

Woods Primary School



Complaints Policy

Procedure for Dealing with Complaints

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. 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 and, in all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues.

We welcome suggestions for improving our work in school. Be assured that, no matter what you want to tell us, our support and respect for your child, will not be affected in any way. Please tell us of your concern as soon as possible. It is difficult for us to investigate an incident or problem properly if it took place some time ago. We do appreciate the assistance we receive from parents in addressing any problems that arise. Currently we receive very few complaints.

Problems sometimes arise from misunderstandings, which are easily addressed. Most concerns and complaints can be sorted out quickly by speaking with your child's class teacher. Parents and teachers treating each other with mutual respect and support, is an excellent role model for our children.

If, having spoken to the class teacher, you still have concerns; you should arrange to speak with the Principal. She will investigate the problem and discuss her findings with you so that a way forward can be found which serves the best interest of both the school and your child. In the unlikely event of the problem remaining unresolved you can put your complaint in writing and, if necessary, subsequently refer it to the Chair of Governors.

The procedure to be followed in the event of a complaint being made is summarized in the following stages:

Stage 1: Informal Action

- Phone the school to speak to the secretary and arrange a suitable time to meet face to face with the teacher.

- Parents discuss concerns with the class teacher.
- If the teacher is unable to deal immediately with the matter, a clear note is made, including complainant's name, contact number and date, and the parent is contacted as soon as the matter has been investigated. The teacher may also consult the Principal at this stage.
- The teacher ensures that the parent is clear what action or monitoring of the situation has been agreed.
- If no satisfactory solution has been found, parents are asked if they wish their concern to be considered further.
- A record should be made of all meetings.

Stage 2: Referral to the Principal

- The Principal acknowledges the complaint, orally or in writing, within 5 working days and informs the Chair of the Board of Governors
- A meeting is arranged with the complainant to clarify and supplement any information given.
- The Principal investigates further, interviewing witnesses as appropriate; if the complaint centres on a pupil, the pupil would normally be interviewed with a parent present or, if this is not possible, with a member of staff who is not directly involved.
- The Principal keeps written records of meetings, telephone conversations and other documentation.
- Once all relevant facts have been established, the Principal responds. If the complaint was in writing, a written response will be sent.
- If the complainant is not satisfied, they are advised to write to the Chair of the Board of Governors (B.O.G), Canon Barry Paine at Woods Primary School, 38 Oaklea Road, Ballyronan, Magherafelt BT45 6HX.
- If the complaint is against the Principal, the Stage 2 procedures are carried out by the Chair of the B.O.G, Canon Barry Paine.

Stage 3: Review by the B.O.G.

- The Chair acknowledges receipt of the written complaint, informing the complainant that the complaint is to be heard by a Committee of 3 members of the School's B.O.G. within 20 working days.
- The Chair arranges to convene a Complaints' Panel elected from members of the B.O.G. The members should have no prior involvement with the complaint and they should elect a Chair for the committee. All relevant documentation regarding the complaint should be given to the members of the committee as soon as possible.
- The Chair of the Committee will write and inform all concerned of the date, time and place of the meeting at least 5 working days in advance. The notification to the complainant should also inform him/her of the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend and the right to submit further written evidence.

- It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Committee to ensure that a written record of the meeting is made.
- After the meeting, the Committee will consider the evidence and a written decision will be sent to the Principal and the complainant within 15 working days. If for any reason, the review of the complaint takes longer to complete you will be informed of revised time limits and kept up-to-date on progress.

Beyond the School's Board of Governors

- *If following stage three you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you can refer the matter to the office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO). This stage should only happen when Stage 1, 2 and 3 have been exhausted.*
- *The Ombudsman provides a free, independent and impartial service for handling complaints about schools in Northern Ireland. You have the right to complain to the Ombudsman if you feel that you have been treated unfairly or have received a poor service from a school and your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction. A complaint should normally be referred to NIPSO within 6 months of the final response from the school.*

Contact details for the NIPSO are:

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman
Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman
Progressive House
33 Wellington Place
BELFAST
BT16HN

Freepost: FREEPOST NIPSO

Telephone: 02890233821
Freephone: 0800343424
Email nipso@nipso.org.uk
Web: www.nipso.org.uk

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Parent Code of Conduct Policy.

Chairperson of the Board of Governors: _____ Date: _____

Reviewed January 2019.