

# LAKESIDE SCHOOL

## Complaints Policy and Procedure

### Policy Statement

Lakeside School will make every effort to provide a broad, balanced and effective education and to instil in the students a sense of fairness and justice. Complaints against staff and pupils will be taken seriously and will be thoroughly investigated.

We intend, where possible, to use the systems of natural justice and reparation that have been set up in the school, and to avoid external means of redress except in situations where this is unavoidable.

We intend to listen and respond to the pupils, parents and carers, and to take action promptly where there are concerns that need to be addressed.

All complaints will be responded to confidentially in a sensitive, non-defensive and sympathetic manner

The school is aware that they have a particular responsibility towards pupils who are vulnerable to bullying, and to those for whom the Local Authority discharges the responsibility of corporate parent within the remit of current legislation.

Other school related policies: Child Protection Policy and Procedures

### Principles

Every complaint is a matter of concern to the school concerned and will be investigated with due urgency and thoroughness. Whenever a complaint is upheld, every effort will be made to rectify the issue and, if appropriate, action will be taken to try to prevent a reoccurrence of the problem. The school will not normally investigate anonymous complaints or allegations but confidentiality will be respected and the identity of informants will be protected whenever necessary.

### Timescales

Complaints to the school will normally be acknowledged within five working days of receipt and a response will usually be provided within ten school days. When a matter requires fuller investigation than is possible within the normal timescale, the complainant will be informed and an indication given of when a final response can be expected.

### Definition

Parents will frequently raise legitimate concerns about their children's education. Most parents do not regard such inquiries as "complaints" in the formal sense. Nevertheless, their concerns will be addressed with similar urgency and thoroughness. If matters raised as concerns are not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, the dissatisfied party may wish to appeal through the formal complaints procedure.

## **Complaints Procedure**

### **Complaints from pupils**

Pupils who feel they have been unfairly treated in school are encouraged to speak to the appropriate manager, usually their Teacher, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher. He/she will investigate the complaint and will seek to resolve the matter informally between the pupil and the member of staff. Where the complaint or subsequent investigation raises issues of disciplinary significance, the matter should be referred immediately to the Headteacher.

### **Receipt of complaints from parents or others**

1. Telephone complaints should be directed to the school office. They will take full details and refer the matter to the Headteacher.
2. Verbal complaints or allegations made by a visitor to the school will be referred to any available member of the Senior Management Team.
3. Written complaints received by school staff should be copied immediately to the Headteacher.

### **Verbal complaints received by members of the Governing Body**

In normal circumstances, the governor should advise the complainant to contact the school direct. If the complainant is reluctant to do so, the governor should ensure he/she understands the full facts as perceived by the complainant without making any commitment or comment on the issue, except that it will be investigated and that a response will be provided either direct to the complainant or via the governor. The governor should then discuss the matter with the Chair of the Governing Body and the Headteacher.

### **Written complaints received by Governors**

It is the responsibility of the receiving governor to ensure that the complaint is acknowledged within five working days of receipt. The letter of complaint should be passed to the Headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body should be informed. The matter will be investigated in the usual way and a copy of the response sent to the receiving governor and to the Chair of the Governing Body.

### **Processing of complaints**

The Headteacher will investigate all complaints, except in cases relating to the alleged misconduct of the Headteacher. Thereafter HCC's Education Personnel Procedures will apply. No action will be taken without the subject(s) of the complaint having an opportunity to comment on the complaint and to suggest independent witnesses who might be called upon to provide evidence to the investigating manager.

Most complaints are satisfactorily resolved by the appropriate manager reporting back, usually in writing, to the complainant. If the complainant is still not satisfied, they may appeal to the Headteacher, who has final authority in matters of the internal organisation, management and control of the school. If a parent feels that the Headteacher has acted unreasonably in the exercise of his duties and powers, he/she may appeal in writing to the Chair of the Governing Body.

The outcome of the investigation and any action taken as a result will be entered in the record of complaints. The Headteacher will report each term to the Chair of the Governing Body on complaints received and any implications arising.

