



**Moulsham**

**Junior School**

# **Complaints Policy**

Ratified by governors: 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Next review: Summer 2025

## **Moulsham Junior School Complaints Policy**

### **Compliments**

These are always welcome and very encouraging to teachers and staff. The school encourages feedback or opinions from pupils and parents. In practice this dialogue is continuous, sometimes directly and also indirectly, for example, at Parents' Evenings. It may not always be possible to act immediately but pupils and the school always benefit so please don't hold back.

### **Concerns**

It is natural that parents may, occasionally, be concerned about an aspect of their child's education or welfare at school. This could include issues concerning the school's approach to aspects of the curriculum, homework, behavioural problems or any other issue.

The school welcomes enquiries from parents about any matter. Teachers and staff will explain the school practices, policies, and how they affect the pupils. The vast majority of concerns will be handled by the class teacher or by the subject leader if this is more helpful. If in doubt, keep asking until you are completely satisfied as all staff are eager to help.

The usual format is to speak to the child's class teacher in the first instance, or to contact the school office to arrange an appointment to discuss your concern with whoever you wish. At all times the staff will help to resolve a problem. If occasionally parents feel they must state their concern formally, this too is not a problem. The school has defined procedures for handling complaints so don't be embarrassed if you feel an issue warrants more attention.

### **Complaints**

The procedure is again to speak to the child's class teacher in the first instance, or contact the school office to arrange an appointment to discuss your complaint with whoever you wish. The school's policy is to follow the Local Authority (Essex County Council) and Department for Education guidelines when handling concerns and complaints. Just ask if you would like advice or a copy. It would be unusual to deviate from these procedures but the school always retains discretion in these matters.

In summary, the nationally accepted procedure is divided into three stages:

**Stage 1** aims to resolve the concern through informal contact at the appropriate level in school.

**Stage 2** is the first formal stage where written complaints are considered by the headteacher (or a designated governor, if the complaint is about the headteacher), who has responsibility for dealing with complaints.

Complaints about the Head Teacher need to be marked for the attention of the Chair of Governors and labelled "Complaint". To ensure receipt, they should be handed to the school

office. We will accept complaints via post but will only log and action from date of receipt, not date of posting. The office will log the date of receipt and the date of passing on to the Chair (usually by hand.) The office will make a follow up call to the Chair after 3 working days to check that the process has begun. For a Stage 2 complaint, Governors will aim to respond within two school weeks. However, as all Governors are volunteers with other demands on their time, this may not always be possible.

**Stage 3** is the next step once Stage 2 is complete. It involves a review of the complaint by the Chair of Governors, who may convene a complaints review panel of governors. Our Chair of Governors can be contacted via the Clerk to the Governors, Anne Whelpdale ([annewhelpdale@supportinggovernors.co.uk](mailto:annewhelpdale@supportinggovernors.co.uk)) or in writing via the School marked 'FAO the Chair of Governors.'

If you are unhappy with the outcome or your complaint, or the way it has been handled at school level, you can contact The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) by following the link on the DfE website:

[www.gov.uk/complain-about-school](http://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school)

You should enclose a copy of any correspondence with the school or governing body. The ESFA considers complaints relating to maintained school on behalf of the Secretary of State. The ESFA will look at whether the complaints policy and other relevant statutory policies were adhered to. However, the ESFA will not normally re-investigate the complaint and will not overturn the school's decision except in exceptional circumstances.

If you should need to refer to the full procedures and government guidance, please ask at the school office. All staff are familiar with the guidelines and have a duty to help parents needing advice. Please don't feel you are making a fuss. These procedures have been carefully compiled and their reference, however rare, is routine to help pupils, parents and the school.