



## **COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE POLICY**

### **AIM**

It is the aim of the school to take complaints and grievances seriously, and investigate and deal with those complaints appropriately and sensitively. As far as is possible the school will act to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of all concerned, in so far as this does not adversely affect the operation of the school, the children in our care and the wider school community.

### **A complaint is:**

- an expression of dissatisfaction which you have about any service of the school, and which requires a response or may lead to an investigation;
- a perceived injustice or perceived failure on the part of the school to meet reasonable expectations about a specific issue.

### **TIME FRAME FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS**

Complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days.

A response to a complaint will be made within 15 working days.

If the Principal does not receive further contact from a complainant within 15 working days of the date of the response letter the matter will be deemed closed.

We will keep you informed about the progress of your complaint.

If this timescale cannot be met you will be informed of any delay, the reason for the delay and a revised timescale.

In the event of your complaint needing further investigation you will be kept informed of progress on a regular basis.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Complaints will be treated with discretion and information regarding a complaint will be shared only with those persons who need to be involved in order to bring the matter to a satisfactory resolution.



## **COMPLAINTS FROM PARENTS**

### **STAGE 1**

Parents who have a complaint should, in the first instance arrange to meet the school principal to discuss the matter. An appointment can be made by telephoning the school office. Most complaints dealt with in this way can be brought to a satisfactory resolution. If the complaint is about the Principal, please refer to Stage 3.

### **STAGE 2**

Parents who remain unhappy with the action taken to resolve a complaint may arrange to meet the principal again. If the resolution is still unsatisfactory they may wish to put their complaint in writing to the principal. Parents will, at this stage, be issued with a full copy of the school's complaints policy.

A written response will be returned to the parent within 15 working days, stating reasons why the school has taken the course of action it has and addressing the issues raised and action to be taken. Copies of these letters will be forwarded to the Chairman of the Board of Governors.

### **STAGE 3**

If the complaint is about the Principal, or, if having made representations to the principal verbally and in writing and received a response, parents who remain dissatisfied with the action of the school may write a letter of complaint to the Chair of the of the Board of Governors.

The Board of Governors or a complaints committee constituted of members of the Board of Governors will consider the complaint and consult with the various parties involved. A written response will be issued to the parent within 15 working days. Copies of all of this correspondence may be forwarded to the Education Authority if deemed appropriate.

The school will endeavour to reach a satisfactory and reasonable resolution to all complaints within the bounds of quality teaching and learning, health and safety, Department of Education regulations and financial viability.

Anonymous Complaints will only be considered by the school management to ensure safeguarding and good practice. In the case of such a complaint it is not reasonable that the complainant receive a response from the school. The outcomes of investigations into anonymous complaints are unlikely to be made public except in exceptional circumstance where it is considered to be in the public interest to do so.

**If all of the above stages have been exhausted:**

#### **Referral to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO)**

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you can refer the matter to the Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO). The Ombudsman provides a free, independent and impartial service for handling complaints about schools in Northern Ireland. You have the right to complain to the Ombudsman if you feel that you have been treated unfairly or have received a poor service from a school and your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction.



A complaint should normally be referred to NIPSO within six months of the final response from the School. The school must advise in its concluding letter that the complaint may be referred to the NIPSO if you remain dissatisfied.

Contact details for NIPSO are:

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman  
Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman  
Progressive House  
33 Wellington Place  
Belfast  
BT1 6HN  
Freepost: FREEPOST NIPSO

### **COMPLAINTS FROM STAFF**

- Grievances from teaching staff will be dealt with in the same fashion as is detailed for parents and in line with EANI and DE Policy.
- Grievances from non-teaching members of staff will be dealt with as outlined above and in accordance with EANI Policy.

### **Grievances between members of staff/ Dealing with disputes and Harassment**

When a staff member has a grievance with another member of staff they should discuss or report the grievance to the Principal. The principal will take the matter seriously and endeavour in the first instance to find a solution through consultation of the parties involved and the reaching of an agreed resolution.

If a member of staff is found to be at fault or in breach of school policy, the staff code of conduct or their terms and conditions of employment appropriate disciplinary action will be taken as specified by school, EANI or DE policy.

If the member of staff remains unhappy with the outcome they can complain to the Chair of the Board of Governors who will follow procedures in line with EANI and DE policy.

In the event of the grievance being with the Principal and the member of staff not wishing to complain directly to the Principal they can complain to the Vice Principal who will liaise with the Chair of Governors in seeking to resolve the issue.

All staff have the option to refer an issue that they feel is effecting their welfare and their ability to perform their duties effectively directly to the EANI staff welfare officer who is available through Human Resources Dept. of the EANI.

At all times the Principal or Chair of Governors will take advice from the EANI staff welfare officer and EANI Human Resources/Employee Relations Department.



### ***Staff Health and Emotional Well being***

In Forge Integrated Primary School we recognise that consideration needs to be given to keeping all staff in the school safe and well. Opportunities to improve the organization and management of the school can impact positively on the morale, self-esteem and stress levels of both teaching and non-teaching staff. Having a happy and healthy staff who are valued will impact on all aspects of the teaching and learning of the pupils.

Ensuring Staff health and emotional wellbeing, takes into account the relationship between professional growth, job enrichment and morale. It is important that the employee understands his/her role at work and how this fits with the goals of the school. It is also important that the Principal and Senior Management Team recognize each employee for their achievements and work.

#### **A health promoting workplace:**

- Provides an environment that protects health
- Provides appropriate occupational health support
- Provides opportunities and support for the promotion of health

To ensure the Health and Emotional Well being of Staff are catered for the school aims to have:

- Clear visionary leadership for staff
- Valued staff participation in decisions that affect their professional role
- Good communication and efficient decision-making processes
- Staff appraisal for work and achievements
- Development of individual professional growth
- Harmonious working relationships
- A team based approach to the teaching and learning in the school

#### **The school will contribute to personal health of staff by:**

- Fostering a positive work atmosphere that encompasses a healthy balance between work and home activities.
- Having a supportive culture in assisting staff making lifestyle decisions.
- Demonstrating flexibility when home issues become priority concerns for the individual.
- Encouraging a sense of fun.
- Allowing staff to discuss issues or concerns with the school nurse during visits
- Providing a safe and secure environment for staff to work in.
- Ensuring that teaching staff are aware of the services available from the teachers support network; [www.teachersupport.info](http://www.teachersupport.info) , 08003895362 which, while no longer operational in Northern Ireland remains a useful source of information for teachers.
- Ensuring that staff are aware that the EANI have a staff welfare service and that they can discuss issues about staff welfare by calling EANI Belfast Region Headquarters on 9056400 and asking to speak to the staff welfare officer.