Corbridge C of E First School

Complaints Procedure for Use by Parents and Members of the Public

2:12:4

This procedure is for use for complaints against the school, a member of staff or the governing body. There are separate arrangements, laid down by law to cover the following:

- Complaints against the curriculum, collective worship and religious education.
- Appeals against admissions.
- Appeals against exclusions.
- Appeals about assessments and statements of special educational needs.

For further guidance on any of the above please contact the head teacher.

Stage One: Complaint Heard by Staff Member/Head Teacher

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The experience of the first contact between the complainant and the school can be crucial in determining whether the complaint will escalate. To that end, all staff have been made aware of the procedures and they know what to do when they receive a complaint.

In the first instance the complaint should be discussed between the person making the complaint and the member of staff involved. If a complainant indicates that he/she would have difficulty discussing a complaint with that particular member of staff he/she should be referred to the head teacher. Where the complaint concerns the head teacher or a governor the complainant should be referred to the chair of governors.

Similarly, if a member of staff/head teacher/chair of governors feels too compromised to deal with a complaint it should be referred to another member of staff or another governor. The ability to consider the complaint objectively and impartially is crucial.

If a complainant first approaches a governor, he/she should be referred to the appropriate person i.e. the member of staff concerned or the head teacher. **Governors should not act unilaterally on an individual complaint outside the formal procedure or be involved at the early stages in case they are needed to sit on a committee at a later stage of the procedure.** It is hoped the majority of complaints can be resolved at this stage.

Stage Two: Formal Consideration of Complaint

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the way the complaint has been handled at stage 1 or the head teacher believes it would best be handled by the chair of governors then stage 2 applies. The complainant is asked to complete a stage 2 complaint form. Once the relevant

facts have been established, the chair of governors should relay the decision, and the reason for the decision, in writing to the complainant as soon as possible.

Stage Three: Complaint Heard by Governing Body's Complaints Committee

If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the outcome after stage 2 he/she should write to the chair of governors, giving details of the complaint, within ten school days of the receipt of the decision letter. The Chair, or another nominated governor, will convene a governing body complaints committee.

The committee will consist of a minimum of three governors with delegated powers to hear a complaint. The committee will be appointed by the chair of governors with the chair of the committee being appointed when they meet.

The complaints committee will take a decision as to any action to be taken in response to the complaint. For example, they may choose to:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in 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 recur.
- In reaching a decision the committee may take the advice of such bodies as they see fit, in particular the LEA and, where appropriate, the Diocesan Authority.
- Once a decision has been reached, the chair of the complaints committee may summarise the outcome and relay this informally to both parties.
- The clerk of the complaints committee will inform both parties in writing of the decision within five school days of the date of the hearing.

Stage Four: Complaints Referred to the Department of Education

If, after following the school procedure i.e. all three of the above stages, the complainant is still dissatisfied with the decision of the complaints committee, or they feel there is a conflict of interest and could not use the school's procedure, then they can forward the complaint to the Department of Education using the on-line complaints form:

www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/schoolperformance