



FULWELL JUNIOR SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

POLICY STATUS : STATUTORY

DATE OF LATEST UPDATE : June 2016

Previous Update : November 2013

Consultation & Ratification : Head Teacher / SMT / SBM / Governing Body

Policy Approved By:

Chair of Governors

Countersigned:

Head Teacher

Date of Approval :

14th June 2016

Policy Purpose :

To provide clear objectives of the framework in place for handling complaints made against the school/school employees.

Links to Other Policies :

To be read in conjunction with the following Policies:

- Staff Appraisal Policy
- Behaviour & Discipline Policy
- Capability Policy
- Staff Discipline/Conduct & Grievance Procedures
- Single Equality Scheme
- Confidentiality Policy
- SEND Policy

See Also :

Staff Handbook & School Prospectus
City of Sunderland Code of Conduct
City of Sunderland Whistleblowing Policy
Related Risk Assessments
Any other Policy deemed relevant (see Policy File)

REVIEW & EVALUATION:

All Local Policies at FJS are subject to annual review. Where there is NO CHANGE to practice or legislation, the most recent edition of the policy will remain in operation. The Policy Monitoring Statement will be updated annually as evidence of the periodic review and any changes will be appropriately recorded.

FULWELL JUNIOR SCHOOL
POLICY & PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS 2016-17



Introduction:

The Governing Body of Fulwell Junior School has adopted this policy to provide clear guidance to parents and associates of the school of the steps to follow in the event of a complaint.

It has been devised in accordance with Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, which states that “all maintained schools must have and make available a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides”.

Consideration has also been given to the DfE guidance document **‘Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016’**, issued January 2016

The Policy provides clarity of the most common matters arising:

1. The difference between a ‘concern’ and a ‘complaint’
2. Who can make a complaint
3. The Complaints Procedure:
 - a. Timeliness
 - b. Stages
 - c. Recording Complaints
 - d. Governing Body Review
4. Complaints that are not covered by this policy
5. The School hierarchy for reporting a complaint
6. Roles & Responsibilities
7. Next steps

The School have also adopted a separate guide to dealing with serial and persistent complainants which is enclosed in this policy at Appendix A.

1. The difference between a concern and a complaint:

There may be times when parents feel it necessary to speak to the school, and it is therefore necessary to establish the difference between a ‘concern’ and a ‘complaint’.

Concerns: Generally defined as *‘an expression of worry or doubt considered to be important for which reassurances are sought’*

Complaints: Generally defined as *‘an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action’*.

It is in everyone’s interest to ensure that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to follow formal procedures as many matters that people see as a complaint tend to be requests for more information. Often, once the complainant has understood the situation, they tend to be satisfied that the school has recognised and is dealing with issues.

The school will take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. There will be instances where the complainant would like to raise their concerns formally, and in such instances, the schools formal procedure will be invoked through the stages outlined within this policy.

2. Who can make a complaint?

Any person may make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that the school provides, including members of the general public (unless separate statutory procedures apply). Complaints are not just limited to the parents/carers of children registered at the school. We will be mindful of any barriers to communicating a complaint that an individual may have, such as a physical impediment or language difficulty and will offer support where appropriate.

In the first instance, at the earliest opportunity, we will ask the complainant what they believe might resolve the issue. Please note, an admission that the school could have handled a given situation better is not the same as an admission of negligent or unlawful action.

We will ensure the complaints policy is:

- Easily accessible and publicly available on the school website
- Is simple to understand and use
- Is impartial
- Is non-adversarial
- Enables a full and fair investigation by the relevant parties or an independent person where necessary
- Respects an individual's desire for confidentiality
- Addresses all the points at issue and provides an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- Provides clarity to the Senior Management Team so we may improve our services to all our stakeholders.

3. The Complaints Procedure:

A. Timeliness:

The school will endeavour to deal with complaints promptly to ensure swift resolution; with this in mind, we have set realistic and reasonable time limits for each action within each stage of the process. In instances of complex or significant complaint, it may be necessary to extend the time limit to ensure that all relevant investigations have been made.

