

# Mount Pleasant Primary School

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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Approved by the Governing Body: March 2016

Review Date: March 2017

The following procedure is based on best practice and is in line with:

- School Complaints Toolkit 2014 - Department of Education - August 2014
- General Complaints Procedure for Maintained Schools – revised Nov 2015 (Dudley LA)

The procedure offers advice to:

- Parents and Carers (adults with parental responsibility) of pupils registered at Mount Pleasant Primary School.
- Members of the school community, including those who use services and/or facilities provided by Mount Pleasant Primary School.
- Members of the wider community.

Complaints can be heard by the following:

Headteacher - Mrs J Hartill

Chair of the Governing Body – Mr S Jarvis

Members of the Senior Leadership Team – Mrs Capener (Deputy Headteacher, Manager of Early Years)), Mrs C Woodhall (SENDCO), Mrs C Grinsell (Head of English and KS1), Mrs S Derbyshire (Head of Maths and KS2).

The person investigating the complaint will;

- Establish what has happened so far and who has been involved.
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved.
- Meet with the complainant or contact them.
- Interview those involved in the matter, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish.
- Conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning.
- Keep notes of any discussion and meeting throughout the complaint.
- Keep the complainant updated and well informed of the progress of the complaint.

**It should be noted that the school does not allow the recording of any meetings during this process by any party who attends.**

### What is a complaint?

A complaint is a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction.

Initial enquiries, questions or concerns, are not complaints; for example a question relating to why a particular decision has been taken is not a complaint.

There are some issues that the school will not be able to deal with as they are controlled by the Local Authority eg admissions, but parents will be informed of the most appropriate person to make the complaint to.

Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated under the procedures stated here, unless it is a matter of child protections or bullying, in which case, the school may decide to investigate the allegations further.

Please note that when dealing with a complaint about a named child, the school will only communicate and share information with those persons who have legal responsibility for the child.

### Before making a complaint, it is advised that the parents/carers should:

- Make themselves aware of any school policies or procedures relating to the concern or complaint about to be raised. (The school should be following its own policies and procedures, or those imposed on it by the Local Authority or Central Government, for example, where the curriculum or national assessments procedures are concerned.)
- Make themselves aware of **all** the facts; remember that children will have a child's perception of what happened and are unable to reason or see a 'bigger' picture.
- Be prepared to approach the school in a **calm manner** as opposed to an aggressive manner; no complaint justifies aggression on the part of any adult towards another adult.
- Complaints must be raised as soon as possible after an incident arises and within six weeks of the incident taking place.

### Complaints Procedure

Complaints that are not about a child, should be made first to the Headteacher (Stage 2).

Complaints about the Headteacher should be made first to the Chair of the Governing Body (Stage 3)

Every concern or complaint is dealt with on an individual basis. A complaint form (obtained from the school office) must be completed and returned to school as soon as possible. In most cases the procedure to follow is;

1. Stage 1 – Complaint heard by a staff member. The first concern or complaint should be heard by your child's class teacher. Many complaints will be resolved satisfactorily simply by providing clear information or through an informal meeting to discuss the matter. **A parent should not approach a governor.** (Governors should not act on behalf of a parent or divert the complainant from the procedures outlined here, in case they are required to sit on a hearing

panel at a later stage.) If, after speaking to the class teacher, the parent/carer is not satisfied, then they would be advised to go to stage 2.

2. Stage 2 – Complaint heard by the Headteacher. To communicate your complaint to the Headteacher, you must complete a Stage 2 complaint form (obtained from the school office). It is important that you outline some of the details in order that the Headteacher can speak to anyone involved in order to begin to get a wider understanding of what has happened, prior to the appointment. The Headteacher will endeavour to speak with the complainant as soon as she is available, if this is not possible and the complaint needs to be heard urgently, then the appointment can be made with a Senior Member of staff. If you are not satisfied by the outcome of the meeting with the Headteacher, then you will be advised to move to the next stage.
3. Stage 3 – Complaint heard by the Chair of the Governing Body. To raise your complaint with the Chair of the Governing Body, you should:
  - Complete a Stage 3 complaint form (obtained via the school office). This should be completed within ten school days of the outcome of Stage 2. Give clear details of your complaint in on the form and attach any relevant paperwork.

The Chair of Governors should;

- Acknowledge your letter within 10 school days from receiving it.

- Tell you what arrangements have been made for your complaint to be considered.

- Provide an opportunity for you to discuss your letter in more detail with themselves.

- Investigate your complaint thoroughly within 20 working days.

- Write to you within 10 school days following the end of the investigation, and detailing the outcome of that investigation including any actions taken.

- Offer escalation to Stage 4 if you are still not satisfied.

4. Stage 4 – Complaint Heard by the Governors’ Complaints Appeals Panel. To move to this stage, you must write complete the Stage 4 complaints form (obtained via the school office), giving details of the complaint and asking that the complaint be heard by the panel. This stage is the final stage of the complaint being heard in school. Individual complaints will not be heard by the Governing Body at any stage. The panel may consist of between 3 and 5 Governors. The Chair of the Governing Body will not be involved at this stage.

