



Concerns & complaints Policy

Spring term 2018

Review frequency:	Annually	Review date:	Summer term 2019
Governing committee responsible:	Full Governing Body		
Governor approval:	Spring term 2018	Website:	Yes
Staff responsible:	Head Teacher Prepared by Bursar	Date produced:	March 2018

1. Policy statement

Clarborough Primary School aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any concerns that individuals may have about the 'service' we provide. All concerns will be given careful consideration and we will deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to solve any concerns through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, we put the interests of the pupil above all other issues. We will provide sufficient opportunity for any concern to be fully discussed and then resolved.

In order for complaints to be resolved as quickly and fairly as possible we request that complainants do not discuss complaints publicly via social media such as facebook and twitter. Complaints will be dealt with confidentially for those involved, and we expect complainants to observe confidentiality also.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 We believe that our school provides a good education for all our pupils, and that the Head Teacher and other staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all the parents and carers. However, if a concern or complaint does arise, the school has a policy and procedures in place that comply with Education Regulations.

The following policy sets out the procedures that Clarborough Primary School follows in such cases:

- 2.2 If any parent or carer is unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or has any concern relating to the school, we encourage that person to talk to their child's Teacher immediately. If a parent or carer has a concern about a member of staff, please talk to the Head Teacher of the school in the first instance.
- 2.3 We also work hard to maintain good relations with our neighbours and wider community. If you feel that something is not going quite as you would like it to, that we are doing something that you are unhappy with, or not doing something that you feel we should, please let us know about it.
- 2.3.1 There are areas where concerns should be raised through other routes, e.g.
- a) Complaints which have an alternative statutory avenue of appeal or complaint e.g. admissions, exclusions, SEN assessments. These are detailed in the relevant policies.
 - b) Complaints which must be dealt with by specific employment procedures, e.g. allegations of professional abuse, criminal offences or those that are potentially staff disciplinary issues.
 - c) Allegations of child abuse will be dealt with through the Child Protection policy.
 - d) Wherever a complaint indicates that a child's wellbeing or safety is at risk, the school is under a duty to report this immediately to the Local Authority. Any action taken will be in accordance with the school Safeguarding policy.
 - e) Complaints of financial improprieties or other criminal activities will be dealt with through the Whistleblowing policy. Whistleblowing complaints can occur when an individual knows, or suspects, that there is some wrongdoing occurring with the organisation and alerts the school or Local Authority. Please refer to this policy in the first instance. Further concerns can be raised with Ofsted on 0300 123 3155 or by emailing: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk, or by writing to WBHL, Ofsted, Picadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD
- 2.4 If at any stage in the procedure it becomes apparent that the complaint falls outside of this general complaints procedure then parents, carers or individuals will be informed.
- 2.5 We deal with all complaints in accordance with our school policy and procedure. This includes complaints from people who are not parents of attending pupils, e.g. local residents, stakeholders etc.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The governing body of Clarborough Primary School has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework. The school has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to the Head Teacher.

