

Mulbarton Primary School



Mulbarton Primary School Complaints Policy and Procedures

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All schools want their children to be healthy, happy and safe, and to achieve. At Mulbarton Primary School we recognise that parents, guardians or carers play an important part in making this happen. Cooperation between parents, staff and governors leads to a shared sense of purpose and a good atmosphere in the school.

Each level of the procedure set out below offers the opportunity for concerns and complaints to be resolved as quickly as possible.

General Principles:

- This procedure is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school, or the services it provides.
- An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, except in exceptional circumstances.
- To enable a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, any matter raised more than 3 months after the event, will not be considered.

Raising a Concern or complaint

Stage 1 - Informal

It is normally appropriate to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned. This may be by letter, by telephone or in person, by appointment requested via the school office. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information, and it is expected that most complaints will be resolved at this informal stage.

In the case of serious concerns it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Head Teacher (or the Chair of the Governing Body via the school office and marked urgent, private and confidential, if the complaint is about the Head Teacher.)

If you are uncertain who to contact, please seek advice from the school office.

Stage 2 - Formal

If your concern or complaint is not resolved at the informal stage, you must put the complaint in writing by filling in a complaints form for the attention of the Head Teacher, who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately. If the complaint is about the Head Teacher, your complaint should be addressed to the Chair of the Governing Body via the school office, addressed as above.

A complaint form is provided to assist you.

If, for any reason, the complainant is unable to express themselves in written English they may approach the school office who will organise for an independent scribe to meet with the complainant.

You should provide details which might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents.

It is very important that you include a clear statement of the actions that you would like the school to take to resolve your concern.

Please pass the completed form, in a sealed envelope, to the school office, addressed to the Head Teacher or the Chair of the Governing Body as appropriate.

The Head Teacher (or Chair) may invite you to a meeting to clarify your concerns and to explore the possibility of an informal resolution. If you accept that invitation, a friend may accompany you, if you wish, to assist you in explaining the nature of your concerns.

It is important to note that if the complainant is unhappy with the decision reached by the Head Teacher after Stage 2, the complaint does not become a complaint about the Head Teacher.

Stage 3 - Formal : Governors' Complaint Panel.

If the complainant feels the issue has not been resolved after Stages 1 and 2, they should proceed to Stage 3, a Governors' Complaints Panel.

The complainant should send a completed Complaints Form to the Chair of Governors, indicating a Stage 3 Complaint, in a sealed envelope marked 'Urgent, Private and Confidential' c/o the School Office. This formal complaint must be received within 10 school days of the last meeting with the Head Teacher concerning the issue.
Timescales for Governors' Complaints Panel

Receipt of Complaints Form	1. Acknowledgement within five school days
	2. Governor Panel to meet within 15 school days (unless this goes into school holidays)
Written documentation sent to Governor Panel members, complainant and Head Teacher	Five school days before meeting
Decision of Governor Panel members communicated to all concerned	Within 10 school days of meeting

At the meeting

Although this is a formal meeting, every effort will be taken to make it as informal as possible for all concerned.

The meeting will be attended by the Complainant, the Head Teacher and at least three school Governors. If wished, both parties may bring a friend to support them.

An independent clerk will attend to take notes, but will take no formal part in the meeting.

The Chair of the panel will request a short verbal statement from the complainant in support of their written complaint.

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The Chair of the panel will then request a short verbal statement from the Head Teacher in response.

Panel members may ask questions of both parties to make sure they fully understand the issues.

The Chair of the panel will make sure that both the complainant and the Head Teacher have had the opportunity to provide all relevant information.

After the meeting, the panel will discuss the issues in private, and with the assistance of the clerk, will produce a written report of findings and recommendations.

Unreasonable Complaints

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:-

- 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 while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or 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, complicated and
- stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email
- and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:-

- maliciously;
- aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowing it to be false;
- using falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.