

Complaints Policy

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| <i>Date written:</i> | 14/02/17 |
| <i>Confirmed by Governors on:</i> | 20/3/17 |
| <i>Due for reviewed:</i> | 14/02/18 |
| <i>Reviewed:</i> | 20/3/17 |
| <i>The person responsible for monitoring this policy statement and monitoring and evaluating its implementation is:</i> | Mike McCann |

Mission

Greenbank School provides a safe and inclusive learning environment where everyone is valued and encouraged to reach their full potential.

Rationale

Under section 29 of the Education Act 2002, Governing bodies of all maintained schools in England have been required to put in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school. The law also requires the procedure to be publicised.

There is a difference between a concern and a complaint; taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints. The formal procedures will need to be invoked only when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

Aims

We will endeavour to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint and will always put the interests of our young people above all else.

We will give careful consideration to all complaints and we aim to resolve any complaint through dialog and mutual understanding.

Our complaints procedure will:

- Encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- Be easily accessible and publicised;
- Be simple to understand and use;
- Be impartial and non-adversarial;
- Allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of

the progress;

- Ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary;
- Respect confidentiality;
- Address all points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress;
- Provide information to the schools senior management team and governors so that services can be improved.

Guidelines

For a general complaint:

Step 1 If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education or support that we are providing at Greenbank, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher; most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and making good progress; they naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before it seriously affects the child's progress.

Step 2 Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the head teacher (who acts as the complaints co-ordinator). The head teacher will consider all matters of concern very seriously and investigate each case thoroughly. Most complaints would normally be resolved at this stage.

Step 3 Only when an informal complaint fails to be resolved by the head teacher should a formal complaint be made to the governing body. This complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint, who has been spoken to already and the preferred outcome. The parent should send this written complaint to the chair of governors via the school office.

For a complaint about the head teacher:

Step 1 If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the behaviour, leadership or management of the head teacher, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with the head teacher; most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way.

Step 2 Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the head teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the chair of the governing body. The chair assumes the complaints co-ordinator role and will consider all matters of concern very seriously and investigate each case thoroughly. Most complaints would normally be resolved at this stage.

Step 3 Only when an informal complaint fails to be resolved by the chair should a formal complaint be made to the governing body. This complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint, who has been spoken to already and the preferred outcome. The parent should send this written complaint to the clerk of governors via the school office.

Governing body complaints committee

The governing body must consider all written complaints within **21 school working days** of receipt.

The chair of governors will act as or nominate a governor to co-ordinate the procedure and will appoint a complaints panel consisting of 3 governors who are not employees of the school. The nominated co-ordinator will chair the complaints panel.

The co-ordinator will arrange a meeting of the complaints panel to discuss the complaint and will invite the person making it to attend the meeting so that they can explain the complaint in more detail. The school will give the complainant at least 5 days' notice of the meeting. If the complainant cannot attend the suggested date, a further date will be set. If the complainant cannot attend the second date, a third and final date will be set, at which time the meeting will proceed without the complainant present.

The head teacher will write a report addressing the complaint and ensure the complaints panel members and the complainants receive a copy 4 days before the meeting. (If it is a complaint about the head teacher, the chair of governors will write the report).

Check list for a panel hearing

The panel must take the following points into account:

- The hearing is as informal as possible;
- After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint (with the support of parent partnership or other advocate if required);
- The panel members and head teacher (or chair of governors) may ask questions;
- The head teacher (or chair of governors) is then invited to explain the schools actions (with support of deputy head teacher or other staff member if required);
- The panel members or complainant may ask questions;
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint;
- The head teacher (or chair of governors) is then invited to sum up the schools actions and response to the complaint;
- The chair of the panel explains that both parties will hear from the panel within 3 working days;
- Both parties leave the meeting while the panel decides on the issues.

When the panel has fully investigated the complaint, the chair of the panel, on behalf of the governing body, will write to the complainant confirming the outcome of the complaint and any agreed action to be taken.

The panel can:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- Uphold the complaint in whole or part;
- Decide on appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- Recommend changes to the schools systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

Investigating Complaints

At each stage, the person investigating (the complaint co-ordinator*) the complaint should make sure that they:

- 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;
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right;
- Interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, 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 the interview.

* The complaints co-ordinator is the head teacher; where the complaint is against the head teacher the co-ordinator is the Chair of Governors).

Resolving Complaints

At each stage in the procedure we will look for a way in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An apology;
- An explanation;
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- An assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- An undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

It should be noted that an admission that the school could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence.

