



**D R A F T**

## **The Meadows Sports College Complaints, concerns and compliments policy**

Date of approval by Governing Body: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Review: \_\_\_\_\_

*This policy is in line with Section 20 of the Education Act 2002*

### **Aims of policy**

- To put the interests of pupils above all else
- To work in partnership with families and the wider community
- To be fair, open and honest
- To resolve complaints through dialogue, mutual respect and understanding and in a timely manner
- To celebrate our successes' through the compliments procedures

The Complaints procedures will not be used to investigate the following statutory procedures:

- Child Protection / Safeguarding Issues
- Admissions to schools
- Exclusions
- Serious complaints against staff
- Special Education Needs Provision (SEN Tribunal)
- Statutory Proposals for School Re-organisation
- Risk Assessment/Claim for Damages

### **Complaints can be made about:**

- Non-compliance with curriculum issues
- Failure to provide a satisfactory service
- Failure to follow policies and processes
- The conduct of staff/Governors

Please refer to additional school policies for further details

### **Department for Education defines the following:**

A '**concern**' may be defined as '*an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought*'. A **complaint** may be generally defined as '*an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action*'.

### **Note:**

Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that a school provides, unless separate statutory procedures apply. It is accepted that complaints, concerns or compliments should be raised as soon as possible (we would consider this to be within a three month time frame, but this is not exclusive).

**If you have a complaint, concern or compliment:**



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## **Stages of the complaints procedure**

### **Informal Procedures**

This stage will take no more than 20 school days.

General day-to-day concerns should be raised initially with the class teacher

- where applicable.
- If your concern/complaint is not resolved or it is of a more serious nature you should make an appointment to meet the HeadTeacher.
- We will take all complaints seriously and investigate them thoroughly (clarifying what happened, who was involved, what action would put the situation right etc.) within a timescale of 20 working days. Most complaints will be fully resolved at this stage.

### **Formal Procedures**

Only if the above informal stages fail to resolve a complaint will formal investigations begin.

- A formal written complaint should be sent to the chair of governors, via the school. This should include a statement about the nature of the complaint, how the school has handled the complaint to date and what action you would like to resolve the complaint.
- A committee of 3 governors and the HeadTeacher will consider all formal complaints within 10 working days. A meeting will be arranged with you within another 10 working days ensuring that you have at least one week notice
- After reviewing the complaint evidence the committee will decide on a course of action and inform you of this in writing
- If you consider that the governors' committee has not acted properly in carrying out the investigation you have the right to complain to the Local Authority. The Local Authority has the responsibility to ensure that governing bodies act properly but does not have the power to instruct them to overturn their decision
- Letters to the Local Authority should be sent to the Director of Education
- N.B. The Local Authority can only act when all steps of the school's policy have been followed.

Formal complaints can also be sent to the DfE but again it is expected that all local procedures have been followed first.

### **A complaint, concern or compliment may be made in the following ways:**

- Telephone (see above)
- Writing
- Electronically via e-mail to [enquiries@themeadows.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@themeadows.sandwell.sch.uk)

### **When a complaint, concern or compliment has been received:**

- Notes will be made regarding the initial and subsequent contact
- Record the start, progress and end of the complaint, concern or compliment procedure
- Hold these documents centrally for review (see also Freedom of Information Act and Data Protection Act)

Under the Equality Act (2010), we will provide complaints, concerns or compliments documentation in an accessible manner.

### **Governing Body Review**

- Complaints would not be shared with the entire governing body, just a subcommittee thereof, except in very general terms, in case an appeal panel needs to be organised
- Complainants can request for an independent panel to hear the complaint if they believe that there is likely to be bias in the proceedings. The Department for Education notes that schools should consider this, but ultimately the decision is made by the school governors
- The governing Body review would feed into school improvement

### **Serial and persistent complainants**

The school will resist abuse of the complaints procedure and may reserve the right not to investigate any complaints considered to be vexatious or malicious or where the headteachers and chair of governors is satisfied with the actions already taken.

The Upper Tribunal (Freedom of Information) defines vexatious as “the ‘...*manifestly unjustified, inappropriate or improper use of a formal procedure.*’

For additional details, please review: “Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016 - Departmental advice for maintained schools, maintained nursery schools and local authorities” January 2016.

### **Concerns**

If you have a ‘day-to-day’ concerns about your child that you wish to discuss, please contact the Pastoral Team on 0121 569 7086 or email [pastoral@themeadows.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:pastoral@themeadows.sandwell.sch.uk). This team will request support from the Senior Leadership Team of the school if required.

Please note that any issues relating to safeguarding of young people will be referred immediately according to Safeguarding Procedures.

### **Compliments**

It is important to recognise the successes of the school and celebrate these. We welcome positive feedback about how our school operates.

If families or members of the wider community wish to express their compliments to the school or an individual member of staff, these can be forwarded to the Head teacher and Governing Body at the school.

Compliments can also be recorded in the compliments book situated in the school reception.

All compliments will be celebrated and shared with the staff .