



Lawnside Lower School - Complaints Policy

1. Rationale & Aims

Lawnside Lower School takes all comments seriously.

The aim of this document is to set out how any complaint from a parent, carer, the general public or a pupil is dealt with, and to ensure it is handled in the most appropriate and efficient manner. The procedure has been adapted from the recommendations made by the UK Government on www.education.gov.uk and complies with section 29 of the Education Act 2002. This document may be reviewed as deemed appropriate or as required by Law or Regulation.

2. Introduction

There are two distinct types of complaint under this document:

Informal 'Concern' which is an informal complaints procedure to allow concerns to be expressed quickly and in complete confidence with appropriate school staff. The process is kept informal with the aim of resolving the complaint as quickly as possible.

The Formal Complaints Procedure.

All complaints, no matter what their nature, whether formal or informal will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Concerns raised in the media (including social media) will not be taken into account. Lawnside Lower School will only respond to complaints raised in accordance with this document.

No form of physical or verbal abuse towards staff will be tolerated and if there is any danger of any, the police will be notified immediately and you may be asked to leave and be banned from the site. You may also face criminal prosecution if any damage is caused by you.

3. Timings

In all cases, once a Concern of Formal complaint is received by Lawnside Lower School, an acknowledgement will be sent out within two working days.

Depending on the type of complaint, you will receive a response within 10 to 15 working days. However, in some cases which are which are complex or where more time is required, we will contact you and let you know. We will also give you a reasonable estimate of when you will hear from us with a resolution or decision.

For the purposes of this document, a 'working day' is a day when the school is open for teaching pupils in formal lessons Monday to Friday and excludes Saturdays, Sundays and any school holidays, Closure days and Bank holidays.

4. Procedure

If you have a concern to raise you should follow the procedure below.

Informal Procedure

Stage 1

On most occasions these can be resolved immediately by speaking to your child's class teacher or appropriate staff member. It may be necessary for you to make an appointment at a time which is convenient to both of you. However, in the circumstances listed below, a formal letter should be immediately sent to the Headteacher.

- If the concern is about the actions of a member of staff and it would be difficult for you to discuss the issue with that member of staff or
- If the concern places the health, well-being or safety of the pupils at risk

If the concern relates to the Headteacher, the concern should be sent in writing for the attention of the Chair of Governors via the school office.

Stage 2

If you feel your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction under stage 1 of the informal procedure, you should contact a senior member of staff.

Formal Procedure

Stage 1

If you feel that the concern raised under the informal procedure above has not been resolved to your reasonable satisfaction, you should contact the Headteacher. This should be submitted in writing on the Complaints Form (Appendix C). You will receive an acknowledgement within two working days.

If the Headteacher deems it necessary, s/he will discuss the complaint with the Senior Leadership team and a named person will be appointed to investigate the matter. The named person will:

- Carry out an investigation in a timely manner
- Only interview children when the nature of the complaint is sufficiently serious to warrant it; and
- Maintain accurate notes of the investigation

Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the outcome under Stage 1 or you feel that the Complaint remains unresolved, you should write a letter to the Chair of the Local Governing body and request that your complaint be considered further. The chair of governors will respond within 15 working days.

Stage 3

If the complaint remains unresolved, after Stage 2, you should write to the chair of the governing Body again requesting that the complaint is referred to a Complaints appeal Panel (see Appendix B which contains the detailed procedure for the Appeal Panel)

Complaining to the Secretary of State

If you feel that the Complaints Appeal Panel has acted unreasonable or illegally a complaint should be made in writing to the Secretary of State for Education.

Vexatious Complaints

Lawnside Lower School takes all complaints raised seriously but, when all the stages of this complaints Procedure have been followed and you still remain unsatisfied despite our reasonable endeavours to resolve the complaint and you re-open the same issue, Lawnside may determine that your correspondence is of a vexatious nature and no further correspondence will be entered into.

Lawnside Lower School will not accept any form of continued harassment of their Staff or Governors directly or on social media and will also view this as vexatious in nature, and no further correspondence will be entered into.

You are still entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

All Complaints are recorded by the school. Trends are analysed and appropriate action taken by the Senior Leadership Team. Complaints analysis/trends are submitted to Governors once a term.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, the School will keep any information relating to a complaint in a secure manner for a period of 6 years.

