

Complaints Procedure Booklet

LONG MARTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL



*“A happy, caring, creative, learning
environment at the heart of our
community.”*

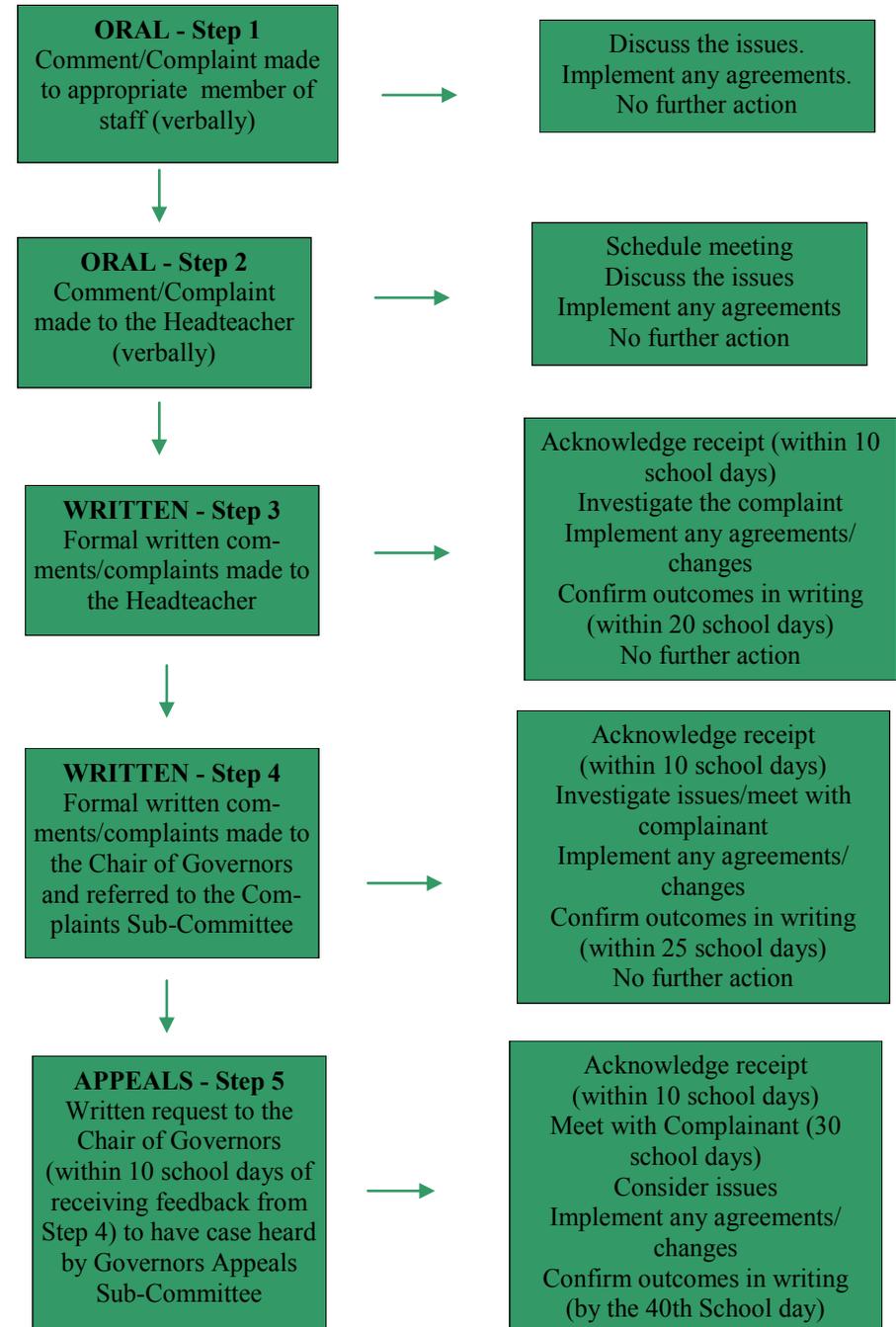
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Long Marton Community School is a County Primary School

**Headteacher: Mrs Rachel Smith
Chair of Governors: Mrs Yvonne Lake**

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FLOW CHART
(with timescale for responses)



Again, where it becomes evident that the nature of the complaint should be dealt with according to other established procedures or appeals mechanisms in accordance with CCC procedures this complaints procedure will be set aside in favour of the alternative procedure such as Child Protection, Special Education, Admissions, Suspensions and Exclusions, Grievance, Discipline, Harassment or Unsatisfactory Teacher Procedure - (see paragraph 1.1 ii).