Similarly, we would expect complainants to lodge their complaint as soon as possible after an incident arises and reserve the right to dismiss complaints that fall outside of a **three month** window. We will only consider exceptions to this in the most extreme of instances, and only where the complainant can provide sound evidence as to why the complaint was not lodged sooner.

B. Stages:

Fulwell Junior School have adopted a **3-stage** structure for dealing with complaints:

Stage 1:

Informal discussion with the school

It is always useful to talk through your complaint with the person responsible, either by telephone or face to face. We reserve the right to request an appointment if the complaint requires time and consideration, to ensure your concerns are fully addressed.

Stage 1 complaints are deemed to be not of a serious nature; examples of this would be if a parent was dissatisfied with a reprimand their child received and wanted further clarification, or where there has been an incident between children that had not been satisfactorily resolved.

NB : Any complaint that involves an allegation of misconduct against a member of staff **MUST** be referred to the Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher in the first instance (e.g. physical or emotional misconduct).

At the informal stage, your first point of contact will probably be your child's Class Teacher. If this preliminary discussion does not resolve the matter, it will be possible for you to discuss the complaint further with the Phase Leader for your child's Year Group. After referral to the Phase Leader, it is hoped that no further action would be necessary, however parents have the right to escalate discussions to the Deputy Head Teacher and/or Assistant Head Teacher if they believe the involvement of the Phase Leader has not resolved the matter. Such discussions would still be considered as Stage 1 (informal). The staff dealing with the complaint may make notes of the discussions held to assist in monitoring the situation and to refer back to in the event of a re-occurrence.

Stage 2:

Formal Complaint to the Head Teacher

If you feel your complaint has not been appropriately addressed at Stage 1, you may wish to take the matter further by putting it in writing to the Head Teacher. **The complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 5 school days of receipt.** The Head Teacher may invite you in to school to discuss the matter and hopefully seek a resolution. He reserves the right to delegate the task of collating information about the complaint to another member of the Senior Management Team (Assistant HT/Deputy HT) or any other member of staff who may have had first hand involvement with the initial complaint.

The decision on any action to be taken as a result of the complaint and the subsequent response will be communicated to you in writing by the Head Teacher **within 10 school days of the first acknowledgement.**

Stage 3:

Formal Complaint to the Governing Body

If neither Stage 1 or 2 have resulted in satisfactory resolution of the complaint, **or if the complaint relates to the conduct of the Head Teacher**, the next step would be to make a formal complaint to the Governing Body. You should contact the Chair of Governors by letter, and provide copies of any supporting correspondence between yourself and the school, providing clear reasons as to your dissatisfaction with the outcome.

You can send correspondence via the school or to the Governor Support Team based at the Civic Centre, Sunderland, SR2 7DN.

The Chair of Governors will consider whether the complaint needs to be heard by the Governing Body by establishing:

- Has the complainant followed Stage 1 and 2 of the Policy?
- Is there sufficient evidence that the school has not dealt properly with the complaint?
- Is there any indication of what the complainant has done to resolve the matter?

See part D for the Governing Body review process.

C. Recording Complaints:

We will ensure we comply with our obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Although we will request all formal complaints are submitted in writing, we appreciate that some people may have communication preferences due to disabilities or learning difficulties and we will allow alternative methods of contact such as telephone or e-mail as well as in writing.

In order to prevent further challenge or disagreement over what was discussed, the member of staff dealing with the complaint in the first instance will make brief notes of the conversation which will be retained with any other written responses and added to the complaints record.

We reserve the right to use recording devices to ensure the complainant is able to access and review discussions at a later date where appropriate. We are committed to ensuring all stages of the process are adequately documented and that sufficient records are retained of the progress of the complaint to the final outcome.

We will fulfil our duties under the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts to ensure complainants may have access to any records retained.

