

VICTORIA AVENUE SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

A CHILD'S PARENTS HAVE A COMPLAINT ABOUT SOMETHING HAPPENING AT SCHOOL

STAGE 1 : INFORMAL RESOLUTION

Parents make an appointment with the child's teacher. Issue discussed with teacher. Teacher may consult with syndicate leader (SL) or member of senior management team (SMT) where appropriate. Complaints made directly to a SL or SMT member will usually be referred to the relevant Teacher.

Matter resolved to parent's satisfaction – either concluded or an understanding in place for further action. The relevant teacher makes written record of complaint and resolution.

If, within an agreed period of time e.g. two weeks, the agreed action is unsuccessful, i.e. problem has resurfaced, Parents will meet again with the relevant teacher to endeavour to resolve. Teacher should consult with SL or member of SMT at this stage.

Matter resolved to parent's satisfaction. Teacher makes written record of resolution.

STAGE 2 : FORMAL RESOLUTION

If the relevant teacher and the parents fail to reach a satisfactory resolution under the "Informal Resolution" procedures within a reasonable time, the parents will be advised to put their complaint in writing addressed to the principal.

Upon receipt of the formal complaint, the principal will decide (after considering the complaint) the appropriate action to take. In most cases the principal will contact the parents concerned within 3 days of receiving the formal complaint. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage. It may be necessary for the principal to carry out or arrange further investigations. These will be completed as soon as practicable. The principal will ensure that written records are kept of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Once the principal is satisfied that the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and the parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The principal will give reasons for the decision.

STAGE 3 : PANEL RESOLUTION

If the parents are not satisfied with the decision of the principal under the "Formal Resolution" procedures, they may write to the principal requesting a hearing by a complaints panel (Panel). Upon receipt of a written request for a panel hearing, the principal will arrange for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the chairperson of the board of trustees. The panel will consist of at least three persons who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. At least one of these persons must be independent of the management and running of the school. A hearing before the panel will be scheduled as soon as practicable.

If the convenor of the panel considers it necessary, the panel may require that further information be supplied to the panel in advance of the hearing. Any such information must be supplied to all parties not later than 5 working days (or such fewer number of days as the panel may specify in its discretion) before the hearing (and any details received after the specified number of days before the hearing must be disregarded and will be inadmissible at the hearing unless the panel, in its discretion, determines otherwise). The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person, who may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. In all other respects, the panel may conduct the hearing in such manner as it sees fit, having regard to the circumstances and to principles of natural justice.

If possible, the panel will resolve the complaint at the hearing without the need for further investigation. However, if the panel decides at the hearing that further investigation is required, such investigations shall be carried out as required by the panel, after which the panel will reconvene and reach a decision (and may also make recommendations). The panel will write to the parents informing them of this decision. The decision of the panel will be final. The panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the principal, the chairperson of the board of trustees and, where the complaint relates to an individual, to that individual.