



Parklands Junior School

Complaints Procedure

Overview

If you have a suggestion or a concern we would like you to talk to us. We welcome suggestions for improving our school and want to know if you have any concerns. Problems sometimes arise from misunderstandings which are easily addressed. No matter what you wish to tell us, our support and respect for you and your child in school will not be affected in any way. If you have a concern, please let us know as soon as possible. It is difficult for us to properly investigate an incident or problem which happened some time ago.

Parklands Junior School have adopted the London Borough of Havering recommended practice for dealing with Complaints; a copy of the full procedure may be obtained through the school office and may also be found on the Havering website.

Our school complaints procedure is as follows:

- Informal Action Stage 1
- Formal Action Stage 2
- Formal Action Stage 3

Informal Action (Stage 1)

Most concerns can be resolved quickly by speaking with your child's class teacher. Any complaints regarding members of staff received by the school office will be referred to the appropriate person. Any Governor approached with a complaint will refer you to the relevant person and advise you about the procedures as they are not able to act on individual complaints.

Staff will make every effort to resolve your problem informally. They will make sure that they understand what you feel went wrong, and they will explain their actions to you. They will ask what you would like the school to do to put things right. This does not mean that in every case it will be possible to achieve a satisfactory outcome but it will help both you and the school to understand both sides of the situation. It may also help to prevent a similar problem arising again.

Formal Action (Stage 2)

We will endeavour to resolve matters immediately but if you are not entirely satisfied with the teacher's response you can make a formal complaint to the Headteacher. This should be in writing. If your complaint is about an action of the Headteacher personally, then you should refer it to the Chair of Governors who you may contact through the school office. The Headteacher (or Chair of Governors) will contact you

to discuss the problem. The Headteacher (or Chair of Governors) will then conduct a full investigation of the complaint. You will receive a written response to your complaint.

Formal Action (Stage 3)

We hope that we will have been able to resolve the problem by this stage. However, if you are still not satisfied you may wish to make a formal complaint to the Governing Board. You should write to the Chair of Governors via the school office.

Further action

Complaints about school problems can usually be resolved within the school but in exceptional cases, it may be possible to refer the matter to an outside body including the local authority. If necessary we will let you know whom to contact at that stage.

Monitoring

We receive very few complaints. All complaints reaching the formal stage will be reported to the Governing Board and written records kept. They will be reviewed annually, so that potential problems and issues can be identified.

Dealing with unreasonable or persistent complaints

The school's definition of this type of complaint is a complainant who persists in pursuing a complaint where the complaints procedure has been fully and properly exhausted. Their complaints have been thoroughly investigated and have received a comprehensive and full response to each of their complaints, but continue to pursue the matter [and/or any evolving issues] despite correspondence, apologies and/or meetings. Complainants (and/or anyone acting on their behalf) may be deemed by the head teacher and /or the chair of governors to be unreasonable or persistent where previous or current contact with them shows that they meet any one of the following criteria (but this list is not exhaustive). The following are given as examples of behaviour by complainants that may be described as unreasonably persistent. (In these examples a "contact" may be in person, by telephone, letter, email, fax or SMS text). The complainant:

- by the frequency of contact with the school hinders objective consideration of a "live" complaint;
- makes a string of further complaints about a "live" investigation or changes aspect of the complaint, during the investigation;
- who has exhausted all stages of the school's complaints procedure but continues to pursue the matter;
- who seeks an unrealistic outcome and persists in doing so despite being advised that this is the case.

An additional consideration of the school may be to decide to deal with such complaints in one or more of the following ways, for example;

- a) Try to resolve matters before invoking this policy by drawing up a signed “agreement” with the complainant (and if appropriate involving the relevant {officer, practitioner etc...}) in a two-way agreement) which sets the code of behaviour for the parties involved if the school is to continue processing the complaint. If these terms were contravened, consideration would then be given to implementing other action.
- b) To require contact to take place with a named officer.
- c) To restrict telephone calls to specified days and times.
- d) Decline contact with the complainant either in person, by telephone, by email, by fax, by letter or any combination of these, provided that one form of contact is maintained. Similarly, indirect contact may be agreed via a third party.
- e) Notify the complainant in writing that the school has responded fully to the points raised and has tried to resolve the complaint but there is nothing more to add and continuing contact on the matter will serve no useful purpose. The complainant should also be notified that the correspondence is at an end and that further communication about the same matters will be acknowledged but not answered.