In the event of a complaint being made against the Head teacher a letter, marked Private and Confidential, to the Chair of Governors should be sent to the school.

### **The Role of the Governing Body**

If all other stages of the complaints procedure have been completed and the complainant is still dissatisfied they should write to the Chair of the Governing Body explaining the reasons for their continuing dissatisfaction.

Complaints about the school's policies or procedures which are unable to be resolved informally by the Chair of the Governing Body may be referred to a Governing Body Complaints Panel convened by the Clerk to Governors for that purpose.

Complaints about the Headteacher or any member of the Governing Body should be directed in the first instance to the Chair of Governing Body.

Allegations of misconduct will be dealt with according to the relevant County procedures.

In matters which fall within the scope of County procedures, such as pupil exclusion appeals or staff disciplinary matters, those procedures will take precedence.

### **Governing Body Complaints Panel**

The complainant will receive notification of the date that the Panel will meet, at least 5 days in advance of the meeting. They will also be informed that they have the right to attend the meeting, and to be accompanied by a friend, legal representative, etc. The Head Teacher will also be invited to attend the meeting.

Whilst discussions at the meeting will be documented (usually by the Clerk) the meeting will be as informal as possible, with the main aim being to resolve the problem, and to achieve reconciliation between the complainant and the school. It provides an opportunity for you to explain your complaint and concerns, for the Head Teacher to explain the school's response, and for all people present to seek clarification through questions and discussion.

Once the discussion has ended, everyone apart from the Panel will leave the meeting, and the Panel will review matters and reach its decision. The Panel will provide to the complainant and to the school, a written decision on the complaint as soon as possible but within 10 working days. The complainant will also be advised of what options are open to them to appeal against the decision.

### **Residential Students at Lakeside school**

For pupils who attend the boarding provision at Lakeside School, the complaints system is the same. In addition to the system the boarding provision has a Grumbles and Gripes form. This is used for all low level/ minor issues. The boarding house has an independent visitor and a member of the governing body is responsible for monitoring the boarding provision.

Complaints concerning residential pupils/issues can be made and will be passed on to Ofsted at Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester. M1 2WD Tel: 03001231231. [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

### **The Role of the Secretary of State for Education**

When all other processes are concluded complaints that remain unresolved may be referred to the Secretary of State for Education, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT

