



L A L E H A M L E A

A Catholic Independent Primary School for boys and girls aged 3 to 11

Head Teacher: Ms K Barry

L A L E H A M L E A S C H O O L & N U R S E R Y

C O M P L A I N T S P O L I C Y

This is a whole school policy which applies to all sections of the school, including Early Years Foundation Stage, Out of School Care and Clubs.

Person responsible for this policy:

Karen Barry
Head teacher

INTRODUCTION

We believe that our school provides a good education for all our children and that the Head Teacher and all Staff work hard to build positive relationships with all parents. The school is however obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents. The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases.

If any parent is unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or has any concerns relating to the school, we encourage that parent to talk to the child's teacher immediately. The sooner we know about concerns, the sooner we can deal with them.

We aim to be fair and honest when dealing with any concerns or complaints. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding. In all cases we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed and then resolved.

Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Head Teacher who may require the complaint to be put in writing. The Head Teacher will deal with the complaint and investigate each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage.

The Head Teacher will log all complaints and keep a record of how they were dealt with.

What follows describes the procedure to be followed in the event that a parent or guardian has a complaint.

- a) Complaints are not easy to define and it is therefore important to bear in mind that what may be initially presented as a complaint, is in fact a problem or a concern.
- b) Complaints will be investigated speedily, efficiently, fully and fairly. All aspects of each complaint will be given due consideration.
- c) The aim of this Complaints Procedure is to ensure that a complaint is fully considered and wherever possible, resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant.
- d) It may be that a complaint can be resolved without formally invoking these procedures, particularly where the complaint can be redefined as a problem or concern. This procedure does not replace the good practice of resolving concerns or problems as they arise within the general running of the school.

Head Teacher: Ms K Barry

e) A written record will be kept of all complaints and at what stage they were resolved and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's class teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. If the class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for her to consult the Head.
- Complaints made directly to the Head will usually be referred to the relevant class teacher unless the Head deems it appropriate for the Head to deal with the matter personally.
- The class teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved or in the event that the class teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents may proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this procedure.
- The timescale for Stage 1 will be within 10 days.

Stage 2 - Formal Resolution

- The period from the lodging of the complaint to its final resolution will be within 28 days.
- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- The Head and, if necessary, the teacher will meet/speak to the parents concerned, within 5 working days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head to carry out further investigations.
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
- Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for her decision.
- **If the complaint concerns the Headteacher or a member of the Governing Body, it should be referred to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Headteacher or governor should be informed. If the complaint concerns the Chair of the Governing Body, it should be referred to the vice chair and the chair informed. The Chair or Vice Chair would then undertake all steps in Stage 2**
- If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to a Governor of the school who has been appointed by the Governing Body to call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the aforementioned Governor. The said Governor on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and within 18 working days of receiving the complaint. **The Governor convening the panel may sit on the panel unless they have been involved in stages 1 or 2.**
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 5 working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within 5 working days of the Hearing. A copy of the findings and recommendations of the Panel will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and where relevant the person complained about.
If a parent does not exercise the right to attend a Panel Hearing, this does not remove the school's obligation to hold the hearing in conformity with its Complaints Policy. The School's arrangements for the Panel Hearing should be reasonable in order to facilitate the parent(s) exercising the right of attendance.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously, confidentially (except where disclosure is necessary in the course of the investigation) and with respect.

Knowledge of it will be limited to the Headteacher and those directly involved.

The panel's findings and recommendations will be provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and available for inspection on the school premises by the Chair of Governors and the Head Teacher.



Head Teacher: Ms K Barry

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them. (The independent School Standards, April 2019, Part 7, 8.1).

A record of all complaints including those for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) will be kept for three years whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).

Parents of an EYFS pupil may also make a complaint to Ofsted, Royal Exchange Buildings, St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7LA and/or ISI should they so wish.

The Headteacher will provide Ofsted and ISI, on request, a written record of all complaints made during the course of an academic year together with the action which was taken as a result of each complaint.

The complaints procedure does not apply to prospective pupils, and therefore, it does not cover failure to admit such pupils.

The policy only applies in relation to complaints from Parents (Parent includes a person who has Parental responsibility, or who has care of a child- Section 575 of the Education Act 1996) of pupils, i.e. persons for whom education is being provided at the school. The Complaints Policy does cover complaints from parents of pupils who have left voluntarily or as a result of being excluded (except in cases where the complaints process was started when the pupil was still being educated at the school).

It is school policy that complaints made by parents should not rebound adversely on the children.

Review Date: June 2019

Next Review Date: September 2022