Temporarily suspend all contact with the complainant or investigation of a complaint whilst seeking legal advice, guidance from local education authority, the DfE or other relevant agencies.

When a complainant is unreasonably persistent about a complaint (and the complaint has been properly exhausted) the head teacher will report their concerns to the chair of governors. If the chair of governors is in agreement that the persistence and behaviour of the individual is unreasonable then the head teacher and chair of governors shall jointly write to the individual setting out why they have come to this conclusion and what action the school are taking and the duration thereof.

Where a complainant continues to behave in an unacceptable fashion the chair of governors may authorise staff to terminate contact with the complainant (except in matters directly related to the education and welfare of their child) and they may discontinue any further investigation being carried out. Any further contacts from the complainant in writing will be read and placed on file. Telephone calls relating to the complaint will be terminated and logged.

Complainants who behave in an unacceptable way

The School recognises that parents and carers who feel dissatisfied may feel angry about their treatment. However the school, the governing board and the local authority has a duty of care towards the safety and welfare of all its staff.

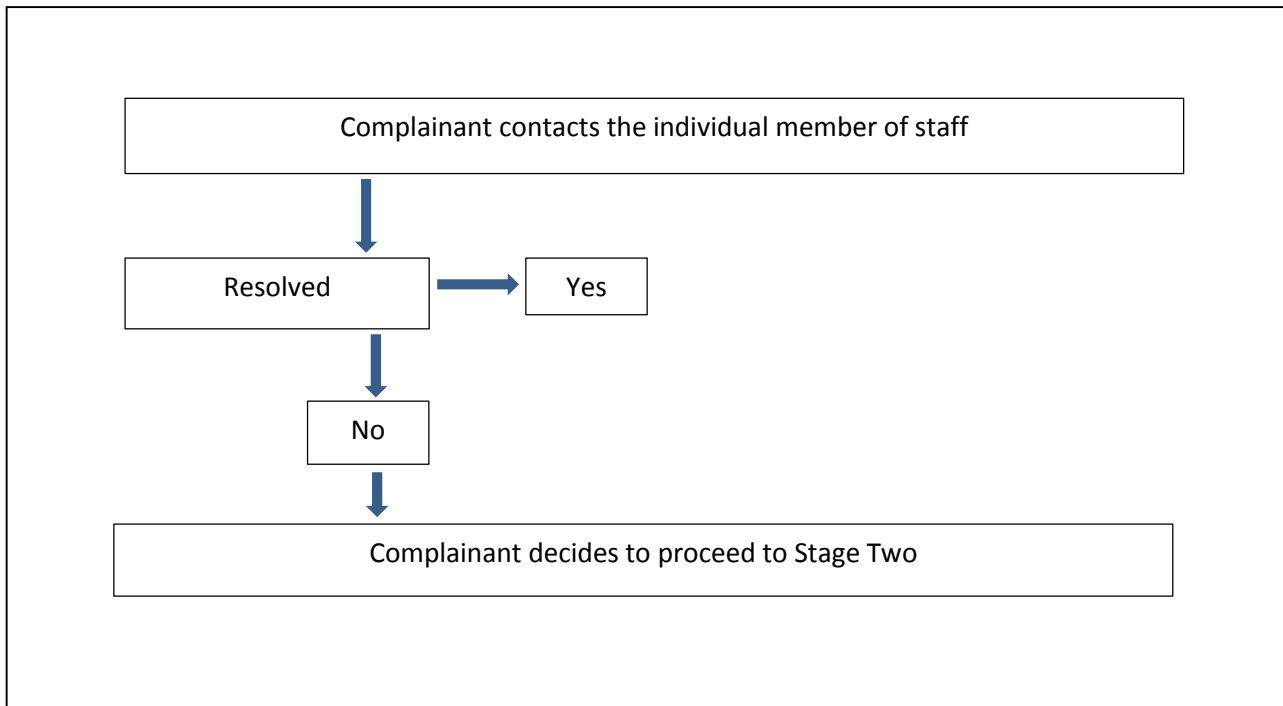
If a member of staff feels threatened by a complainant they will report this to the head teacher (or in the case of the head teacher to the chair of governors). The head teacher or chair of governors will complete an investigation and may consider:

- Writing to the perpetrator requiring a guarantee of no repetition of the behaviour and, if necessary, setting out the conditions and restrictions for further contact with staff;
- Temporarily banning the parent or carer from the school site;
- Whether to report the matter to the police.

