



*Nurture-Believe-Inspire-Achieve*

**Danson  
Primary  
School**

# **Complaints Policy**

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## **Complaints Policy**

### **Procedure for handling concerns and complaints**

At Danson Primary we want our pupils to be healthy, happy and safe, and to achieve. We recognise that parents, guardians or carers play an important part in making this happen. Cooperation between parents, staff and senior leaders leads to a shared sense of purpose and a positive atmosphere in the school.

The procedure set out below offers the opportunity for concerns and complaints to be resolved as quickly as possible. This document sets out the school's procedure for addressing complaints. It should be used only when informal attempts to resolve problems have been unsuccessful.

Please note that this procedure does not apply to issues concerning the curriculum, collective worship, admissions, exclusion appeals, decisions about your child's special educational needs or grievances by school staff. These are the subject of separate complaints procedures.

### **Framework of Principles**

This policy will:

- be easily accessible and publicised
- be simple to use and understand
- be impartial
- be 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 people's desire for confidentiality, wherever possible (some information sharing may be necessary to carry out a thorough investigation)
- address all points of issue, providing an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- provide information to the school's senior management team so that services can be improved.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The school will give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them fairly and honestly. We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and aim to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding.

## Informal Stage

**Every effort should be made to resolve the difficulty informally in discussion with either the class teacher, a senior member of staff or the head teacher.**

If you have any concerns about the school or the education provided, please discuss the matter in the first instance with *your child's class teacher*.

Parents, carers or guardians should, in the first instance, make an appointment to speak to the class teacher about the concern. It is best to resolve issues at this point.

- *Concerns should initially be handled informally in a manner that offers the best way of resolving issues.*
- *A class teacher should offer an appointment to discuss the issue as quickly as possible, as this will give both parties time to talk about it calmly and politely without being interrupted. This can allow parties to remain calm. It will also show a commitment to resolving issues.*
- *It is important for parents to recognise that schools are busy organisations and that it may not be possible to offer an appointment straight away. Appointments should be made through the School Office.*
- *The parties involved should be encouraged to offer their view of what would be a realistic resolution to the problem.*

*If your concern has not been addressed /resolved to mutual satisfaction please the proceed to your child's Year Group Leader, or Key Stage Leader at the earliest opportunity. The school considers any concerns very seriously and most problems can be resolved at this stage. If a resolution to the issue is proving difficult to find, the Senior Leadership Team or Assistant Head Teachers can speak to the Headteacher regarding the issue who may be willing to offer informal intervention. However, there is no obligation on any Headteacher to become involved at this level.*

- *It is always best to resolve issues informally at the earliest possible time but if the person is not satisfied with the result of the talk with the teacher or Year Group Leader then he/she can ask for an appointment to meet with a member of the SLT or with the Assistant Headteacher*
- *It is in everyone's interest, particularly the child or children, for concerns and complaints to be sorted out quickly and smoothly.*
- *The aim should be that discussions end on a positive note with no bad feeling.*
- *It is good practice for a member of the Senior Leadership Team to write a letter to parents summarising what has been agreed regarding the issue.*
- *A member of the Leadership Team, Assistant Headteacher, Deputy Head Teacher may feel that a particular Head Teacher's input would be helpful in bringing about a resolution but there is no obligation on any Head Teacher to become involved at this level.*

## **Stage 1: Complaint Heard by Head Teacher**

The Head Teacher's influence will already have shaped the way complaints are handled in the school. At this point, the complainant may be dissatisfied with the way the complaint was handled at stage one as well as pursuing their initial complaint. The head teacher may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken.

If your concern has still not been addressed, please make an appointment or write to the Head Teacher outlining your concern

If the matter is about:

- the day-to-day running of the school
- the interpretation of school policies
- the actions or inactions of staff at the school

It will be formally investigated by *the Head Teacher, Miss Casey or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (Mrs Hunter, Ms Sangani, Mrs Davis, Mrs O'Hara or Miss Young)*

If the matter is about:

- school policies as determined by the Governing Body
- the actions or inactions of the Governing Body
- the actions or inactions of the Head Teacher

Then you will be asked to complete a formal complaint form which is obtainable from the clerk to the governors.

## **Stage 2**

The complainant needs to write to the Chair of Governors via the Clerk of Governors, giving details of the complaint. The Chair, or a nominated governor, will convene a governing body complaints panel. Your formal complaint will be investigated by the Chair of Governors or a Governor nominated by the Chairman.

The person carrying out the investigation will review the way in which the complaint has been handled by the school and ensure that the issues have been dealt with properly and fairly. He/she will normally write to you with the outcome of this process within *15 working days* of receiving the complaint.

You will have the opportunity to submit written evidence on the complaint.

If it becomes apparent that the complaint is a disciplinary or capability issue, then the matter will be dealt with by following the appropriate procedure rather than the complaints procedure. You will be notified if this is the case but you are not entitled to know which procedure or the final outcome.

### **Stage 3**

If you are not satisfied with the result from the Stage 2 review, you may choose to refer your complaint to Stage 3 of the procedure. This must be done in writing to the school within *15 working days* of the completion of Stage 2.

If the complainant is not satisfied after the Chairman or nominated Governor has completed their review at Stage 2, a panel of 3 governors will meet to consider the complaint and make a final decision about it on behalf of the Governing Body.

The panel will consist of governors who have no detailed prior knowledge of the complaint, or connection with the complainant. The meeting will normally take place within *15 working days* of your request.

You will have the opportunity to submit written evidence on the complaint prior to the meeting of the panel and also to attend, accompanied by a friend/partner if you wish, to put your case. The head teacher will be given the same opportunities. The panel will write to you with its conclusion within *ten working days* of the meeting.

The decision of the panel is final. If you are not satisfied with the way the governors have dealt with this matter you may wish to put your complaint to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The governing body monitors the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The head teacher logs all formal complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis and consider the need for any changes to the procedure.

### **Availability**

A copy of this procedure is available to all parents on request.

## Summary of Model Complaints Procedure

### Informal

Complaint at school level – complainant should try and resolve the problem with the school.

**Resolved?**

**Yes.** No further action

**No.** Complainant is asked to write formally to the head to resolve the problem.

### Stage 1

Letter received by head who acknowledges receipt  
Is complaint about areas of head teacher's responsibility or governing body's responsibility? If it is the governor's responsibility the complainant should be advised to write to the clerk - move to Stage 2.

### Head Teacher's Responsibility –

Head Teacher deals with matter or designates senior member of staff.  
If complainant dissatisfied with designated senior member of staff response head teacher deals with themselves

**Resolved?**

**Yes.** No further action

**No.** Complainant wishes to move to Stage 2 of the procedure and writes to the clerk of the governors for formal complaints form

### Stage 2 – Chairman's/appointed Governor's desk survey

Returned Complaint form passes to the Chairman/appointed governor or nominated complaints governor to review whether the complaint has been properly dealt with



**Resolved?**



**Yes.** No further action



### Stage 3 - Governor Panel

**No.** A governor complaints panel is set up to consider the complaint within 15 working days of the complaint being passed to the governing body or as soon as practicable. It consists of 3 governors, with no prior knowledge of the complaint, who will consider written and verbal submissions from the complainant and the head teacher



The panel meets to consider the complaint and make a final decision on behalf of the governing body.



Panel writes to complainant with its conclusion within 10 working days of the meeting



**Resolved?**



**Yes.** No further action



**No.** The complainant may decide to write to the Department of Education if they feel the school has acted unreasonably or not followed the correct procedures