6. Implementation and Review

This policy will be made known to all staff, parents/carers and Governors and published on the Lawnside Lower School website. Copies are also available upon request from the School Office. This policy will be reviewed annually or as required.

7. Author and Date

Written due to review of previous policy (from March 15)

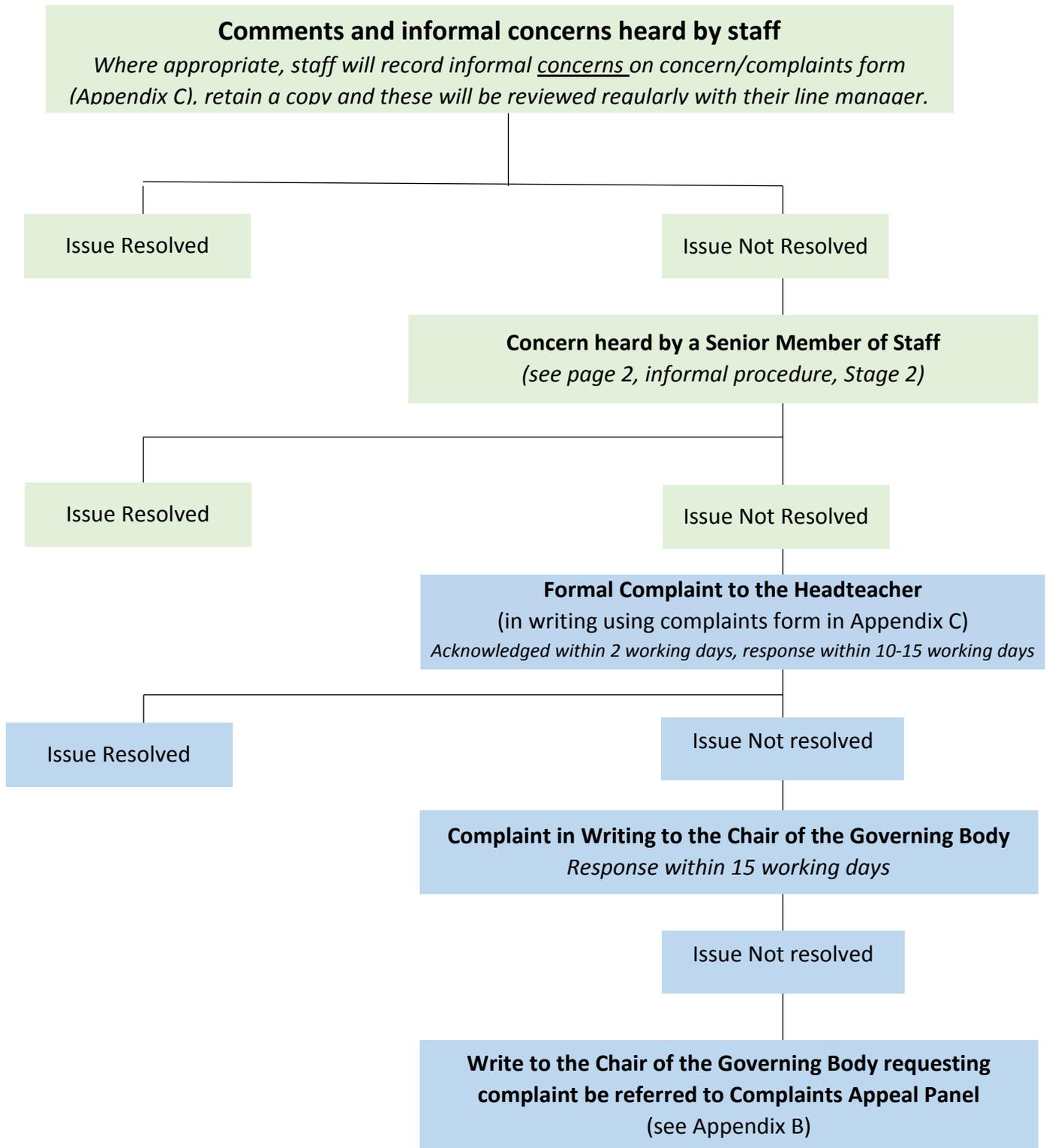
Written by: Elaine Ashcroft, Acting Head – November 2017

