



## Allendale Primary School Complaints Procedure

This procedure is for use for complaints against the school, a member of staff or the *Governing Body*.

This complaint procedure should not be used for appeals and referrals that fall under other procedures and legislation and which are covered by other guidance, including:

- Admissions
- Exclusions
- Special Educational Needs
- Staff Grievances
- Child Protection
- Whistleblowing

An anonymous complaint will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances.

### **Stage One:**

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. In the first instance the complaint should be discussed between the person making the complaint and the member of staff involved. If the complainant feels that this is difficult to do, he/she can be referred to another member of staff. Where the complaint concerns the Headteacher or a governor, the complaint should be sent in writing to the *Chair of Governors*.

In the event that a member of staff / Headteacher / *Chair of Governors* feels too compromised to deal with a complaint, it will be referred to another member of staff or another *Governor*. The ability to consider the complaint objectively and impartially is crucial.

When a complaint is received in writing, using the form attached, the complainant will receive a written acknowledgement that the matter is being addressed. A letter explaining the outcome will follow, after investigation, within 25 working days.

If a complainant first approaches a *Governor*, this is inappropriate and he/she will be referred to the appropriate person, i.e. member of staff concerned or *Chair of Governors*. **Governors should not act unilaterally on an individual complaint outside the formal procedure or be involved at the early stages in case they are needed to sit on a committee at a later stage of the procedure.**

It is hoped that the vast majority of complaints can be resolved at this point.

## **Stage Two:**

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the way the complaint has been handled at stage one and wishes to pursue the initial complaint, the Headteacher / Chair of Governors will delegate the task of investigating the complaint to another staff member or another governor. The person making the complaint will be informed that an investigation is underway and that they will receive a response within 25 working days, or a letter explaining the reason for any subsequent delay.

Once the relevant facts have been established the person investigating will relay the decision, and the reason for the decision, in writing to the complainant.

## **Stage Three:**

If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the outcome, he/she should write to the Headteacher / Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint within ten school days of receipt of the decision letter. The Chair or another nominated governor will convene a governing body complaints committee if they consider it to be appropriate, after considering the report of the investigating officer.

The committee will consist of a minimum of three governors with delegated powers. The committee will be appointed by the Chair of Governors, with the chair of the committee being appointed when they meet. The complaints committee will take a decision as to any action to be taken in response to the complaint. For example, they may choose to:

- Convene a hearing at which the complainant will be invited to put forward their case. This should be held within 20 working days of the decision to hold a hearing;
- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- Recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur;

In reaching a decision the committee may take the advice of such bodies as they see fit, in particular the Local Authority.

The clerk of the complaints committee will inform both parties in writing of the decision of the committee within five school days.

If the complainant is still not satisfied, he/she can ask the Local Authority to review the procedure. The request to seek a review must be received by the LA, addressed to the Director of Education, within ten school days of the date of the hearing.