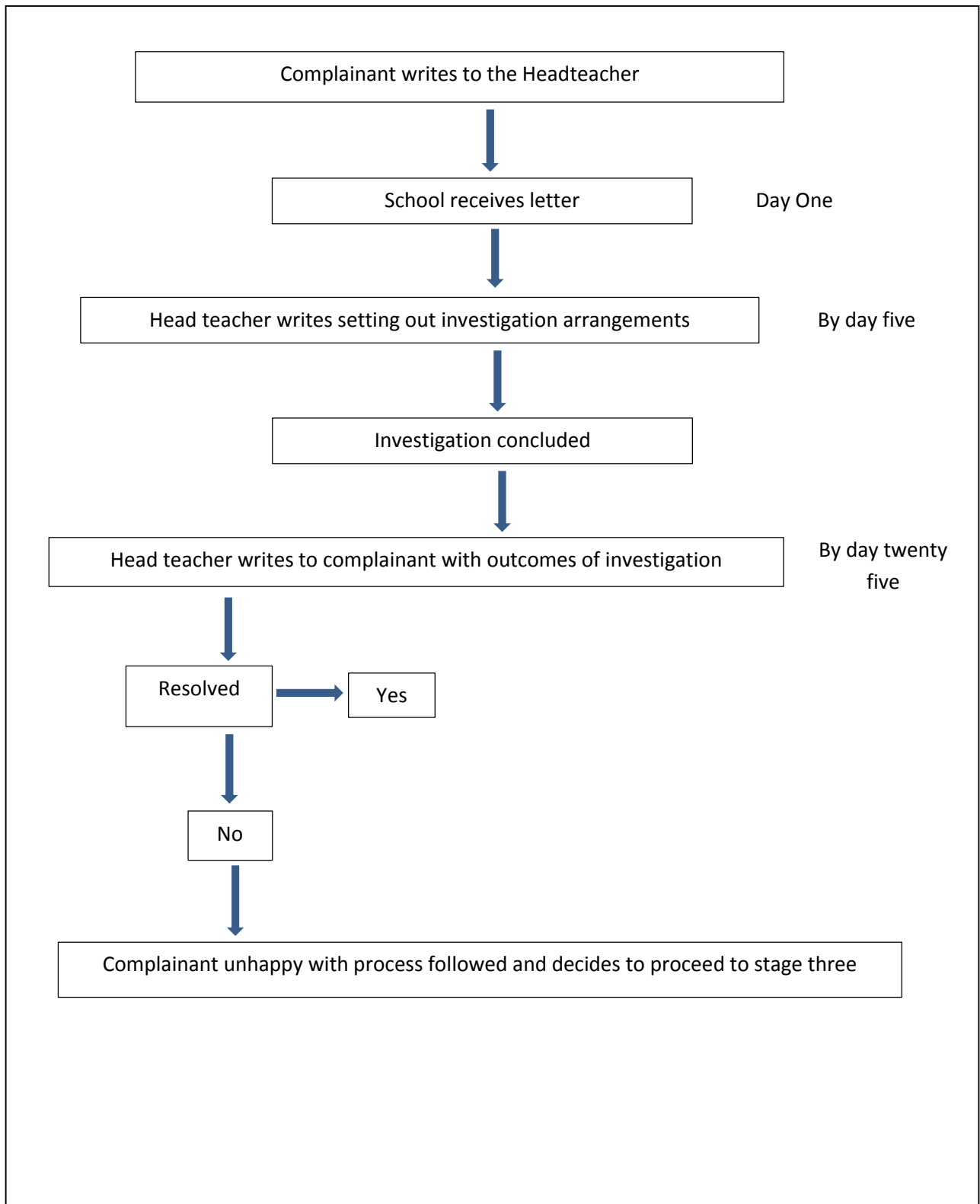
Repeated calls or threatening contact may be deemed to be harassment which may be reported to the police if felt necessary by the head teacher.

Flowchart

Stage One Informal Stage



Stage Two Formal Stage



Note: - If the complaint is about the actions of the Headteacher then the Chair of Governors carries out the Headteacher's role indicated above.

**Stage Three
Governors Review Panel (Stage Three)**