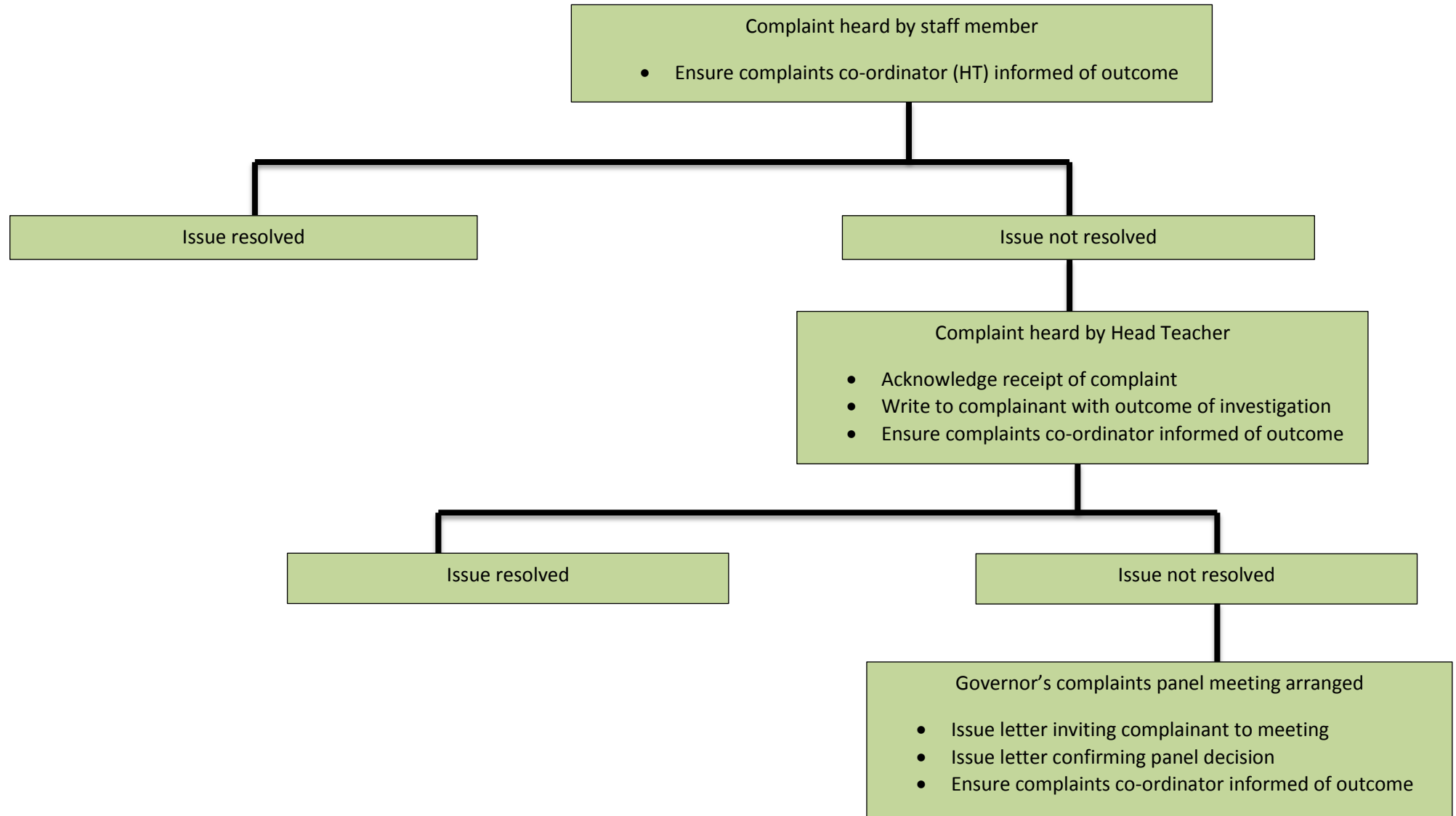
Unresolved Complaints

From 1st August 2012 complaints about maintained schools not resolved by the school that would have been considered by the Local Government Ombudsman or the LA should be addressed to the Secretary of State for Education.

Further information can be obtained by calling the National Helpline on 0370 000 2288 or going online at: www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus or by writing to:

Department for Education
Schools Complaints Unit
2nd floor, Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Summary of Dealing with Complaint



Summary of Dealing with Complaint against Head Teacher

