

Grievance Policy

INTRODUCTION

At Grace Primary we recognise that we live in a fallen world with people (board members, teachers, parents and children) who are prone to make mistakes which need redress. The impact of these mistakes is exacerbated by society's increasing reliance on communicative tools (e-mail and social chat forums and sites) that will not only compound miscommunication or misunderstandings but can often be the cause of the issue. As a school we undertake to keep our employees and governing body members accountable to the Christian ideals and values we embrace and to this end have seen the need to develop a procedure that will provide children, parents and staff with a course of action that will allow them to lodge a complaint or grievance without fear of reprisal.

This procedure will follow the biblical conflict resolution model espoused by Jesus to His disciples in Matthew 18, which aims to uphold both truth and unity. The teaching aptly begins with Jesus giving encouragement about how our faith must be childlike yet at the same time warning them about the consequences of "despising" or misleading children. We should be cognizant that the behaviour we adopt in our school will be absorbed by our children so it is imperative that all parties approach conflict with the right spirit under submission to Christ Himself. Jesus goes on to give detail on how to approach conflict in vs 15-17 which will form the basis of our formal procedure. Finally, Jesus spells out our need to be open to forgiving not just once but "seventy-seven" times (indefinitely). Jesus expands on the forgiveness principle with the parable of the unforgiving servant.

We would encourage any party wishing to follow through with the procedure provided below to dwell on Matthew 18 and to ensure that the heart is right both in raising an issue and in hearing out a grievance.

The purpose of our Complaints Procedure is:

1. To ensure that parents/guardians/staff members who wish to express a complaint or grievance know how they can do so.
2. To state clear timescales for dealing with any complaints received.
3. To reassure parents/guardians/staff that the school governing body takes their grievances and complaints seriously.
4. To outline the action that Grace Primary will take when it receives a complaint.

PROCEDURE

Stage 1: Initial discussions

The parent/guardian/staff should in the first instance:

1. Approach their child's teacher or the offending party informally to discuss their concerns. This can be done in person, by telephone or by email. We hope that in the majority of cases direct contact with the child's teacher will resolve the matter.
2. Should this prove unsatisfactory, or if the complaint is about the child's teacher, then the Principal should be contacted.

3. Should the complaint be that of a staff member, it should first be raised informally with the Principal or to another senior teacher appointed to this position. Should this prove unsatisfactory, or if the complaint is about the Principal, then the concern should be addressed to a member of the Board.

Stage 2: Written complaints

If concerns are not resolved then the complaint should be furnished in writing to the Principal. At this stage, the Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the course of any further action. If the Principal decides that further investigations are necessary to resolve the issue, then a reasonable timescale for the investigation to take place will be agreed with the complainant. Once the Principal is satisfied that, as far as is practicable, all relevant facts have been established then the complainant will be informed of the outcome in writing. The Principal will give his/her reasons as far as is reasonably possible. Records of any concerns or complaints and of the action taken to resolve the issue, including any further investigations, will be kept and reported to the governing body. Should the matter not be resolved within two weeks of lodging the grievance or if the outcome is unsatisfactory then it is advised to proceed to Stage 3.

Stage 3: Formal board discussion

If the written complaint procedure does not satisfactorily end the matter, parents or affected parties are encouraged to ask for a panel to hear the complaint. This panel will:

1. Be convened by the Chairman of the Board within 10 school days of the request who will make sure that all parties involved are given adequate notice.
2. Be made up of at least 3 people who were not directly involved in Stage 2 of the complaint process.
3. Include the complainant who may wish to be accompanied to the hearing.
4. Include one person who is independent of the management and running of the school.
5. Provide a written summary of recommendations to all those who attended, within 5 school days of the hearing date.
6. Keep confidential records of every stage of this process.