



# Complaints Policy

## Schedule for Developing, Monitoring and Review Policy

<b>Approval by the Board of Governors:</b>	April 2025
<b>The implementation of this Policy will be monitored by:</b>	SLT
<b>Monitoring and Reviewing:</b>	Triennially, and as required following any change to provision.

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## **1. FOREWORD**

At Glengormley Integrated Primary School, we take all complaints seriously. In this regard, we encourage anyone with a concern to speak to us as soon as possible. If concerns are dealt with at an early stage, they are more likely to be resolved efficiently and quickly.

Many issues can be addressed simply by talking to the relevant staff in school who will be happy to help. Open communication and regular engagement between the school staff and parents or the wider school community is vital to the effective management of the school.

All parents should be aware that, regardless of the nature of a complaint and whether or not it is upheld, parents are not entitled to details of any related sanctions imposed on staff, pupils or parents for reasons of data protection and confidentiality.

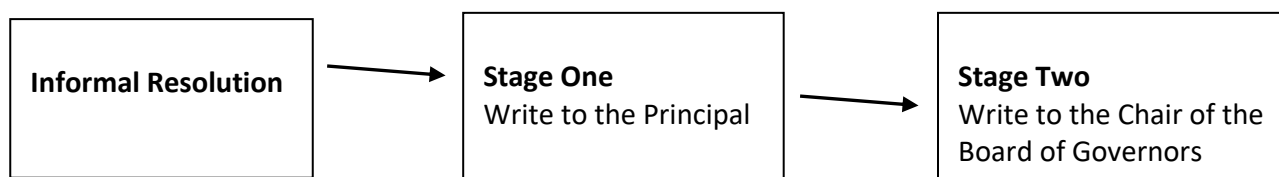
## **2. AIMS**

When dealing with complaints the School will:

- encourage resolution of all concerns as quickly as possible
- provide timely responses to concerns and complaints
- keep you informed of progress
- ensure a full and fair investigation of your complaint where appropriate
- have due regard for the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved
- respect confidentiality
- fully address complaints and provide an effective response
- take appropriate action to rectify the issue and prevent it happening again where appropriate
- be responsive to learning from outcomes which will inform and improve practice within the school.

A copy of this Policy is available on the School's website or is available from the school on request.

### 3. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE -AT A GLANCE



#### **Time Limit**

Please contact the School as soon as possible, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Complaints will normally only be considered within 6 months of origin of the complaint to the school.

#### **Who can make a complaint?**

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Glengormley Integrated Primary school about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

#### **The difference between a concern and a complaint**

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 defined as '*an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action*'.

#### **Informal Resolution**

If you have a concern about any aspect of your child's education or pastoral wellbeing, you should be able to sort it out through an informal discussion with your child's teacher or a member of the senior leadership team.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Glengormley Integrated Primary School takes concerns and feedback seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

Parents are reminded that teachers do not access their seesaw messages immediately while they are working with pupils. For urgent matters, a call to the school office during office hours 8.30am-3.30pm will ensure that the parent's concern or feedback receives immediate attention.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the Principal will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the Principal will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

Where concerns are not successfully resolved by the informal process, a more formal procedure is available as set out below.

## **How to make a Formal Complaint**

### **Stage One**

Complainants who are not satisfied with an informal resolution are now asked to put their complaint in writing using the template form in Appendix 1. Where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support you with this process. *(see guidance notes for further information)*

Complaints against school staff (except the Principal) should be made in the first instance, to the Principal via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the Principal should be addressed to the Chair of the Board of Governors, via the School office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole Board of Governors should be addressed to the Principal as Secretary to the Board of Governors. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations like Citizens Advice to help you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 5 school working\* days and a response normally made within 20 school working\* days of receipt of the complaint. This response will be issued in writing by the Principal and will indicate with reasons whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

\*working days for the purposes of this policy mean a day other than a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday. Term dates can be found on the School website. Any complaints raised during school holidays will be acknowledged and this policy will commence when the School re-opens. In calculating the number of days, the day of receipt of the complaint and the day of the despatch of the response will not be counted.

***There may be occasions when it is necessary to deviate from this Complaints Policy if this is reasonable and justified. Complainants will be notified of the changes.***

If you remain unhappy with the outcome at Stage 1, the complaint may be progressed to Stage 2 which is overseen by the Board of Governors.

## **Stage Two**

If the complaint is unresolved after Stage One, write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors (*care of the school and marked 'private and confidential'*) within ten working days. Where this may present difficulties, please contact the School which will make reasonable arrangements to support the complainant with this process.

The Chairperson will convene a Committee to review the complaint. Please provide as much detail as possible.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 5 school working days and a final response normally made within 20 school working days from date of receipt of the complaint. The response will be issued in writing by the Chairperson of the Committee. The decision of the Committee in respect of the complaint will be final and binding.

***We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.***

## **Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO)**

If following Stage Two 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

Telephone: 02890 233821

Freephone: 0800 34 34 24

Email: [nipso@nipso.org.uk](mailto:nipso@nipso.org.uk)

Web: [www.nipso.org.uk](http://www.nipso.org.uk)

### **Anonymous complaints**

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints.

## 4. SCOPE OF COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

**4.1** The Complaints Procedure sets out how any expression of dissatisfaction relating to the School will be managed. By taking concerns raised seriously at the earliest possible stage, it is hoped that issues can be resolved quickly and effectively.

*Some examples of complaints dealt with:*

- not following school policy
- communication delays / lack of communication
- difficulties in staff / pupil relationships.

### **4.2 Complaints with separate established procedures**

Some examples of statutory procedures and appeal mechanisms are listed below. The list is not exhaustive. The Principal will advise on the appropriate procedure to use when the complaint is raised.

*Matters may still be referred to NIPSO, if it is felt that maladministration has occurred.*

<b>Exceptions</b>	<b>Contact</b>
• Admissions / Expulsions / Exclusion of children from school	Contact <a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a> Director of Operations and Estates
• Statutory Assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)	Contact <a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a> Director of Children and Young People's Services
• School Development Proposals	Contact <a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a> Director of Education
• Child Protection / Safeguarding	Contact <a href="http://www.eani.org.uk">www.eani.org.uk</a> Director of Children and Young People's Services

**4.3** The School will not normally investigate anonymous complaints, unless deemed by the Chair of the Board of Governors to be of a serious nature. The decision of whether to deal with such complaints will be at the discretion of the Board of Governors. *(see guidance notes for further information)*



## **5. WHAT TO EXPECT UNDER THIS PROCEDURE**

### **5.1 Your rights as a person making a complaint**

In dealing with complaint, we will ensure:

- fair treatment
- courtesy
- a timely response
- accurate advice
- respect for privacy - complaints will be treated as confidentially as possible allowing for the possibility of consultation with other appropriate parties about the complaint
- clear reasons for decisions.

### **5.2 Your responsibilities as a person making a complaint**

In making a complaint it is important to:

- raise issues in a timely manner
- treat our staff with respect and courtesy
- provide accurate and concise information in relation to the issues raised
- use these procedures fully and engage with them at the appropriate levels.

### **5.3 Rights of parties involved during the investigation**

Where a meeting is arranged the complainant may be accompanied but not represented by another person.

This Procedure does not take away from the statutory rights of any of the participants.

### **5.4 Timeframes**

Where concerns are raised with the relevant Teacher or Principal, a response will normally be provided during the meeting or within an agreed timeframe.

**Stage 1** - Normally acknowledge within 5 school working days, response normally within 20 school working days.

**Stage 2** - Normally acknowledge within 5 school working days, response

normally within 20 school working days.

If, for any reason, the review of a complaint takes longer to complete, you will be informed of revised time limits and kept updated on progress.

*We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.*

## **6. MAKING A COMPLAINT**

### **6.1 Equality**

The School requires complaints to be made in writing. Where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support the complainant with this process.

### **6.2 Unreasonable Complaints**

The School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain.

There will be occasions when, despite all stages of the complaints procedure having been completed and the complaint having been reviewed by the Ombudsman, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If they try to re-open the same issue, the Chair of the Board of Governors will inform them that the procedure has been completed and that the matter is now closed.

If the complainant repeatedly continues to contact the School with the same issue the school may choose not to respond.

### **6.3 Withdrawing a complaint**

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

## **7. Review and Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed and evaluated at least every three years by the Board of Governors, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, taking into account changes to legislation and best practice advice and guidance from the Education Authority and/or the Department of Education.

**APPENDIX ONE**  
**Glengormley Integrated Primary School - Complaint Form**

Please read the School's Complaints Policy before completing this form. It provides information on when and how this form should be completed.

The person who experienced the problem should normally fill in this form. If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else, please fill in Section B also. Please note that before taking forward the complaint, we will need to be satisfied that you have the authority to act on behalf of the person concerned.

This form should be completed and returned to the Principal either as a hard copy or via email to [info@glengormleyps.newtownabbey.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@glengormleyps.newtownabbey.ni.sch.uk)

<b>SECTION A</b>	
Your name(s)	
Contact telephone day	
Contact telephone mobile	
Contact email address	
<b>SECTION B</b>	
<b>If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else, what are their details?</b>	
Name (in full)	
Address & Postcode	
What is your relationship to them?	
Why are you making this complaint on their behalf?	

**SECTION C**

**About your complaint**

Please give details of your complaint.

Action taken to date (including staff member(s) who has/have dealt with it so far) and solutions offered.

The reason(s) why this was not a satisfactory resolution for you.

<p>What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?</p>	
<p>If it is more than three months since you first became aware of the problem, please provide the reason why you have not submitted a complaint before.</p>	
<p>Signature(s):</p> <p>Date:</p>	