

# **Complaints Policy**

**To be reviewed:** Annually

**Policy Agreed:** 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017 **To be reviewed:** December 2018



This policy relates to the Nursery School, Pre-nursery and Family Centre

# Hungerford Nursery School Centre for Children & Families

## Complaints Policy

**This document sets out the policy for dealing with comments, grievances and complaints. This policy should read in conjunction with the following documents: Centre's Complaints procedure, Allegations of Abuse, Whistleblowing, Safer Working Practice and Safer Recruitment.**

This policy should be used for:

- Complaints relating to the schooling of your child
- Complaints about the education and care provided to pupils at Hungerford Nursery School & Family Centre
- Complaints about the Hungerford Nursery School Centre for Children and Families operational arrangements
- Complaints about the Family Centre's operational arrangements

This policy is limited to matters which can reasonably be investigated and therefore complaints should relate to matters which have occurred within the last 12 months.

This policy should not be used for:

- Complaints by staff relating to grievances about their employment
- Complaints about the actions of a governor
- Complaints about the actions of another parent
- Allegations of abuse
- Issues between Hungerford Nursery School & Family Centre and community groups

These matters will be dealt with by:

- Complaints by staff relating to grievances about their employment (There is a separate staff grievance procedure )
- Complaints about the actions of a governor (This should be reported to Chair of the Governing Body in the first instance, and considered with reference to the West Berkshire Governors Code of Conduct)
- Complaints about the actions of another parent (This should be reported to the Headteacher who will investigate whether action can be taken by Hungerford Nursery School & Family Centre)
- Allegations of abuse (Any allegations of abuse should be discussed with the Headteacher or a senior staff member in the first instance.
- Issues between the Centre and community groups (These will be resolved informally by discussion)

### **Status**

Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 states the need to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to Hungerford Nursery School & Family Centre and to any community facilities or services the Nursery School & Family Centre provides. The law also requires the complaints procedure to be publicised.

### **Purpose**

The Centre's values are concerned with meeting the needs of pupils, parents and other stakeholders. The governing body believes that feedback is an important ingredient in self-evaluation and raising standards. All stakeholders should feel that their concerns or complaints can be voiced and will be considered seriously.

The Centre takes informal concerns seriously and aims to resolve them at the earliest stage in order to reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints.

The underlying principle is that concerns will be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures. The requirement to have a complaints procedure will not in any way undermine efforts to resolve the concern informally. Staff will endeavour to resolve issues on the spot.

Formal procedures will be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

### **Applicability**

The policy shall apply to all employees and governors of the Centre. It is the shared responsibility of the Headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body to ensure that these groups are made aware of the policy and procedure.

The Complaints Procedure will:

- encourage resolution of problems by **informal** means wherever possible;
- be easily **accessible** and **publicised**;
- be **simple** to understand and use;
- be **impartial**;
- be **non-adversarial**;
- allow **swift** handling with established **time-limits** for action and keeping people informed of the progress;
- ensure a full and **fair** investigation by an independent panel *where necessary*;
- respect people's desire for **confidentiality**;
- address all the points at issue and provide an **effective** response and **appropriate** redress, where necessary;
- provide **information** to Hungerford Nursery School & Family Centre senior management team so that services can be improved.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

***This section of the policy is taken from the separate document: Centre Complaints Procedure, which explains the process in more detail.***

In brief the procedure is as follows:

#### **Stage one:** (Informal)

Complaint/concern heard by staff member (informal);

#### **Stage two:** (Formal)

- Complaint heard by Headteacher/Family Centre Co-ordinator (formal) or
- Complaint is heard by the Chair of Governing Body (if complaint is about the headteacher) (formal);

#### **Stage three:** (Review)

Complaint heard by Governing Body's Complaints Panel (review);

A dissatisfied complainant can always take a complaint to the next stage.

The Complaints Policy and Procedure are publicised to all stakeholders through:

- the information given to new parents when their children join the Centre;
- posters displayed in areas of Hungerford Nursery School & Family Centre that will be used by the public, such as reception or the main entrance;
- the Centre's website.

If, at any stage of the process, the complainant starts legal action in relation to the matters under considerations, the complaints process will automatically cease, and all further correspondence will be with the Hungerford Nursery School & Family Centre's legal representatives.

### **Monitoring and evaluating the policy**

All documentation regarding complaints (including notes of any related meetings and telephone calls), the action taken and the final outcome will be recorded and a summary included in the Headteacher's termly report to governors.

The governing body will monitor the level and nature of complaints and review the outcomes on a regular basis to ensure the effectiveness of the procedure and make changes where necessary. Complaints information shared with the whole governing body will not name individuals.

The monitoring and review of complaints by the Centre and the governing body is a useful tool in evaluating the Hungerford Nursery School & Family Centre performance, and will contribute to school improvement. Any underlying issues identified will be addressed.

### **Record Keeping**

- At Stage 1 – heard by a member of staff, Headteacher made aware.
- At Stage 2 – Formal record kept by Headteacher. Communication may be in writing if appropriate, summarised on form and reported to Governors.
- Stage 3 – Formal record kept by Governor.

Only complaints relating to the schooling of the specific child would fall within the child's files. Other issues will be filed separately in a secure location and will be retained for a period of 7 years.