

# Townsend Church of England School

## Complaints Policy

### Summary

How we will deal with your concerns

#### HOW TO COMMENT OR COMPLAIN

##### We care about what you think

Each day this school makes many decisions and tries hard to do the best for all the children. Your comments - either positive or negative - are helpful for future planning.

You may want to tell us about a particular aspect of this school, though not actually make a complaint - you just want to get something 'off your chest'.

If you are dissatisfied about the way your child is being treated, or any actions or lack of action by us, please feel free to contact us using the school address –

Townsend Church of England School, High Oaks, St Albans, Hertfordshire. AL3 6DR

##### Our aims

- Your complaint will be dealt with honestly, politely and in confidence.
- Your complaint will be looked into thoroughly and fairly.
- If your complaint is urgent we will deal with it more quickly.
- We will keep you up to date with progress as appropriate.
- You will get an apology if we have made a mistake.
- You will be told what we are going to do to put things right.
- You will get a reply to formal complaints within **28 school days (5½ weeks)**.

**Townsend Church of England School**  
**Respect for All, Achievement for All**  
Website: [www.townsend.herts.sch.uk](http://www.townsend.herts.sch.uk)

Based on the Hertfordshire County Council model procedures for dealing with School based complaints as adapted and adopted by Townsend Church of England School

## **How to make a complaint**

### **In the first instance – informal stage**

If you have a concern about anything we do, or if you wish to make a complaint, you can do this by writing. We hope that most complaints can be settled quickly and informally, either by putting matters right or by giving you an explanation. If there is something you are not happy about, or you don't understand why we are doing something in a particular way, please make an appointment to come in and discuss it with the class teacher or another appropriate member of staff, such as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) if it is about Special Needs. If you are uncertain about who the appropriate person is, the Head Teacher will be able to help by asking one of his team to assist you.

We know that it can feel uncomfortable to question or challenge something, but if you don't tell us what is worrying you we cannot explain what we are doing or try to put it right. If the member of staff you speak to in the first instance is unable to attempt to resolve the matter, you can write to the appropriate senior member of staff. Again, if you are uncertain about who is the appropriate person, the Head Teacher will be able to help by asking one of his team to assist you.

If necessary, you can request a meeting with the a senior member of staff provided by the Head Teacher who will investigate your complaint and aim to inform you of the outcome within 10 school days (2 weeks).

If your first contact is with individual Governors, they will advise you to take up your concerns with the appropriate member of staff. A Governor should not be made aware of a potential complaint as they may be required to sit on a Panel in the event of a formal hearing (Stage Two) and should be impartial.

If your complaint is about the Head Teacher, you can write to the Chair of Governors. If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) you might find it helpful to talk to our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) or your child's named Special Needs Officer at the Local Authority. The SEND Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS – formerly Parent Partnership) may also be able to help you.

### **Second - formal stage**

If you remain dissatisfied following Stage 1 and wish to take your complaint further, you will be asked to complete a form or write a letter addressed to the Chair of Governors. In the letter you should:

- Make it clear why you are complaining.
- Say who you have spoken to already.
- Explain what you would like to happen as a result of your complaint.

The Chair of Governors will arrange for your complaint to be considered and investigated under the arrangements approved by the Governing Body. This could involve a Panel of Governors. If the Chair of Governors or another Governor has been involved in discussions to help settle the disagreement at Stage 1, s/he should arrange for another Governor to take charge of the investigation. The Governor in charge of investigating the complaint may ask you to write with further details or ask to meet you to discuss your concerns.

You should make sure that the Governors' Complaint Panel is provided with any written information or evidence you intend to use in a formal hearing. You may bring a friend, representative or interpreter to any meeting if you wish. The Chair of the Panel may invite any person who may help establish the facts

of the complaint. The Chair should tell you who this person is before the meeting. If any member of staff is required by the Governing Body to attend a meeting they will have the opportunity to be accompanied or represented as they wish. A member of staff named in a complaint may also choose to attend a meeting, even if not required to do so by the Governors. They may be represented. If this happens, we will inform you in advance.

When the Panel has fully investigated your complaint, the Chair of the Panel or the Governor in charge of the investigation will write to you to tell you the findings. These findings will be reported to the Governing Body. The Chair of Governors will then write to you confirming the outcome of your complaint and any agreed actions to be taken. Our Governing Body will aim to deal with your complaint within 28 school days (5½ weeks).

### **Further recourse**

Most complaints are resolved by this process. Should your complaint not be resolved, your further options are as follows:

It should be noted however that if you wish to pursue this route, you must do so within 20 working days (4 weeks) of receiving the written outcome of the hearing into your complaint. After 20 working days (4 weeks), neither the school nor the Local Authority is under any obligation to investigate or progress your complaint any further.

If the complaint is about denomination Religious Education or Collective Worship there is no right of complaint to the Local Authority but you may complain to Diocesan Authority.

The Diocesan Director of Education, Diocesan Office, Holywell Lodge, 41 Holywell Hill, St Albans, AL1 1HE.

☒ You can complain to the Secretary of State at the Department for Education:

In the case of complaints about **Special Educational Needs provision**, you may complain further to the Local Authority. This should be done by writing to the Children's Services Complaints Manager. Parents / carers who remain dissatisfied following the investigation by the Local Authority have the right to complain to the Secretary of State for Education.

Hertfordshire County Council  
Pegs Lane  
Hertford  
Hertfordshire  
SG13 8DQ  
0300 123 4040  
01992 555555

The Secretary of State  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT  
Website: [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)  
Telephone: 0370 000 2288

**For all other types of complaint, including those regarding bullying and the National Curriculum there is no third stage of complaint to the Local Authority.**

**For almost all complaints there is no third right of further complaint or appeal to the Local Authority beyond the schools Governing Body.**

Parents have the right to complain to the Secretary of State at the Department for Education (under the Education Act 1996), if they believe that the Governing Body or the LA is acting or proposing to act unreasonably (section 496), or is failing to carry out a statutory duty (section 497). This has to mean that the LA or the Governing Body is acting outside its powers, or misusing them. Only then would the Secretary of State follow up the complaint.

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