4. The informal concern process

Also see the flow diagram at Appendix A

- 4.1 If a parent or carer is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at Clarborough Primary School, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's Teacher. Most concerns can hopefully be dealt with in this way. The aim of this process is to take action promptly, in order to achieve a mutually acceptable solution.
- 4.2 Should you prefer to raise this issue in writing, then we ask that you send written details of your concern, together with any additional relevant documentation, addressed to the 'Clerk to Governors, at the school address, marked 'Confidential'. If, for some reason, you are not able to either visit the school, or put your concern in writing, you should contact the Head Teacher, via the school, who will record your concerns as a statement for you to sign.
- 4.3 All Teachers work very hard to ensure that every child is happy at our school, and is making good progress: they always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before it seriously affects the child's progress. The Teacher will either take action, or work with appropriate colleagues to resolve the concern. If the Teacher is the subject for your concern, please contact the school and you will be advised as to who would be best to deal with your query. This would normally be the Head, or the Assistant Head Teacher.
- 4.4 Where a parents or carer or individual feels, following interaction with their child's Class Teacher or Head Teacher, that a situation has not been resolved or that their concern is of a serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Head Teacher. To support this meeting, Form A should be completed (Appendix C) and sent to the Head Teacher in advance of the meeting. A meeting will then be arranged to discuss your concern further. The Head Teacher considers any such concern very seriously and each case will be investigated thoroughly. We would hope that most concerns are normally resolved at this stage.
- 4.5 Should a parent, carer or individual have a concern about the Head Teacher, they should in the first instance, make an informal approach to the Governing Body. Complaints about the Governing Body, or any individual governor should be made in writing to the Clerk to Governors at the school address, marked 'Confidential'. All concerns should be detailed on Form A.
- 4.6 If having met with the Head Teacher, you feel that your initial concern has not been dealt with to your satisfaction, the next step is to make a formal complaint, by following the procedure detailed below.

5. The formal complaints process

Summarised in flow diagram - Appendix B

Only if an informal concern, (as detailed above), has been reported previously should a formal complaint be made. The complaint must be made in writing using Form B – Appendix D, stating the

nature of the complaint, how the school has handled it so far and how parents or carers would like the situation to be resolved. This should be addressed 'Confidential' to the Head Teacher, at the school postal address. Where a complaint is made against the Head Teacher, Form B should still be used, marked as 'confidential' and sent to the Clerk of Governors at the school's address.

- 5.1 In the first instance a complaints panel, (comprising of at least two members of staff not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom will be independent of the management and running of the school), will consider the complaint within three working weeks of receipt. Should the complaint be regarding the Head Teacher, then the Chair of Governors would take the place of the Head Teacher in the process.

The Chair of Governors will be informed that a formal complaint has been received, if it relates to teaching or curriculum issues.

The panel will arrange a meeting, so that the nature of the complaint can be understood and the complainant/s has an opportunity to explain the complaint in more detail. This meeting should take place no more than 20 working days after receipt of Form B.

An administrator will set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and the venue and proceedings are accessible. All written materials will be collated and sent to all parties at least 7 days in advance of the meeting. A copy of the procedure at the meeting will be sent to all parties. All parties will be welcomed to the hearing and the proceedings recorded formally.

The complainant may, if they wish, bring a supporter to the meeting with them. This may be a friend or colleague. If the complaint involves a member of staff, they will also be given the opportunity to bring a supporter with them. Neither party is able to bring legal representation with them. If after the panel meeting any party feels that legal action is necessary, please see the contact details at the end of this procedure.

- 5.2 The meeting will be minuted and each person at the meeting will receive a copy of these minutes. There will be a focus on clarifying the actions the complainant feels would resolve the complaint.
- 5.3 At the meeting the complaints panel will consider the evidence collected and witness statements/or hear witnesses as appropriate. The aim of the hearing, which is held in private, and is independent and impartial, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant.
- 5.4 The Chair of the panel will explain the remit of the panel to the parties and give each party the opportunity to put their case without undue interruption. Their role will be to ensure that all issues are addressed and key finding of fact are made. The panel may:
- a) Dismiss the complaint, in whole or in part
 - b) Uphold the complaint, in whole or in part
 - c) Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
 - d) Recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.
- 5.5 Parents/Carers/Individuals should be put at ease and the Chair will ensure that each party treats the other with respect and courtesy. The panel members will be reminded that they should be open minded, act independently and no member of the panel should have a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure. Each side will be given the opportunity to ask questions and state their case. Written material is seen by all parties in advance of the meeting. Confidentiality will be respected at all times.
- 5.6 After listening to all parties and all the evidence, the complaints panel will consider their decision and inform the parent or carer about the outcome in writing. The panel will do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent's or carer's satisfaction.

However, it is recognised that the complainant may not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that their complaint has been taken seriously.

