



## **Complaints Policy**

### **Introduction**

Heath Farm School who are part of the Acorn Care & Education (ACE) welcome suggestions for improving our work in school. We believe that our school provides a good education for all our children, and that all staff work in a professional manner to build positive relationships with all parents/carers and professionals. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents/carers/professionals. The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases.

### **Aims and objectives**

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 and, in all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

### **The complaints process**

#### **How to share a concern**

If a parent/carer/professional/ is concerned about anything to do with the education, welfare or support that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher.

Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress.

#### **What to do if the matter is not resolved through informal discussion**

Where a parent/carer/professional feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Deputy Headteacher. The Deputy Headteacher considers any such complaint very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage.



## **Sharing a concern about the Deputy Headteacher**

Should a parent/carer/professional have a complaint about the Deputy Headteacher, they should first make an informal approach to the Headteacher, who is obliged to investigate it. The Headteacher will do all they can to resolve the issue, but if a parent/carer/professional is unhappy with the outcome, they can make a formal complaint, as outlined below.

## **How to take the matter further**

Only if an informal complaint fails to resolve the matter should a formal complaint be made to the Headteacher. This complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far. The parent/carer/professional should send this written complaint to the Headteacher.

The Headteacher must consider all written complaints within 7 working days of receipt. They will arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint, and invite the person making it to attend the meeting so that they can explain their complaint in more detail. The school gives the complainant at least 3 days' notice of the meeting.

After collecting all the evidence and the conclusion of the meeting, the Headteacher considers his decision and will inform the parent/carer/professional about it in writing within 7 working days. The Headteacher will do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent/carer/professional's satisfaction.

## **Who to appeal to next**

If the complaint is not resolved, a parent/carer/professional may make representation to ACE. The school will provide the necessary contact details. This is also the case if the complaint is about the Headteacher.

The Education Director acknowledges receipt of the written complaint, informing the complainant that the complaint is to be heard by a panel of 3 members, none of whom have had previous involvement with the complaint and one of whom is independent of Heath Farm School. All relevant documentation regarding the complaint will be made available to the members of the panel and the parent/carer/professional.



The Chair of the Panel will write and inform all concerned of the date, time and place of the meeting at least 5 working days in advance. The notification to the complainant should also inform them of the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend and the right to submit further written evidence.

It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Panel to ensure that the meeting is properly minuted. After the meeting, the Panel will consider the evidence and a written decision will be sent to Acorn Care and Education, the Headteacher, complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. A copy of the findings will be made available and distributed within 15 days. Written records are kept of all complaints. These records are available for inspection in the school administration office and are maintained in line with the schools data protection policy.

### **Confidentiality**

All complaints are stored in a secure location and are only accessible by the Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher