



## **Complaints Procedures**

To be a star, you must shine your own light,  
follow your own path and  
don't worry about the darkness,  
for that is when stars shine brightest

## Introduction

The school is committed to working in partnership with parents to provide a safe and rich learning environment for children to work and grow in. Albemarle seeks to promote and sustain a positive and effective working relationship with its parent body.

- a) On admission to school, at the beginning of each academic year and again at the beginning of each term, parents are informed that class teachers are available to discuss concerns and problems and are they welcome to make a time at the end of the school day when a discussion can take place.
- b) Parents can raise concerns with their class teacher or the Headteacher during open evenings which are held twice a year.
- c) The Parent Governors are also available for discussion with parents.
- d) Parents are welcome to make an appointment to meet with the Headteacher.
- e) Parents are always welcome to write about their concerns by letter.

These opportunities enable the parents to raise any concerns or issues they may have and have created a process whereby most parents have felt that their concerns have been addressed.

The majority of concerns and problems can be resolved at the initial stage by talking to the appropriate person. This will usually be a class teacher or the Headteacher.

There are some matters which cannot be dealt with through these Complaints Procedures. These are :

- a) Admissions to schools. (1980 Act)
- b) Exclusion of pupils from schools (1986 (2) Education Act).
- c) Special Education Provision (1993 Education Act)
- d) School Reorganisation Proposals.
- e) Curriculum and Religious Worship (which have their own procedure as required by section 23 of the Education Reform Act 1988)
- f) Complaints covered by The Children Act 1989 (which have their own

procedure).

- g) Complaints which are the subject of Legal Proceedings and have been so.
- h) Complaints being considered by the Secretary of State for Education.
- i) Complaints about the allocation of resources to service users according to agreed criteria, such as awards and benefits and the allocation of day nursery places.

These services have their own appeals procedures.

### Anonymous Complaints

It is left to the Headteacher's discretion, to decide whether the gravity of an anonymous complaint warrants its investigation.

### Confidentiality

The identity of parents raising concerns or making complaints will be confidential except for the need to tell those individuals investigating or implicated in any complaint. Information about a complaint will always be passed to the Headteacher. A confidential record of all complaints made and the outcome of any investigation will be kept in a Complaints file and stored in a locked filing cabinet.

### What is a Complaint?

A complaint is:

- a) a clear expression of dissatisfaction, whether verbal or in writing, by a parent or anyone else who has a legitimate interest in the School (other than Governors and staff), with the exception of those Governors and staff who have children in the school.
- b) about the standard and content of teaching, the building, health and safety, conduct and actions of staff, parents or children, whether it affects only an individual or a group, and which
- c) has not been resolved to their satisfaction by informal discussions with the appropriate member of staff or Headteacher.

If parents are still dissatisfied following discussion with staff and/or the Headteacher, there is a formal complaints procedure which is set out below.

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR ALBEMARLE SCHOOL

### Principles

1. Parents have the right to express their dissatisfaction in relation to the way Albemarle School carries out its practice.
2. Complaints can be made verbally or in writing and all complaints will be recorded.
3. All concerned will be kept informed of the progress of any investigation at all stages.
4. Complaints should be dealt with as quickly as possible. Precise timescales will depend on the complexity of the issue concerned. The aim will be for all complaints to be considered fully, fairly and carefully.

There are three stages to the complaints procedure:

#### *Stage One – Dealing with Complaints at School Level*

1. Complaints made to a member of Staff will be referred to the Headteacher who will investigate the complaint. This investigation will include discussions with the parent (s) making the complaint and any other relevant member of Staff or individual. The Headteacher will use her discretion as to whether it is appropriate or helpful to have a joint meeting.
2. The Headteacher will then give the parent(s) a verbal summary of the outcome of the investigation and her decision. This will include, if the complaint is found to be valid, the steps she will take to resolve the complaint. If the parent(s) remains dissatisfied, the complaint will then be referred by the Headteacher to the Chairperson of the Governing Body.

#### *Stage Two – Complaints Referred to Chairperson of the Governing Body by the Headteacher.*

1. The Headteacher will write a report for the Governing Body of Albemarle School outlining :
  - a) the nature of the complaint
  - b) a summary of the investigation
  - c) the outcome of the investigation
2. A meeting with the Chair of Governors will be arranged within ten working (school) days to hear the complaint. The parent(s) making the complaint may be invited to the meeting and given a copy of the Headteacher's report. If parents' are invited they may put their case to the Governors and the Governors may question the Headteacher and/or the parent(s).
3. The Governors will then consider the information without any other person

present and make a decision as to whether further action is required and what such action should be.

4. All those attending the meeting will then be recalled and the Governors will inform them of the decision. This decision will then be put in writing to the parent(s) and the member of staff where appropriate.
5. The parent(s) will then be informed that they have the right to have their complaint referred to the Director of Education, if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the this stage (two).

### *Stage Three*

If you are unhappy with the way the Governing Body has dealt with your complaint, or if your complaint is about the Governing Body, please first check whether your school includes a mediation step in its complaints policy. If it does, you may refer to the Local Authority. If it does not, you will need to send your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education.

### Complaints about the Headteacher

Parents wishing to complain about the Headteacher should initially attempt to resolve any complaint through discussion with the Headteacher.

If a complaint is not resolved it can then be made either verbally or in writing to the Governing Body. The Chairperson will inform the Headteacher of any complaint and the proposed course of action.

### Conclusion

The above sets out the formal complaints procedure for Albemarle School. The Governors hope that the informal means of resolving concerns will continue to be used by parents wherever possible.

**Stage 1 – Dealing with complaints at school level.**

Complaints will be referred to the Headteacher to investigate.



**Resolved?**



**Yes.** No further action.



**No.** Parent told how to move on to the formal stage of the procedure, investigation will then be referred to the Chairperson of the Governing Body.



**Stage 2 – Complaints referred to the Chairperson of the Governing Body by the Headteacher.**



**A meeting with the Chair of Governors arranged within ten working days to hear the complaint.** The Governors will make a decision on any further required action and this will be put in writing.



**Resolved?**



**Yes.** No further action.



**No.** Parent will be told how to move on, either through Wandsworth Mediation or by sending a complaint to the Secretary of State for Education.