- 5.7 If the complainant thinks the complaints panel did not provide them with a fair hearing/deal with the complaint properly, then the parent or carer may refer their complaint to the Chair of Governors asking that the completed process be reviewed. A governor panel made up of three governors from the governing body, may then review the case. Their purpose would not be to re-investigate the complaint, but to review the process. They will not meet to overturn the outcome. They must review the case within 20 working days of the request.
- 5.8 This procedure should limit the number of complaints that become protracted. This is the final stage at which the school will consider the complaint. There may be occasions where despite all stages of the procedure having been followed correctly, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant then wishes to take the complaint further, contact details can be found at 5.9 below.

If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the Chair of Governors is able under this policy to inform them in writing, that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is closed.

- 5.9 If any parent, carer or individual feels that the school and governing body has acted 'unreasonably' in the handling of their complaint and the procedure detailed in this policy has not been fully complied with, then they are entitled to appeal to the Department of Education:

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>

Please note that 'unreasonable' is used in the legal sense and means acting in a way that no reasonable school or authority would act in the same circumstances.

- 5.10 In considering the concerns raised by parents, carers or individuals, Clarborough Primary School may also refer and work to the school's Unreasonable Complaints policy, a copy of which is available on the school website, www.clarborough.notts.sch.uk, or from the school.
- 5.11 If at any formal stage of the complaint it is determined that staff disciplinary or capability proceedings are necessary in order to resolve the issue, the details of this action will remain confidential to the Head Teacher. The complainant is not entitled to participate in the proceedings, or receive any details about them.

6. Monitoring and evaluation

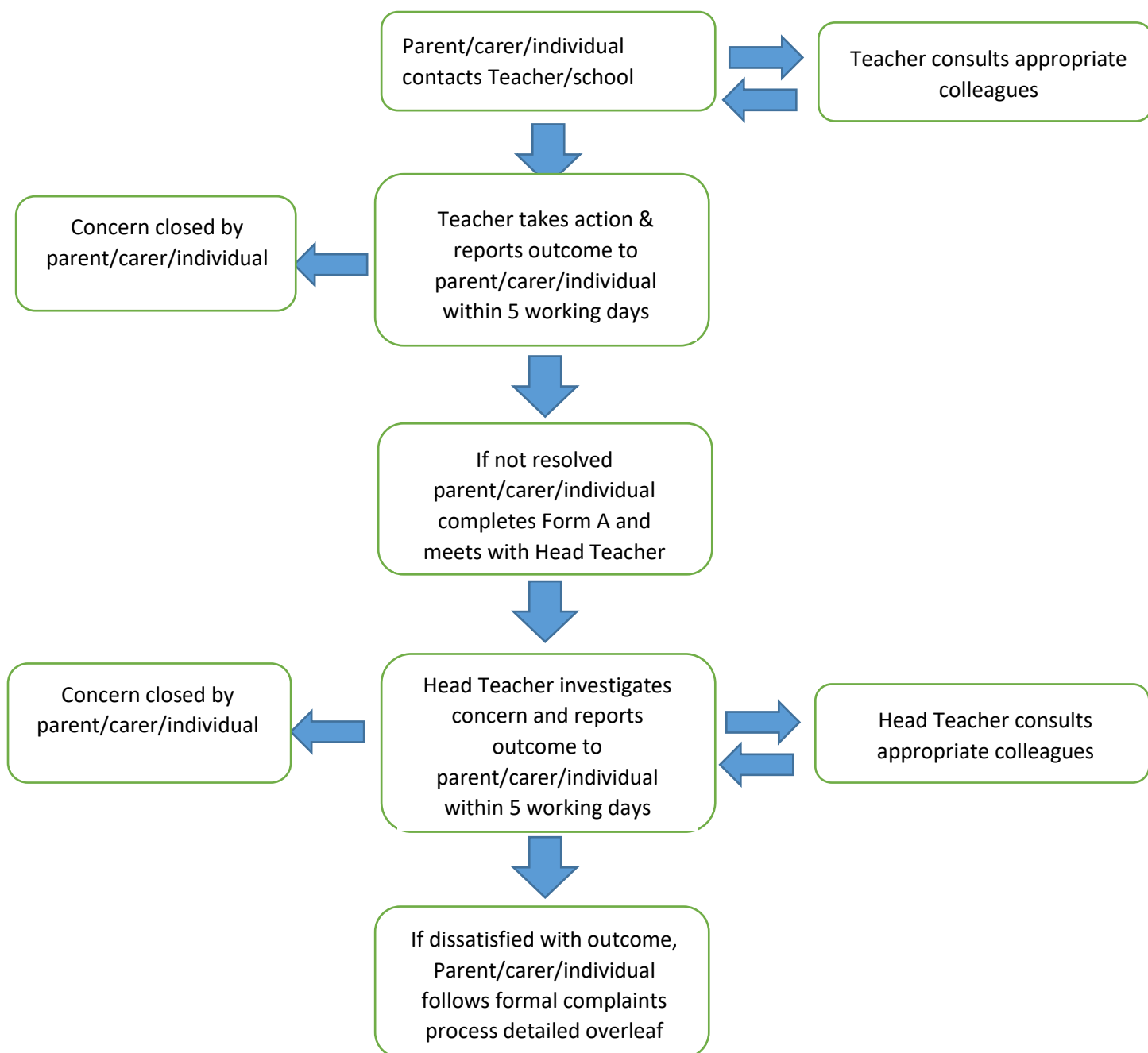
- 6.1 Staff confidence in handling complaints depends on their having clear information about procedures. All staff will have clear information about which staff have which responsibilities, so that complainants do not get passed from one person to another unnecessarily.
- 6.2 The Governing Body will monitor the complaints and concerns policy and procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. Formal complaints received by the school will be logged. Governors will examine this log. The resolution of any complaints will be recorded.
- 6.3 The Complaints and Concerns policy and associated forms are available on the school website: www.clarborough.notts.sch.uk. A printed version and versions that support those with disabilities can be obtained from the school office in response to a personal visit, a telephone request, or by letter or email.

