursery School & Children's Centre and Saltaire Primary School.