You will receive a written acknowledgement of your letter within 10 school days. This will confirm that your letter has been received and provide you with the date and time of the meeting at which you will have an opportunity to explain your concerns. Since this process is consultative in nature and not adversarial, a complainant will have the right to be accompanied by another person, but not a legal representative or a person acting in a professional capacity. This meeting will normally take place within 30 school days of your Appeal request having been received.

Within 10 school days of this meeting, you should expect a final written response. This will indicate the governors' findings, their recommendations and the reasons supporting their decisions.

The decision of the Governor Appeals Sub-Committee is final. At the end of the process the Chair of Governors will inform you in writing that the Complaints Procedure has been exhausted and the matter is considered closed.

Should a complainant believe that the school has not investigated the complaint in line with its published procedures they may request a review by the Local Authority.

6.1 Record Keeping

The Headteacher and Chair of Governors shall maintain a record of all correspondence, conversations and meetings concerning your complaint. These records shall be held confidentially in the school and shall be kept apart from pupil records. All such records will be destroyed five years after the date of the last correspondence on the issue.

If the complainant does not respond within a reasonable time to the outcome of an investigation into the comment/complaint or does not co-operate with the process, we will assume that the complainant is satisfied and does not require us to take further action.

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11.1 Scope of Complaints Procedure

The purpose of the School Complaints Procedure is to address concerns raised mainly by parents/ carers.

- i) The procedure covers all matters relating to the school, the actions of staff, volunteers and governors, and any community facilities or service it provides
- ii) **Where it becomes evident at an early stage that the nature of the complaint should be dealt with according to other established procedures or appeals mechanisms this complaints procedure would be set aside in favour of the alternative procedure such as Child Protection, Special Education, National Curriculum, Religious Education, Collective Worship, Health & Safety, Admissions, Suspensions and Expulsions, Grievance, Discipline, Harassment or Unsatisfactory Teacher Procedure.**
- iii) The school will not deal with anonymous complaints and therefore these procedures do not provide for a resolution of anonymous complaints except for the referral of child protection concerns within the scope of Procedures and Guidelines to the appropriate Child Protection Authority.

Your written complaint should be as concise as possible and address specifically the issue or issues that are of concern to you. You will receive a written acknowledgement of your letter within 10 school days. This will confirm that your letter has been received, and:

- Provide a response to the issues you raised;
or
 - Indicate that your concerns are being fully investigated and when you can expect a response to be issued (normally a maximum of 25 school days from the date on which your written complaint was received).
- The investigation may require you to meet the Sub-Committee of the Governors. Again, a mutually convenient time will be arranged. The Sub-Committee will also talk to other parties relevant to the complaint.
- If the Chair of Governors is the subject of the complaint, you should write to the Vice Chair of Governors.

Step 5 - Appeals Process - Governors Appeals Sub-Committee

Finally, if you still believe that your complaint has not been addressed you may write to the Chair of Governors within 10 school days of receiving written feedback from Step 4 above requesting that your complaint be moved to the Appeals Process.

The Chair of Governors will be responsible for ensuring that you are invited to a meeting of the Appeals Sub-Committee where your appeal will be heard. Your written request should be as concise as possible and set out specifically the ground of your Appeal.

The Appeals Sub-Committee of the Governors will have at least 3 members who will not have been involved in the initial investigation.

(ii) Written Process

Step 3 - Writing to the Headteacher

Sometimes it will not be possible for you to have your complaint resolved through the informal processes proposed at Steps 1 and 2 or indeed it might be more appropriate to initiate the procedures at Step 3. You should write to the Headteacher and state the grounds for your complaint as concisely as possible addressing specifically the issue or issues that are of immediate concern to you.

