The Hayes Primary School

Complaints Policy and Procedure Statement for Parents, Carers and the General Public

Date Policy Ratified: June 2026 **Date policy to be reviewed: June 2028**

1. Introduction

1.1 At The Hayes Primary School we strive to provide a good education for all our children. The Head Teacher and staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents, carers and the general public. This guidance, developed in consultation with the Board of Governors, is intended to be a good practice guide that will apply to most general complaints received by schools (subject to the exceptions outlined in 2.7). The aim of this procedure is to seek a resolution to a complaint and restore positive relationships. In the case of parental complaints, the aim is to arrive at a resolution that is in the best interests of the pupil.

The following policy sets out the procedures that the school follows in such cases (see pg 4 for our Procedure Statement).

1.2 If any parents/carers are unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or have any concerns relating to the school, we encourage them to talk to the child's class teacher immediately.

1.3 We stress that there is a clear difference between a **concern** and a **complaint.** We take informal concerns seriously and as a result few develop into formal complaints. A 'concern' may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'. A complaint may be generally defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'

1.4 Parents/carers should be assured that making a complaint will not adversely affect your child.

1.5 This policy is published on our website as well as referred to in our prospectus.

2. Aims

2.1 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. Our complaints procedure is accessible and simple to use and understand. It aims to be non-adversarial. In all cases we put the interests of the child above all else.

2.2 Any complaint raised will be treated seriously and courteously. You will be given the opportunity to make your concerns known and school staff must be given time to properly investigate them in order for the matter to be resolved to everyone's satisfaction. It is important that you have confidence in these procedures and know that the matter will be investigated impartially and dealt with as quickly as possible. Resolving concerns involves balancing the rights and responsibilities of pupils, parents and school staff; there should be recognition that responsibility rests with each of these parties.

2.3 To ensure that complaints are managed with total impartiality and the confidentiality required, we would request that you do not discuss your concerns on social networking sites (e.g. Facebook or Whats App). This can be potentially damaging for the school and/or its pupils, can reach a much wider audience than you might have intended, and more importantly does not give the school the opportunity to resolve the issue.

2.4 Confidentiality should be maintained at all times by all concerned. All conversations and correspondence must be treated with discretion. However, you will need to accept that some sharing of information within the

school will be inevitable if the complaint is to be investigated fully and fairly. This will be done with sensitivity and will take into account confidentiality. You should feel confident that a complaint will not disadvantage your child.

2.5 Schools are mindful of GDPR and are not allowed to disclose personal information relating to third parties, i.e. other pupils, other parents, staff etc.

2.6 Complaints about services provided by other suppliers which have been endorsed by the Hayes Primary School (e.g. gymnastics, football, music and movement) should follow the Hayes complaints procedure. If you are unsure whether the service your complaint is regarding is endorsed by the Hayes or not, please ask the Head Teacher for clarification.

Procedure for complaints within the school by Parents/Carers (covered by this Policy)**:**

Stage1. **Informal.** Expression of concern made to the school.	**1. Class Teacher:** 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. In our experience most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before it seriously affects the child's progress. Most issues can be resolved quickly. Staff will notify the Head Teacher that a concern has been raised. *Members of school staff will provide a verbal response to expressions of concern within 5 school working days. If this response is felt to not be satisfactory, the complainant can proceed to stage 2 by informing the school within 10 school working days.
Stage 2. **Complaint** Concerns raised formally with designated complaints officer (the Head Teacher or the Deputy Head Teacher). * Please note that properly collecting details always takes time. An appointment should be made at the school office.	*Formal complaints should be made as soon as possible after an incident arises where possible, and within 10 school working days of receiving a response to a Stage 1 concern - this process has to happen before Stage 2 complaint. These can be made in person, by telephone or in writing to the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher and will be acknowledged within 5 school days. *The Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher will normally offer an opportunity for a parent of a pupil at the school to meet to discuss their concern and supplement any of the information provided previously. The Hayes takes any complaint very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved by this stage. *The outcome of the Head Teacher's/Deputy Head's investigation will be communicated to you **within 15 school working days** in the form of a meeting or a written response, with an explanation of the decision and the reason for it, as well as any action taken, if this is appropriate. If this response is felt to not be satisfactory, the complainant can proceed to stage 3 by informing the Chair of Governors within 10 school working days.

Stage 3. **Governing body** - nominated governor. Complaint rarely reaches this formal level but should you need to you should make a formal complaint to the Governing Body Complaints Panel.	Complaints at this stage should be written and received within **10 school days** of the Deputy Head's/Head Teacher's decision. Your letter should be addressed to the Chair of Governors and sent to the school or you can email the Chair of Governors, Lyla Dey at governors@hayesprimary.croydon.sch.uk Your letter or email should set out why you remain unhappy and what you wish to see happen. Your letter will be acknowledged **within 5 school days**. The Chair of the Governing body will nominate a governor to review your complaint. The governor will let you know **within 5 school days** when your complaint is to be considered (within 15 school working days). If a meeting with you and others involved is considered necessary, you will be given adequate notice to prepare. Following the meeting, the nominated governor will make their decision in private and write to you within **7 school days** with full explanation of the decision and the reason for it, as well as any action taken, if appropriate.
Stage 4. **Governing body – governor panel.** Complaint rarely reaches this formal level but should you need to you should make a formal complaint to the Governing Body Complaints Panel.	Complaints at this stage should be written and received within **10 school days** of the nominated governors' decision. Your letter should be addressed to the Chair of Governors and sent to the school or you can email the Chair of Governors at governors@hayesprimary.croydon.sch.uk. Your letter should set out why you remain unhappy and what you wish to see happen. Your letter will be acknowledged **within 5 school days**. The Governing body complaints panel will consist of 3/4 people – none of whom will have been previously involved in your complaint. Complainants have the right to request an independent panel if they believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings. The school will consider this request and the final decision regarding the make-up of the panel will be made by governors. The panel will let you know **within 5 school days** when your complaint is to be considered (within 30 school working days). If a meeting with you and others involved is considered necessary, you will be given adequate notice to prepare. Following the meeting, the committee will make their decision in private and write to you within **7 school days** with full explanation of the decision and the reason for it, as well as any action taken, if appropriate.
Stage 5. Final Complaints Stage	If all attempts to resolve the complaint have failed, you may refer your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education. https://www.education.gov.uk/form/school-complaints-form

