



CAUSE FOR CONCERN POLICY

This policy has been developed and approved by the Governors of the School. Its purpose is to help to resolve any matters of concern to parents, guardians and others in a timely manner and is not to be regarded as a threat to the school or individual member of staff. This policy is part of the dynamic management of the school and provides an opportunity for review and innovation in the working of the school.

The purpose of this policy is to outline to parents the action they should take when they have a concern. When this is not resolved informally, this policy will enable the Governors to establish the nature of a complaint against an action or an appeal against a decision and will detail the procedure, which should deal the issue.

The mechanism for the investigation and processing of complaints or appeals is illustrated by the accompanying flow chart and ensures an appropriate response whether the issue is upheld or not.

A leaflet outlining this Cause for Concern Policy will be:

- given to all new parents
- on display in the entrance hall of school with spare copies to take away

The full Cause for Concern Policy will be available from the school office.

INITIAL CAUSE FOR CONCERN

- Parents should, in the first instance, contact the class teacher (to agree a mutually acceptable date and time) with a view to meeting and resolving the issue.
- If the issue remains unresolved, the parent should contact the Headteacher (to agree a mutually acceptable date and time) with a view to meeting and resolving the issue.
- The Headteacher will record the nature of the concern, the names of those involved, date, and actions/outcomes in the Concerns Log.
- The Headteacher will hold the log
- It is the purpose of this procedure that matters raising cause for concern, and have been initiated and escalated via the 'informal' route, should be resolved as quickly as possible. If the cause for concern is unresolved by the Headteacher in 1 month, the formal procedure should be invoked unless it is agreed by both parties to delay this step. This delay should not exceed 1 month.

FORMAL COMPLAINT/APPEAL

- If after 1 month and the concern has not been resolved, the Headteacher will advise the parent/guardian that the matter must now be escalated to the Governing body. The Headteacher will provide a copy of this Policy document, and advise that an appointee from the Governing body will be in contact at the earliest opportunity.
- The Headteacher will advise the Chair of Governors that the formal process has been invoked – but of course must not discuss the nature of the concern. The Chair of Governors will ask the Chair of the appointed Panel to make contact with the parent and start the procedure.
- The Clerk, who will acknowledge its receipt, will log the written complaint/appeal.
- A Panel of Governors will have been established, at the beginning of the academic year by the Governing body to investigate complaints or hear appeals.
 - No member of the Panel should have been previously involved with the cause for concern that they are asked to consider.

- If a member of the Panel has been in any way involved with the issue under investigation, he or she will stand down and be replaced by an appropriate alternative Governor.
- The Panel will not include the Chairman of Governors or the Headteacher.
- The Panel will report its findings to the Governing Body, indicating whether the complaint or appeal has been upheld or not.
- If the complain/appeal has been upheld, disciplinary action or competency improvement measures will be initiated.
- The minutes of the Panel are confidential, as are all papers concerned with the issue. This is to ensure that should there be need for any further investigation, a new panel of Governors can be identified. (After this proceed is completed, the Chairman and Vice Chairman have right of access to these papers).
- The Clerk, unless an interest has been recognized, (in which case a suitable substitute will be found) will be present at all meetings of the Panel, taking notes and recording the decision reached. The Clerk will take appropriate action as required by the Chair of the panel.
- All documentation associated with this procedure will be kept by the Clerk in a secure place.
- The Panel will conduct the investigation in an impartial and objective manner in order to establish the facts and to ensure that the principles of natural justice are followed.

MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL

The Headteacher and her team have the responsibility of making decisions relating to a wide range of school management issues. There will always be instances where some people will not agree with the decision or not like the outcome. Any action as a result of such circumstances will be processed as an appeal. It is important to note that a complaint has validity only if the decision is wrong and not because someone disagrees.

ORAL HEARING

The Clerk will give not less than 14 calendar day's notice of the hearing to the complainant, Headteacher and Panel. The Clerk must circulate all papers from all parties not later than 7 calendar days before the hearing. Papers will include:

- A copy of any report made by the Headteacher on the outcome of any investigations of the complaint
- Other document to be considered by the committee

If a paper is raised at a hearing, the Panel may adjourn proceedings for this paper to be read.

