

HOLMFIRTH JUNIOR INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL COMPLAINTS POLICY

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

At Nabb, children and their learning come first and we will always do our utmost to deliver a first class education and caring environment. Occasionally, however, you may have a concern about some aspect of school life. Nabb has an 'open door' policy and we are always pleased to discuss such matters.

Step 1. Your child's class teacher is the best first point of contact.

Why not arrange to talk to them? The start of the school day is rarely a 'good' time and you may want to speak somewhere more private than the classroom - arrange a time and place with the teacher to suit you both.

Step 2. If the class teacher is unable to address the concern satisfactorily, or the matter is more serious or whole school related, arrange to speak to a member of the management team or the Headteacher - they will always welcome communication on anything that relates to the smooth running of our school and our children's well-being. You may wish to see them in school, or may find a telephone conversation more convenient. Practice has shown that in most cases talking directly to the school will provide the best resolution to any complaint.

Step 3. If, having met with the Headteacher, you feel that you have not had a satisfactory verbal response - write to ask for further investigation and a written response. The school will then make further enquiries and write to you with a clearer resolution to your concerns. Your letter should be acknowledged within 5 days - but a detailed response may take a little longer.

Step 4. If this does not resolve your problem or should your concern relate to the Headteacher directly, you should write to the Chair of Governors detailing your complaint and giving reasons why you feel that the Headteacher's response was not satisfactory. Please do not approach other Governors with details as they cannot become involved in this procedure at this stage, though they will be happy to clarify the procedure to you.

Step 5. The Chair of Governors will respond to you in writing and may ask yourself or the Headteacher for further information / clarification. The Chair will then offer you the opportunity to ask for a Complaints' Committee to be convened.

If at any stage you reconsider and decide you would rather go back to the Headteacher for a resolution then please do so, it cannot be emphasised enough that this is always the ideal solution.

Step 6. The Complaints Committee is made up of governors who will have no prior knowledge of the complaint, other than having had sight of all written evidence which both you and the school will have been asked to provide to the Chair of Governors in advance.

The Terms of reference of the Complaints Committee are designed to provide an open, supportive environment in which concerns may be aired and hopefully resolved.

This procedure should allow Nabb to satisfactorily resolve problems within our community.

COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE HOLMFIRTH J I & N SCHOOL
TERMS OF REFERENCE
(September 2003 – reviewed Feb 2007)

The Complaints Committee (C.C.) will be constituted from at least two and preferably three of the designated governors at such time as a complainant requests this and *provided that the complainant has followed the school's complaints procedure to Step 5*. The school will have had opportunity to resolve the complaint and written evidence from the complainant and the Headteacher will be provided to the C.C. via the Chair of Governors in advance. Any Member of the C.C. who perceives a conflict of interest must declare said conflict and disqualify themselves from the panel for this case.

The C.C. has delegated powers from the full governing body and is mandated to act upon behalf of the governing body. Formal notice will be given of the meeting and an agenda published. The meeting will be minuted by a minute clerk or the school secretary as appropriate. Minutes will not identify individuals by name. The C.C. will select a chair from its members on a case by case basis.

Written submissions from both parties must be provided to the C.C. members up to 48 hours in advance of the meeting. This is to allow reading of the case and discussion to take place between members. Neither the Headteacher nor the complainant must attempt to make contact with any of the C.C. members to discuss the issue beforehand.

The complainant will be invited to attend the meeting with the support of a friend or relative if so desired. The Headteacher will also attend and will be equally entitled to a 'supporter'. Both parties will be given a stated time in which to address the committee upon the complaint laid before them- the time allotted will depend upon the complexity of the case. No 'side meetings' will take place - all discussion will be open to all parties. Where it is appropriate and a child is of an age to contribute, the child may be invited to attend - although their contribution will normally have been made earlier in the procedure to the Headteacher or class teacher and will be documented.

The watchword of the C.C. is mutual respect. The parties will be provided with a code of conduct for the meeting. In coming to the meeting their acceptance of this code is implicit. The Chair of the meeting will remind the parties of this and other procedural matters at the commencement of the meeting. In the event of any party breaking this code - by failing to allow others to speak or behaviour deemed unacceptable - a short break in the meeting will be convened to allow the chair to speak to the party. Should inappropriate behaviour continue, the C.C. will bring the meeting to a close, the parties will be asked to withdraw and resolution will be made upon the basis of the written evidence provided in advance.

Once the C.C. has heard from both parties the open meeting will be closed and the parties will withdraw. The C.C. will then review the case and decide an outcome. Minutes of the open meeting will be provided and the parties will be informed of the outcome in writing.

How and What will the Complaints Committee decide?

1. Has the C.C. been provided with sufficient information upon which to make a judgement? If not, where can the information be found? Follow up.
2. Has the school's Complaints Procedure been followed?
3. Is the complaint valid? (Either in its entirety or in certain aspects)
4. Is the Headteacher justified in his/her actions? (All or partly)
5. Should the C.C. ask the Headteacher to reconsider any aspect of the complaint?
6. Should the L.E.A. or other professionals be approached for additional information?

These decisions will be shared with the parties. The governing body will ask the school to take any actions arising from the C.C. decision. The complainant may ultimately request that the L.E.A. review the handling of the complaint but this will look at procedure and not overturn those issues of school management which fall within the remit of the Headteacher or Governing body.

Arrangements for Review

This Policy will be reviewed once in each academic year as a minimum requirement.

MANAGERS	SIGNATURE	DATE SIGNED
Signature of person with responsibility for curriculum area		
Signature of Management Team member		
Signature of Chair of Governors		