7. Review of the policy

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Head Teacher. The application of this policy and outcomes will be monitored to ensure it is working effectively.

Appendix A: Informal concerns- flow diagram

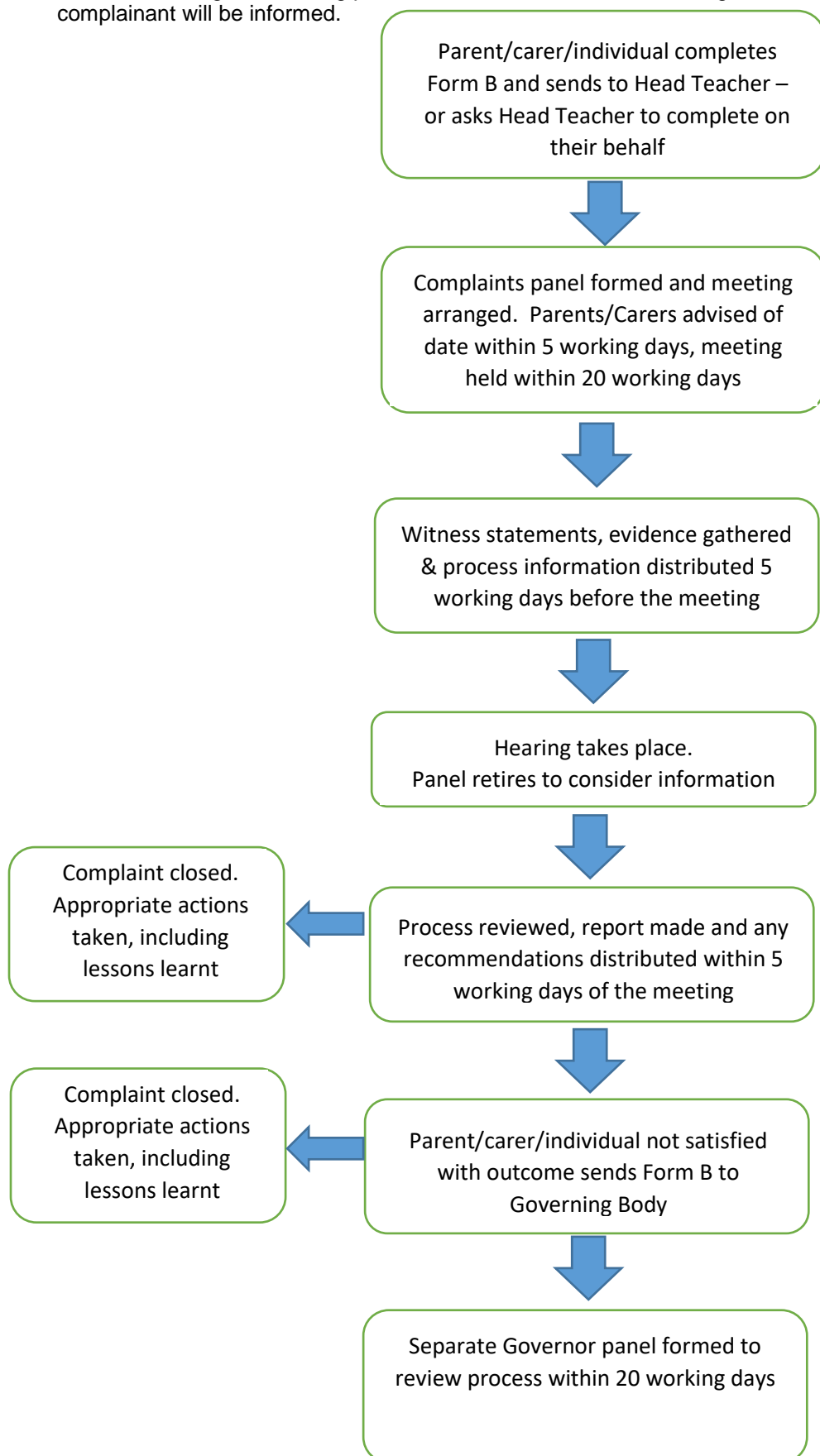
If, due to investigations taking place, the timescales noted in the diagrams below are unable to be met, the complainant will be informed.



Appendix B: Formal concerns- flow diagram

This process **should only be followed if Appendix A has already been undertaken.**

If, due to investigations taking place, the timescales noted in the diagrams below are unable to be met, the complainant will be informed.



Appendix C: Informal concern form A

Please complete and return to the Head Teacher at Clarborough Primary School who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken. If the concern involves the Head Teacher, this should be returned to the Clerk to Governors, marked as confidential and returned to the school.

Name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Telephone number:

Detail of concern (continue on a separate sheet if necessary):

Details of action you have already taken to try and resolve your concern. Who did you speak to and what was their response:

What actions do you feel might resolve your concern at this stage:

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details:

Signature:

Date:

For School use only

Date acknowledgment letter sent:

By whom:

Concern referred to:

Date

Appendix D: Formal concern form B

Please complete and return to the Head Teacher at Clarborough Primary School who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken. If the concern involves the Head Teacher, this should be returned to the Chair of Governors, marked as confidential and returned to the school.

This form should only be completed, after an informal concern has already been raised.

Name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Telephone number:

Detail of concern (continue on a separate sheet if necessary):

Details of action you have already taken to try and resolve your concern. Who did you speak to and what was their response:

What actions do you feel might resolve your concern at this stage:

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details:

Signature:

Date:

For School use only

Date acknowledgment letter sent:

By whom:

Concern referred to:

Date