This panel should;

- Through a nominated Chair, convene a panel of Governors who have not previously been involved.

- Issue a letter inviting you to a meeting.

- Issue a letter within 5 school days from the panel hearing, confirming the panel’s decision, which could be to:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or part
- Uphold the complaint in whole or part

- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- Recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not reoccur

The panel will also offer escalation to Stage 5 if you are not satisfied with their decision and confirm how you can do this and what the resulting outcomes could be.

5. Stage 5 – Independent Appeal and Review by the Local Authority. Complainants must note that where a complaint has exhausted the school procedures, the LA will examine only if the school's complaints policy has been followed. The LA's role at this point is not to re-investigate the substance of the complaint. This remains the responsibility of the school. You must use a Stage 5 complaints form to access Stage 5.

6. Stage 6 – The final stage of appeal is the Secretary of State for Education. You should:

Write a letter to  
The School Complaints UNIT (SCU) at:  
Department for Education  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Piccadilly Gate  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

The Department for Education will, examine only if the school's complaints policy has been followed. The Department do not re-investigate the substance of the complaint. This remains the responsibility of the school.

#### Vexatious, Malicious or Repetitive Unfounded Complaints

The vast majority of complaints are resolved by informal contact. There are occasions when the school is required to deal with vexatious, malicious or repetitive unfounded complaints, which cause unnecessary anxiety for the member of staff associated with the complaint and also wastes valuable 'school hours'.

As an example, a persistent or vexatious complaint:

- Displays behaviours/actions which are disproportionate, harassing and repetitious:
- Seeks unrealistic outcomes relative to the issue being raised and who state that their intention is to persist until that outcome is achieved;
- May be carried out in anger; where no facts bear evidence to the rightfulness of the complaint;
- Repeatedly makes the same complaint with minor differences but who do not accept the outcome of any investigation into their complaints.

In such cases, the school will refer directly to the General Complaints Procedure for Maintained Schools (Dudley LA Nov 2015).



[Please complete this form and return it to the school office]

School use:	
Date Form received:	Date response sent:
Received by:	Response sent by:

### Mount Pleasant Primary School Stage 2 Formal Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it, via the school office, to the Headteacher, who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name: .....

Relationship with school (e.g. parent of a pupil on the school roll):

.....

Pupil's name (if relevant to your complaint):

.....

Your Address:

Telephone numbers

Daytime:

Evening:

E-mail address:

Please give concise details of your complaint, (including dates, names of witnesses etc...), to allow the matter to be fully investigated:

You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of Additional pages attached =

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? (i.e. who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?)

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Signature:

Date:

School use:

Date Form received:

Date response sent:

Received by:

Response sent by:



### Mount Pleasant Primary School Complaint Stage 3 Formal Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it to the Chair of Governors, who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name: .....

Relationship with school (e.g. parent of a pupil on the school roll):

.....

Pupil's name (if relevant to your complaint):

.....

Your Address:

Telephone numbers

Daytime:

Evening:

E-mail address:

I submitted a formal complaint to the Headteacher at school on ..... and am dissatisfied by the procedure that has been followed **or** my complaint is regarding the Headteacher.

My complaint was submitted to ..... and I received a response from ..... on .....

I have attached copies of my formal complaint and of the response(s) from the school.

I am dissatisfied with the way in which the procedure was carried out, because:

You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of Additional pages attached =

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Signature:

Date:

School use:

Date Form received:

Date response sent:

Received by:

Response sent by:

### Mount Pleasant Primary School Complaint Stage 4 Formal Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it to the Clerk to the Governing Body, who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name: .....

Your Address:

Telephone numbers:

Daytime:

Evening:

E-mail address:

I submitted a formal complaint to the Headteacher at school on ..... and am dissatisfied by the procedure that has been followed.

My complaint was submitted to ..... and I received a response from ..... on .....

I then raised the complaint with the Chair of Governors and I received a response from..... on .....

I have attached copies of my formal complaint and of the response(s) from the school.

I am dissatisfied with the way in which the procedure was carried out, because:

<p>You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.</p>
Number of Additional pages attached =

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?
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Signature:

Date:

School use:	
Date Form received:	Date response sent:
Received by:	Response sent by:

### Mount Pleasant Primary School Complaint Stage 5 Formal Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it to the Strategic Director of People Services, who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name: .....

Your Address:

Telephone numbers:

Daytime:

Evening:

E-mail address:

I submitted a formal complaint to the Headteacher at school on ..... and am dissatisfied by the procedure that has been followed.

My complaint was submitted to ..... and I received a response from ..... on .....

I then raised the complaint with the Chair of Governors and I received a response from..... on .....

I then raised the complaint with the Governing Body and I had a complaints appeal hearing on.....

I have attached copies of my formal complaint and of the response(s) from the school.

I am dissatisfied with the way in which the procedure was carried out, because:

You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of Additional pages attached =

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Signature:

Date:

School use:

Date Form received:

Date response sent:

Received by:

Response sent by: