



Kirkby CE Primary School **Complaints Policy**

Complaints about schools

All schools in Knowsley want their children to do well and be happy. We recognise that parents/guardians play an important part in making this happen. Schools aim to provide as many opportunities to keep you informed and involved in your child's progress - regular reports, open days and visits all helping the process. Questions and concerns are usually dealt with quickly and helpfully.

However, we recognise there are times when things go wrong, when concerns continue and differences of opinion develop. These can usually be resolved by speaking to the right person, but whatever the issue, it's always important to try to find an answer. Disruption to a child's education would be the most damaging result of all.

Please read the following guidance before making the complaint.

What actually happened?

Remember there is often more than one view about an incident or situation. For example, your child may well be telling the truth but it may not be the whole story.

What do you want to complain about?

What do you hope will happen as a result of your complaint? It might help to talk this through with a friend or relative.

When you make a complaint, remember that although you want to change a situation, you want it to end on a positive note with no bad feelings.

In order to do this you should try to follow the procedures carefully and always try not to put yourself or anyone else into a corner.

Knowsley's complaints procedure (see related information below) is designed to give anyone who has a grievance the opportunity to have their voice heard and to provide a route to a succession of higher authority if the complainant is unhappy at any stage with the informal response he or she has initially received.

Stage 1 - formal or informal complaint?

The Informal stage is when you contact the school direct if you are unhappy about something that has happened or is happening. It may be a letter, a telephone call or a visit to the school. The school should give you the opportunity to discuss your concerns with the appropriate member of staff.

At this stage, the Headteacher or other member of staff should attempt to resolve your concerns. It may be helpful at this point to identify what sort of outcome you are looking for. This will help tackle minor concerns quickly and effectively.

If a concern relates to a Headteacher, then you should contact the Chair of the Governing Body, although wherever possible you should try to resolve any concerns you have with the Headteacher before doing so.

The Formal stage is the point at which you believe that no-one is listening to you, or taking your concerns seriously. If you are not satisfied with the response received informally, then you should be given the opportunity to take the complaint to the next stage of the process, by placing your complaint in writing and asking the Headteacher to investigate.

Stage 2 - formal complaint to the Board of Governors

In most cases, the problem will have been solved by this stage. However, if you are unhappy then you should contact the Chair of Governors, care of the school, in writing. They will undertake a full investigation on your behalf. A reply will be sent to you within 14 school working days. If, after this, you are still not satisfied you should make a formal complaint to the Governing Body.

Complaints only rarely reach the level of the Governing Body, so it is important that you have thought things through carefully and that every possible attempt has been made to solve your concerns by other means.

A School Complaints Committee consisting of at least three members of the governing body will be convened. Schools may wish to seek advice at this stage from any relevant authority, e.g. the LEA, Board of Education (C of E) or Diocesan Schools' Commission (RC). It is important that the Committee should not only be independent, but be seen to be so.

A School Complaints Committee meeting should be arranged with enough notice given (usually 5 school working days) so that the

Committee, yourself and your representatives can attend. At this meeting the issues around the complaint can be discussed, with everyone involved invited to put their case forward.

A written response to you should be made within 15 school working days of the more formal complaint being made.

Stage 3 - if you are still unhappy

If, after the Governors have dealt with your complaint, you are still unhappy with the decision that was taken, you can contact Knowsley LA for advice on what to do next. For example, if you feel that the Governing Body has acted unreasonably, you can consider complaining to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills Ombudsman.