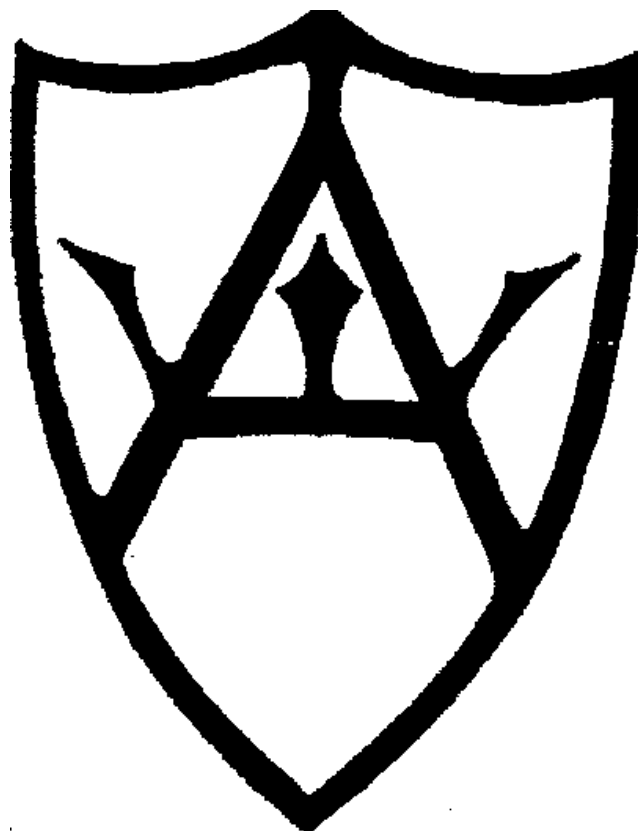


Alfriston School



Concerns & Complaints Policy

Reviewed: April 2017

Approved by FGB: April 2017

Next review: April 2020

The governors and headteacher of Alfriston School place a very high priority on providing an excellent education for all the children in the School – an education with which they and their parents will be fully satisfied.

From time to time, however, parents, and sometimes children, will have concerns. It is the School's policy to deal with such concerns swiftly and effectively, in an informal way, so that they do not become complaints.

When, for whatever reason, such concerns are not allayed by informal means, the School's policy is to have in place procedures for the handling of formal complaints according to the law.

The governors require the headteacher to draw up procedures for the handling of concerns and complaints, including the necessary briefing of all staff and appropriate documentation to support such briefing.

The governors will ensure that these procedures are well publicised via the school website, and that copies of this policy and its associated procedures are available from the School office.

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Board every three years.

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS**THE INFORMAL STAGE**

If you have any concern, it is best for you to bring it to the immediate attention of the staff member involved, so that the School can resolve the matter with you quickly. If you feel that it could be difficult to do so through informal discussion with the staff member involved, you may wish to bring the matter to the attention of the headteacher, who would hear your concern at this informal stage. The headteacher will then do her best to resolve your concern informally with you, take any action necessary, and tell you what has been done.

STAGE 1: COMPLAINT HEARD BY THE HEADTEACHER

If such initial attempts to resolve your concern informally have been unsuccessful, you may wish to make a formal complaint to the headteacher. Your complaint may be put in writing, or discussed at an appointment made with the headteacher, who will record your complaint. This can also happen by telephone by appointment, if necessary.

Your complaint will be handled sensitively and will be investigated by the headteacher, or in her absence by the deputy headteacher.

The headteacher will:

- try to establish **what** has happened so far, and **who** has been involved
- clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved
- meet with you or contact you, for example if further information is necessary
- clarify what you feel would put things right
- interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained about, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- conduct the interview with an open mind
- keep notes of the interview
- make clear to you what action will be taken by the School to resolve your complaint

If you feel that the matter remains unresolved, you may decide to take your complaint to Stage 2 by referring it to the Chair of Governors.

If the complaint is about the headteacher, proceed to Stage 2.

STAGE 2: COMPLAINT HEARD BY THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

If you still feel that your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you should write a letter to the Chair of Governors requesting a review of your complaint. If for any reason you would find it hard to write such a letter, the school can put you in touch with someone who could help you. Your letter should be sent to the School, and in it you should make clear why you are complaining, to whom you have already spoken, and what you would like to happen as a result of your complaint.

The Chair of Governors will acknowledge your letter within 5 school days and provide you with a substantive response within 15 school days. The Chair may need to hold interviews with the headteacher and possibly other members of staff, and notes will be kept of those meetings.

The Chair will write to you with the findings of the review within 15 school days. In case you feel that your complaint still remains unresolved, this letter will include details of the next stage of the procedure.

**STAGE 3:
COMPLAINT HEARD BY THE GOVERNORS' COMPLAINTS PANEL**

If you still feel that your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you need to write to the Clerk to the Governors at the school, repeating the substance of your complaint and why you feel it has not been resolved to your satisfaction, and asking that it be heard by the Governors' Complaints Panel. Arrangements will then be made to convene the panel to hear your complaint.

The Governing Body will nominate a number of Governors who have delegated powers to hear complaints at this third stage, acting on behalf of the full Governing Body. Three of them will be chosen to form an independent panel to hear your complaint on a mutually convenient date.

The Governing Body has produced terms of reference for any complaints panel, and these will be made available to you by the school before your hearing.

The panel will ask you to explain why you feel that your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction, and the evidence for your view. It may also ask to hear evidence from anyone else involved. The panel will then confer, reach a decision about your complaint, and write to you telling you that decision and the reasons for it.

YOUR FURTHER RECOURSE

The Governors' complaints panel is the last school-based stage of the complaints process. However, if you still feel that your complaint has not been resolved, and that either the Governing Body or the East Sussex Children's Services Department has acted unreasonably, there are two other organisations you can approach. Neither of them will take any action until you have been through all three school-based stages of the complaints procedure.

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES

Under section 496 or 497 of the Education Act 1996, complainants have a right of appeal to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families if they believe that the Governing Body or the East Sussex Children's Services Department has acted unreasonably.

Complainants should be advised to write to the School Complaints Unit (SCU) at the Department of Education, 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate, Manchester M1 2WD.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN

If a complainant feels that there has been maladministration in the manner in which a complaint has been dealt with, they can take this to the Local Government Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman can investigate complaints about how something has been done but he cannot question what has been done simply because someone does not agree with it. The Ombudsman cannot investigate the internal management of schools and colleges. The Ombudsman would not take action until the school procedures have been completed.

CONTACT DETAILS:-

Local Government Ombudsman Advice Team

Tel - 0300 061 0614

<http://www.lgo.org.uk/>

APPENDIX

COMPLAINTS FLOWCHART