Ratified by Governors –

Review: November 18

Appendix A – Complaints Procedure Flow Chart

KEY	
	Informal Stage
	Formal Stage



Appendix B – Process for Complaints Appeal Panel

The last stage of the complaints Process is when an appeal is made to the Chair of Governors. The Chair will nominate a number of other Governors to form an appeals panel with delegated powers to hear the complaint at this stage. The remit of the panel is as follows:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- Uphold the complaint in whole or part
- Decide upon the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- Recommend changes to procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur

It is important that the Appeal Panel hearing is independent and impartial therefore no governor may sit on the panel if they have had prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.

The aim of the hearing, which remains private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between you and the school.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Panel

The Role of the Clerk

Once an appeal has been referred to the Complaints Appeal Panel, the Clerk to the Governing body will act as a contact point for all parties. The Clerk will set the date, time and venue of the hearing, collate any written material and circulate this to all parties in advance of the hearing, record the proceedings and notify all parties of the panel's decision.

The Role of the Chair of the Panel

The Chair of the Panel will ensure that:

- The remit of the panel is explained to all parties and each party has the opportunity to put their case forward without undue interruption
- The key issues are addressed
- Key findings of the fact are made
- Parents/carers and others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease (parents/carers may be accompanied at the hearing if they wish and should inform the Clerk of who will be present)
- The hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy
- The panel is open minded and acting independently
- No member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- Each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions
- Written material is seen by all parties – if a new issue arises it would be useful to give all parties the opportunity to consider and comment on it

Checklist for a Hearing Panel

The panel need to take the following points into account:

- The hearing is as informal as possible
- Third party witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence

- After introductions, you will be invited to explain your complaint, and be followed by witnesses
- The Headteacher may question both you and your witnesses after each has spoken
- The Headteacher will then be invited to explain the School's actions and be followed by the School witnesses
- You may question both the Headteacher and the witnesses after each has spoken
- The panel may ask questions at any point
- You will then be invited to sum up your complaint
- The Headteacher will then be invited to sum up the School's actions and response to the complaint
- The Chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within the set time scale
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues

Notification of the Panel's Decision

The chair of the Panel needs to ensure that you are notified of the panel's decision, in writing, with the panel's response within 5 school days of the hearing. This letter would explain if there are any further rights of appeal and, if so, to whom they need to be addressed.

Lawnside Lower School Complaints Form

Appendix C – Concern / Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Headteacher

Please tick appropriate box:

Informal Concern

Formal Complaint (The Informal Procedure within the Complaints Policy should have been followed before a Formal complaint is lodged unless:

- the Concern is about the actions of a member of staff
- the Concern places the health, well-being or safety of the pupils at risk

Formal complaints should be submitted in writing on this form. Please note that all formal complaints will be given directly to the Headteacher.

Complainant's Name:

Relationship to the Pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Daytime telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give details of the concern/complaint.

What action, if any, has already been taken to try and resolve this matter (who has been spoken to and what were the responses?

What would the complainant like to see happen now to resolve the complaint?

Please continue on reverse if necessary

Agreed by Staff:

Mrs E. Ashcroft	Mrs L Blackford	Mrs Z Russell	Mrs C. Hanmer	Mrs R. Robinson
Mrs E Andrews	Mrs C. Gower	Mrs J Blackman	Mrs R Mc Cormack	Miss H Khindey
Mrs D Sullivan	Mrs L Allum	Mrs S Blunden	Miss R Slender	Mrs G Ely
Mrs S Barton	Mrs A Jones	Mrs S Olivadoti	Mrs J Bell	Mr A Davies
Mrs K Walker	Miss L Cain	Mrs L Levantine	Mrs J Martin	Mrs L Simmons
Mrs C Valentine	Mrs K Walker	Mrs A Hughes	Miss C Brown	Mrs L Yorke
Mrs D Khalique	Mrs G James	Mrs O Phillips	Mrs J Ward	Mrs K Glynn

Ratified by Governors:

Signed:

Acting Head

Chair of Governors