

St Mary's Bryanston Square School

Policy on Complaints 2010

1. Introduction

We strive to provide a good education for all our children. The headteacher and staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents or guardians. The following policy sets out the procedures that the school follows in such cases. This policy is available on request from the school, publicised periodically through school newsletters and is also available as a download from our school website.

If any parents/carers are unhappy with the education that their child is receiving at St Mary's, or have any concerns relating to the school, we encourage them initially to talk to the child's class teacher immediately.

We deal with all complaints in accordance with procedures laid down by Westminster Local Authority. If the school itself cannot resolve a complaint, those concerned can refer the matter to the LA.

All parents have the right, as a last resort, to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education, if they still feel that their complaint has not been properly addressed.

2. Aims and objectives

St Mary's 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. In all cases, we put the interests of the child above all else. We aim to provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

3. The complaints process

If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. In our experience, most matters of concern

can be resolved positively in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before it seriously affects the child's progress. .

Where parents feel that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, or if the class teacher him/herself is the object of the complaint they should make an appointment to discuss it with the headteacher . The headteacher considers all complaints very seriously, and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved by this stage.

Should any parents have a complaint about the headteacher, they should first make an informal approach to one of the members of the governing body, who is obliged to investigate it - contact details are kept in the school office. The governor in question will do all s/he can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if parents are unhappy with the outcome, they can make a formal complaint, as outlined below. Only if an informal complaint fails to resolve the matter should a formal complaint be made to the governing body. This complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint, and how the school has handled it so far. The parent should send this written complaint to the chair of governors - contact details are kept in the school office.

The governing body will consider all written complaints within three weeks of receipt. It will arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint, and will invite the person making it to attend the meeting, so that s/he can explain the complaint in more detail. The school gives the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting.

After hearing all the evidence, the governors will consider their decision and inform the parent about it in writing. The governors do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction.

If the complaint is not resolved, a parent may make representation to Westminster LA. Further information about this process is available from the school or from the LA. A further meeting is chaired by an independent

person, who considers all the evidence and makes a further judgement in an attempt to resolve the complaint.

If any parent is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then s/he is entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education.

4 Monitoring and review

The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The headteacher logs all complaints received by the school, and records how they were resolved.

Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

St Mary's will review this policy regularly.

Reviewed: Autumn 2008

Reviewed and revised: November 2010