At the start of the oral hearing, the Chair of the Panel will introduce all those present. The proceedings should be conducted in such a way as to enable all parties to present their information, answer questions and leave feeling that they have had a full and fair hearing.

The order of the proceedings should be as follows:-

- Complainant presents their case
- Clarification questions from Headteacher and/or Panel
- Headteacher responds
- Clarification questions from complainant and/or Panel
- Summary of case by complainant
- Summary of case by Headteacher

At the close of these proceedings, all present will withdraw and the Committee will consider its decision, which will be recorded by the Clerk.

A friend, representative and interpreter may accompany the complainant.

A Union or Staff Representative or a friend may accompany Headteacher or any other member of staff.

Legal representation by either side is not permitted.

NOTIFYING OF THE OUTCOME

If the complaint/appeal is not upheld:-

Cause for Concern Policy

Date Agreed by Governing Body: September 2015

Date for Next Review: September 2018

- A letter of explanation prepared by the Panel will be sent from the Chairman of Governors to the complainant giving the reasons for the decision within 7 calendar days.

If the complaint is upheld:-

- The Chairman of Governors will send a response prepared by the Panel to the complainant within 7 calendar days.
- The recommendations of the Panel will be implemented

The Panel has delegated authority and, therefore, its decisions will be reported to the next formal meeting of the Governing body.

The letter to the complainant will point out that if he/she remains dissatisfied, a further avenue of appeal exists. The complainant will be advised as to the procedure to follow. If an appeal is to be made, it must be made in writing to the Chair of Governors within 14 calendar days of receiving the letter.

FURTHER STEPS

Once this process has been exhausted, there is no formal next step within the school. If, however, the complainant remains dissatisfied, he or she may wish to raise the matter with the Local Authority to the effect that the Governing Body has acted unreasonably.

The LA may be contacted at the following address:-

Director for Children, Education and Families
County Hall
New Road
Oxford. OX1 1NA

KEEPING GOVERNORS INFORMED

The Head teacher's report to Governors will include the following:

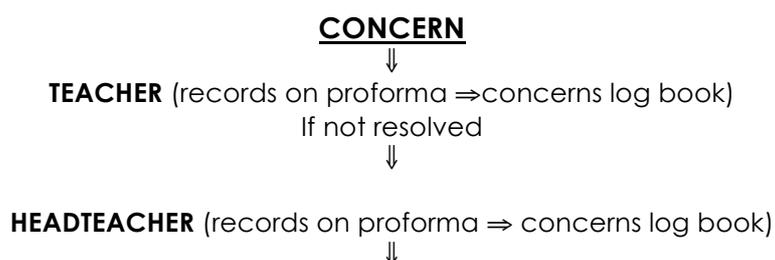
- Number of concerns and complaints logged since the last report
- Number of complaints that are ongoing since the last report
- Analysis of the nature and number of concerns and complaints issues being received is carried out by a delegated member of the Governing body.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES FOR PARENTS

The formal complaint should be submitted in writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body. This written notification should indicate the nature of the complaint and should request that it be formally considered under these arrangements.

If difficulty in writing the complaint/appeal is experienced, someone else can write an approved version, on behalf of the complainant.

In cases of difficulty, the Clerk can provide advice on help available in presenting the case; contact the Chairman of the Appointed Panel in the first instance.



HEADTEACHER reports number of incidents to Governing Body through HT Report
(May wish to discuss un-named situations, if concerned)



**No Case
Matter Closed**

Not Resolved

**Resolved
Matter Closed**



Governing Body - via Chair of Governors or representative



INCIDENT

Complaint



Via Chair of Governors



APPOINTED PANEL



Complaint upheld

⇓
Discipline or competency of qualified teacher or other staff
⇓
Consult LEA
⇓
Appropriate procedure carried out by Headteacher

⇓
Discipline or competency of headteacher
⇓
Chair of Governors
⇓
Appropriate procedure

Not upheld
Feedback as appropriate

DECISION

**(Management of the School)
Appeal**



Via Chair of Governors



APPOINTED PANEL



Appeal Upheld

⇓
Discipline or competency of headteacher
⇓
Chair of Governors
⇓
Consult LEA
⇓
Appropriate procedure