

# THE BIRCHES SPECIALIST SUPPORT SCHOOL

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

We believe that our school provides a good education for all our children, and that the head teacher and other staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents/carers. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents/carers..

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the policy or actions of the school. The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases.

If any parent/carer is unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or has any concern relating to the school, we encourage that person to talk to the child's class teacher immediately.

We deal with all complaints in accordance with procedures set out by the LA. If the school cannot resolve any complaint itself, those concerned can ask the LA to intervene.

All parents/carers have the right, as a last resort, to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education, if they still feel that their complaint has not been properly addressed.

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

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. In all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

### THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

If a parent/carer is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the child's progress.

Where a parent/carer feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the head

teacher. The head teacher considers any such complaint very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage.

Should a parent/carer have a complaint about the head teacher, they should first make an informal approach to one of the members of the governing body. If the governor is not the Chair of Governors it should be passed on to the Chair of Governors, who is then obliged to investigate it. The Chair of Governors will do all that he/she can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if a parent/carer is unhappy with the outcome, they can make a formal complaint, as outlined in appendices.

Only if an informal complaint fails to resolve the matter should a formal complaint be made to the governing body. This complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far. The parent/carer should send this written complaint to the Chair of Governors.

The governing body must consider all written complaints within three weeks of receipt. It arranges a meeting to discuss the complaint, and invites the person making it to attend the meeting, so that they can explain the complaint in more detail. The school gives the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting.

After hearing all the evidence, the governors consider their decision and inform the parent/carer about it in writing. The governors do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction.

If the complaint is not resolved, a parent/carer may make representation to the LA. Further information about this process is available from the school or from the LA. A further meeting is chaired by an independent person, who considers all the evidence and makes a further judgement in an attempt to resolve the complaint.

If any parent/carer is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then they are entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The head teacher logs all complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis. (The Complaints Log is kept in the head teacher's office)

The Governing Body will check that procedures have been followed, consider the subjects of complaints to see if there are implications for the school, and decide on appropriate action.

Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy.

A review of complaints will also be used to contribute to school self-evaluation

This policy is made available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

## APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 - School Complaints Procedure - Key Messages - (Part 1) -General Principles of Complaints
- Appendix 2 - (Part 2) -The Formal Complaints Procedure
- Appendix 3 -(Part 3) - Managing and Recording Complaints
- Appendix 4 - School Complaints Procedure
- Appendix 5 - Flow Chart- summary of dealing with complaints
- Appendix 6 - Example of a complaint form