

## SCHOOL COMPLAINTS POLICY

*Since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2003 Governing Bodies of all maintained schools have been required, under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, to have in place a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides. This does not limit complainants to parents or carers of students registered at a school. A complainant could be a member of the wider community or representing an ex-pupil.*

It is in everyone's interest that complaints about Marshfields School are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The experience of the first contact between the complainant and the school can be crucial in determining whether the complaint will escalate.

Legally the Local Authority has no grounds to engage in issues that are school related, but they do all want to have 'satisfied customers.'

Taking informal **concerns** seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal **complaints**. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish or be asked to refer to the school's formal Complaints Policy.

The prime aim of Marshfields School's Complaints Policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner.

The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints.

Marshfields School Complaints Policy has four main stages:

- Stage 1 (informal): concern heard by an appropriate staff member
- Stage 2 (formal): Complaint heard by Headteacher
- Stage 3 (formal): complaint heard by Chair of Governors
- Stage 4 (formal): complaint heard by Governing Body complaints appeal panel.

### **Stage 1** – concern heard by staff member

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will often resolve concern. The school requests that parents and carers make their first contact with their child's class or form teacher.

On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an informal but informed response within a day or two.

However, if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 1, please write or call the school within 10 school working days. The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

### **Stage 2 – Complaint heard by Headteacher**

The Headteacher may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken.

The Headteacher will arrange for the complaint to be acknowledged within 5 school-working days of receiving it and a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. Following the investigation, the Headteacher will aim to provide a written response within 10 school-working days of sending the acknowledgement.

However, if a complaint is more complex to review this can be extended to a maximum of 20 school working-days. The school will provide you details of the new deadline and an explanation on the delay.

If you are not satisfied with the results at stage 2, please write to or call the school within 10 working days of getting our response.

The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

### **Stage 3 – complaint heard by Chair of Governors**

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 2 or the complaint is about the Headteacher, then you will need to write to the Chair of Governors c/o the school outlining the nature of your complaint and how you would like it to be resolved. The Chair of Governors will arrange for the complaint to be acknowledged within 5 school-working days of receiving it and a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further.

Following an investigation, the Chair of Governors will aim to provide a written response within 10 school working days of sending out the acknowledgement. However, if a complaint is more complex to review this can be extended to 20 school-working days. The school will provide you details of the new deadline and an explanation on the delay.

If you are dissatisfied with the result at stage 3, you will need to let the school know within 10 school-working days of getting the response.

The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

### **Stage 4 – complaint heard by Governing Bodies Complaints Appeal Panel.**

If the matter has still not been resolved at stage 3, then you will need to write to the Clerk to Governors giving details of the complaint, how you would like it to be resolved and asking that it is put before the appeal panel.

Should the Chair have been involved at any previous stage in the process a nominated Governor, impartial to the complaint, will convene a Complaints Panel. The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 school-working days of receiving it. The hearing will normally take place within 20 school-working days of sending the acknowledgement.

The aim of the Appeal Panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the Panel's decision in writing within 5 school-working days after the date of the hearing.

The letter will also contain what you need to do if you wish to take the matter further.

**The Governors appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process.**

From 1<sup>st</sup> August 2012 complaints about maintained schools not resolved by the school should be addressed to the School Complaints Unit (SCU), Department of Education, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Piccadilly Gate, Manchester, M1 2WD