



# Southwark Primary School

## Complaints Policy

At Southwark Primary School, we aim to resolve the concerns of all stakeholders as quickly and amicably as possible. We recognise that the process of listening and resolving complaints can contribute to school improvement.

### **Stage 1 – Informal Complaint**

Most of the time, complaints can be resolved through informal discussion with either the class teacher or a more senior member of staff. We always ask the complainant, at the earliest stage, what they think might resolve the issue and ensure our complaints procedure is easily accessible, simple to understand and use, impartial and non-confrontational.

At Southwark Primary School, complaints may often be addressed by a senior member of staff, teaching or non-teaching, rather than directly by the Executive Principal or Head of School. This speeds up the process and ensures that the complaint is addressed as soon as practicable. However, if the person who is complaining remains unsatisfied, then this procedure may be used.

### **Stage 2 – Formal Complaint**

If the complaint cannot be resolved through informal discussion with a teacher or senior member of staff, then the complaint should be put in writing to Mr Skirton (Head of School) who will investigate and reply in writing within three working weeks.

### **Stage 3**

If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the written response received, or the complaint is directly about the Head of School, then the complaint should be put in writing to Mr Boyd (Executive Principal of the Believe Academy Trust). The Executive Principal will then carry out an investigation independently, or with one or two governors from the Local Governing Body of Southwark Primary School, depending on the complexity of the complaint. A reply will be made within three working weeks. In most cases, the decision of the Executive Head is final, unless the complainant has significant other factual information to bring to bear on the case; if the complaint is still not resolved to the parent/carer's satisfaction; or if the Executive Principal feels that it is necessary to review the complaint.

### **Stage 4**

In cases whereby other factual information has been provided; the complaint is still not resolved to the parent/carer's satisfaction; or if the Executive Principal feels that it is necessary to review the complaint; or the complaint is directly about the Executive Principal, then the complaint should be put in writing to the Chair of the Trust Board. The Chair of the Trust Board will then organise a complaints committee hearing. At this hearing, there will be a panel, set up by the academy trust, comprising at least three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom must be independent of the management and running of the school. Parents/carers are allowed to attend the hearing and be accompanied if they wish.

The Chair of the Trust Board will appoint a member of the Governing Body as an investigating officer to gather evidence and conduct preliminary interviews on the Chair's behalf. The investigating officer will provide a detailed report of his/her investigation of the complaint. Parent/carers will be given a copy of this report. It is important that the investigating officer is seen as impartial so she/he will not be a member of the associated complaints committee.

The Complaints Committee hearing will be at a time convenient to all parties. The committee will ensure that all present are treated fairly. The meeting will be minuted by the clerk to governors and everyone present will be given a copy of the minutes. The committee will give its decision, in writing, within five school days after the meeting, along with the reasons for their decision.

### **Appeals**

If, after this school based process, the complaint is still not resolved to the parent/carer's satisfaction, they should write to the Chair of the Trust Board to appeal against the decision. This should be in writing ten working days from notice of the outcome from stage three. The appeal is heard and investigated as in stage three but using a different governing panel. This is the final stage.

If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the chair of the governing body is able to inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

### **Monitoring and Review**

Mr Skirton (Head of School) is the school's complaints coordinator and will provide regular updates as to complaints that have been logged to the termly Full Governing Body Meeting.

This policy came into effect from June 2016 and will be reviewed every two years.