You will receive a written acknowledgement of your letter within 10 school days. This will confirm that your letter has been received, and either:

- Provide a response to the issues you raised;
- or
- Indicate that your concerns are being investigated and when you can expect a response to be issued (normally a maximum of 20 school days from the date on which your letter was received). The investigation may require you to meet the Headteacher and due notification will be given of such meetings. The Headteacher will also talk to the other relevant parties.

If your complaint is against the Headteacher you should proceed to Step 4 of this procedure.

Step 4 - Writing to the Chair of Governors

If you still believe that your complaint has not been dealt with in a satisfactory manner or in a case where you decide to raise an issue at this level, you may write to the Chair of governors, including, if possible copies of the original correspondence relating to Step 3. The Chair of Governors will be responsible for referring your complaint to a Complaints Sub-Committee which will investigate and respond to your complaint. The Complaints Sub-Committee will have a minimum of 3 voting members.

2.1 Aims

Our Complaints Procedure aims to:

- Encourage resolution of problems by **informal** means wherever possible.
- Be easily **accessible** and **publicised**. Copies will be available on request or via the school website;
- Be **simple** to understand and use;
- Be **impartial**;
- Be **non-adversarial**;
- Allow **swift** handling with established **time-limits** for action keeping people informed of the progress;
- Ensure a **full** and **fair** investigation;
- Have due regard for the **rights** and **responsibilities** of all parties involved;
- Respect people's desire for **confidentiality**;
- Address all the points at issue and provide an **effective** response and **appropriate** redress where necessary;
- Provide **information** to the schools management team and board of governors so that services can be improved.

3.1 What to expect under these procedures

i) Your rights as a person making a complaint

In dealing with your complaint we will ensure that you receive:

- fair treatment;
- courtesy;
- a timely response;
- accurate advice;
- a co-ordinated response;
- respect for your privacy - concerns will be treated as confidentially as possible allowing for the possibility that we may have to consult with other appropriate parties about your complaint;
- reasons for our decisions.

Where there are grounds to your complaint we will acknowledge this and address the issues you have raised. If after investigation it is judged there are no grounds for your complaint you will be advised accordingly.

ii) Your responsibilities as a person making a complaint

In raising an issue we would expect that you:

- raise issues in a timely manner;
- treat our staff in a non-threatening manner and with respect and courtesy;
- provide accurate and concise information in relation to the issue you raise;
- use the procedures fully and engage in them at the appropriate levels.

iii) Rights of staff involved

The process is a non-adversarial and does not provide a role for any other statutory or non-statutory body. However, it does not take away the right of staff to seek advice from their professional body or trade union. Neither does the procedure take away from the statutory rights in law of any of the participants.

4.1 Who will deal with your Complaint

At the informal stage your complaint will be dealt with by the class teacher or Headteacher. If you proceed to the formal part of the process the Headteacher will assume responsibility for managing the process, unless s/he is subject to the complaint, in which case the Chair of Governors will assume responsibility or nominated governor to investigate and resolve complaint.

If the Chair of Governors is the subject of a complaint, the Vice Chair of governor will nominate another member of the governors to act as a Complaints Co-ordinator and you will be informed accordingly.

5.1 Making a Complaint

i) Oral Process

Step 1 - speaking with the Teacher concerned

In the first instance a complaint or concern should normally be referred verbally to the class/subject teacher concerned, so that s/he may be allowed an opportunity to address the issue, as in many instances these can arise through a simple misunderstanding. ***You should observe the schools existing protocols for arranging and conducting such approaches or meetings and observe the schools prospectus or policy with respect to access to members of teaching staff.***

The approach would not prevent you from choosing to enter the process at a later stage, if you believe that to be an appropriate course of action.

If a complaint refers to the behaviour of a non-teaching member of staff, or the school's community facilities or services then you should speak to the Headteacher.

Step 2 - speaking with the Headteacher

If your complaint remains unresolved following Step 1 you should arrange a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss the issue. You should let the Headteacher know in advance the nature of your concerns so that s/he can prepare for the meeting.

In some circumstances the Headteacher will not be able to deal effectively with your concerns immediately and s/he will require some time to investigate and prepare a response. If further time is required you will be informed of the timescale and the likely date by which a response will be issued.

If you have concerns relating to the Headteacher you should arrange a meeting with her/him to discuss issues.