**LAKESIDE SCHOOL**

**SCHOOL COMPLAINT FORM  
CONFIDENTIAL**

**Member of Staff receiving complaint:**

**Date complaint received:**

**Date reported to Head Teacher:**

**Complainant's Name:**

**Complainant's Address:**

**Telephone Number: Day:**

**Evening:**

**Pupil(s) Involved:**

**Nature of complaint**

**Initial action taken:**

**Date of acknowledgement letter (attach copy):**

**Date of Head Teacher's response (attach copy):**

**Resolved Y/N:**

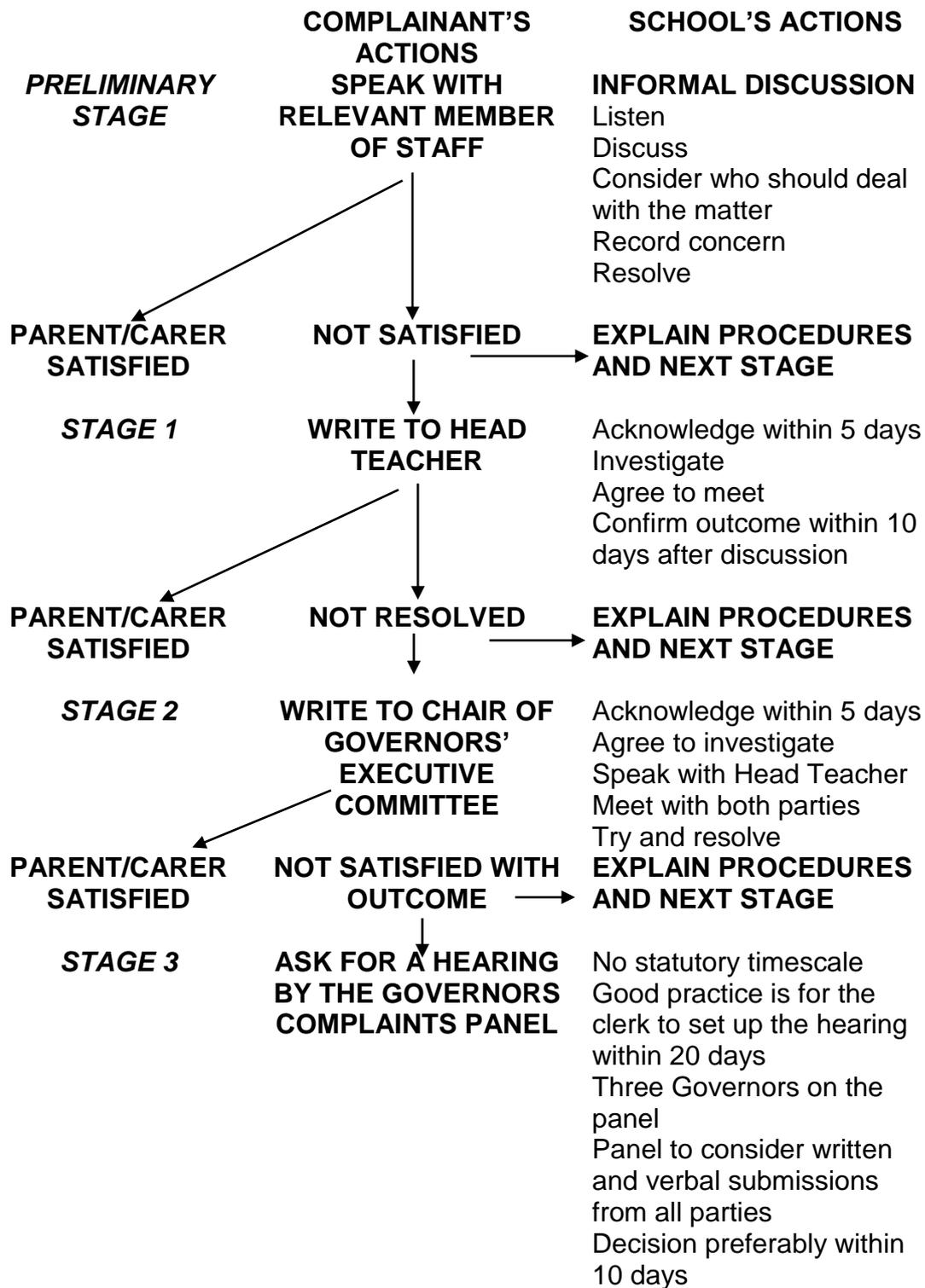
**Date:**

**Governors Involvement:**

**Ofsted**

**National Enquiry Line: 03001231231 [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)**

## STAGED APPROACH TO HANDLING COMPLAINTS



**THIS IS THE FINAL STAGE OF THE SCHOOLS' INTERNAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

## Making a Complaint

There may be times, while at Lakeside, that you become un-happy with the way you have been treated or un-happy about a certain situation.

It is important that you tell someone about this so that the school can help ensure that a decision is fair and that you are listened to.

A good person to speak to is your key-worker or any member of boarding staff.

If you would prefer to write down your concern, then a *Grumbles and Gripes* form would be a good place to start. *Grumbles and Gripes* forms can be found in your personal packs in your bedroom.

Boarding staff will read any *Grumbles and Gripes* form that they find and will ensure that something is done about your concern. They will then speak to you to make sure you are happy with the outcome.

For more serious concerns, or for small concerns that you don't feel are being listened to, a *Complaint* can be made.

You can ask a member of staff for help writing a *Complaint* or you can write it down and pass it to a member of staff.

A *Complaint* will need to be investigated by senior managers of the school and a written response will be returned to you as soon as possible. You will then have the chance to decide if you are happy with this outcome.

**Please remember: *A problem shared is a problem halved.***