2.7 Complaints not in scope of this policy

There are separate (statutory) procedures for the following exceptions:

Exceptions	Who to contact
• Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN) • School re-organisation proposals • Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	For school admissions or SEN contact the local authority. Complaints about admission appeals for maintained schools are dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman http://www.lgo.org.uk/

• Exclusion of children from school	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion
• Whistleblowing	Schools have an internal whistleblowing procedure for their employees and voluntary staff. Other concerns can be raised direct with Ofsted by telephone on: 0300 123 3155 or by writing to: WBHL, Ofsted Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD The Department for Education is also a prescribed body for whistleblowing in education.
• Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures	These matters will invoke the school's internal grievance procedures. Complainants will not be informed of the outcome of any investigation.
• Complaints about services provided by other non-endorsed providers who may use the school premises or facilities (e.g. external swimming groups, clubs)	Non-endorsed providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. They should be contacted direct.

3. The complaints' process: our procedure statement

It is not possible to jump stages in the procedure; it is a fundamental principle that each party must be allowed the opportunity to resolve the complaint before it is escalated to the next stage.

3.1 Should any parent/carer or member of the general public (relating to any facilities or services that the school provides) have a complaint about the Head Teacher, they should first make an informal approach to the Chair of the Governing Body by contacting Lyla Dey at governors@hayesprimary.croydon.sch.uk, who is obliged to investigate it. The chair will do all s/he can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if parents are unhappy with the outcome, they can make a formal complaint, as outlined above.

3.2 Should any parent/carer or member of the general public (relating to any facilities or services that the school provides) have a complaint about the Chair of Governors or any individual governor, these should be made in writing to the Head Teacher: head@hayesprimary.croydon.sch.uk

3.3 Concerns/complaints should be raised in private, at an appropriate time and not when other parents, pupils or staff can overhear, otherwise it is difficult for the school to observe confidentiality.

3.4 Schools will act to ensure that the school remains a safe place for pupils, staff and members of the community. Abusive, threatening or violent behaviour will not be tolerated and people behaving in this way will be removed from the site and risk prosecution.

3.5 If you meet with the Head Teacher/Governor complaints review panel a note taker may be present to record the main points of the discussion; they will let you have a copy of the notes. You may, if you wish, be accompanied to this meeting by a friend, relative, representative or advocate who can speak on your behalf. You must, however, inform the school whom you intend to bring to the meeting. The school should facilitate interpreting facilities, if required, provided that you give notice of your requirements.

3.6 Where the Head Teacher/Chair of Governors considers that disciplinary action, for either a staff member or a pupil is required, you will be informed that appropriate action has been taken, but the specific sanction will remain confidential and cannot legally be disclosed to you for reasons of confidentiality and the rights of individuals.

3.7 In the case of a persistent complaint where despite all stages of this policy being followed the complainant remains dissatisfied they are not entitled to re-open the same issue. In such cases the Chair of Governors is able to inform them in writing that the process has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

3.8 An anonymous complaint will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances. These would include serious concerns such as child protection issues or bullying allegations, where the school might consider it appropriate to contact outside agencies.

3.9 If at any time a child protection concern becomes apparent, the child protection process will take precedence over the complaints process, which will be halted until the child protection matter is resolved.

4. Investigating complaints

4 It is suggested that at each stage the person investigating the complaint makes sure that they:

- Establish what has happened so far and who has been involved.
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved.
- Meet with the complainant or contact them if further information is required
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.
- Conduct any interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning.
- Complete all necessary notes.

5. Resolving complaints

5.1 At each stage in the complaint schools and complainant will want to keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part.
In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An apology.
- An explanation.
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better.
- An assurance that the event that was the basis of the complaint will not recur.
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure it does not happen again. Details of any disciplinary procedures that have taken place as a result of the complaint are not released.
- An undertaking to review school policy or procedure in light of the complaint.
- An explanation that there is insufficient evidence and thus the complaint cannot be upheld.
- An explanation that, following investigation, the concern is not substantiated by the evidence.

5.2 An admission that the school could have handled things better is not the same as an admission of negligence

6. Monitoring and review

6.1 The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Head Teacher logs all stage 2 complaints received by the school, and records how they were resolved. The governing body will use complaints and review their handling at regular intervals to contribute to school improvement.

6.2 Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents/carers, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

6.3 These policy guidelines are reviewed regularly (at least biennially), or as necessary.