The Head Teacher may delegate the co-ordination of complaints to another member of staff, (for example the Business Manager) who would be responsible for:

- Acknowledging receipt of the complaint on the Head Teacher's behalf
- Ensuring there is adequate records maintained of all complaints

received

- Monitoring responses between the parties
- Ensuring responses are made within the set timescales
- Identifying trends and themes arising from complaints, and reporting the same to the Senior Management Team

By investigating the complaint, we will ensure:

- That it has been clearly established what has happened to date and who has been involved
- That there is clarity of the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved
- That there is an opportunity to meet with the complainant or contact them to verify the information provided, or gain further information where necessary
- That we can clarify what the complainant feels would resolve the issue and establish desired outcomes.
- That we interview the parties subject of, and involved in, the complaint, giving them the opportunity to be accompanied where appropriate.
- That we conduct such interviews with an open mind and are prepared to persist in the questioning.
- That we keep thorough notes and records of all interviews

D. Governing Body Review:

The Chair of Governors will work in liaison with the Governor Support Team to establish whether the complaint does or does not meet the threshold for further investigation.

Where it is established that the complaint **does not** meet the threshold, the Chair will:

- Write to the complainant and ask that they submit further information stipulating why they want to pursue the matter further;
- **Or** pass the complaint back to the Head Teacher to deal with if the complaint has circumvented Stages 1 and 2;
- **Or** request the complainant attends a meeting to explore the possibility of resolving the matter informally.

Where it is identified that:

- The complainant **does** meet the threshold
- **Or** where the Chair has already met with the complainant informally and the matter was unresolved
- **Or** where the complainant is dissatisfied with the investigation of the Chair of Governors, and subsequently extends the complaint to include their conduct

then a Governing Body Complaints Panel may be convened. This will normally be within 15 school days of the Stage 3 response to the complainant but will be dependent on the availability of the Panel members.

The Governing Body Complaints Panel should consist of 3 to 5 Governors and should not include all of the School's Governors. This is so impartiality is not compromised in case a panel is then required for a disciplinary hearing against a member of staff as a result of a complaint.

One of the Governors will be appointed as the Chair of the Complaints Panel. This does not necessarily have to be the Chair of Governors; *similarly, the Chair of Governors cannot sit on the panel if any element of the complaint relates to their own conduct.*

The role of the Chair should include:

- Ensuring that the correct process has been followed and the meeting is fully minuted
- The remit of the panel is explained to each party at the beginning of the proceedings – i.e. that all parties will have the opportunity to have their say without being interrupted
- That all issues raised within the written complaint are fully addressed
- That the key findings of fact are made
- Ensuring that complainants are put at ease and do not feel intimidated
- That only complaints raised within the written complaint are dealt with at the hearing and no new complaints are raised that have not been subject to stages 1 or 2.
- Ensure the hearing is conducted informally and that all parties treat each other with courtesy and respect
- The panel is open minded and acts independently
- No panel member has had any previous involvement in the complaint
- All parties are given the opportunity to see any written documentation and to comment on it. The Chair should also ensure that the complainant is informed of the Panel's decision, in writing, within 15 working days of the Panel hearing. This letter should inform the complainant of their right of appeal should they remain dissatisfied (i.e. Ofsted or The Secretary of State for Education).

None of the Governors on the panel should have had any prior involvement in the complaint.

The panel hearing will be held in private, with the aim being to resolve the complaint, achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant and

assure the complainant that his/her concerns have been taken seriously.

The Complaints Panel will aim to reach an outcome in respect of the complaint (i.e. upheld, partially upheld, not upheld, unable to substantiate), decide and agree on appropriate action to be taken as a result of the complaint and make recommendations to change processes/procedures to ensure problems of a similar nature do not re-occur.

Care will be taken to ensure that the complainant does not feel intimidated by the process, especially if the complainant is a child. Consideration will therefore be given to the setting and layout of room etc.

Complainants have the right to request an independent panel if they believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings; however, it is at the discretion of the Governing Body as to whether this request would be honoured.

A Clerk to the panel will be appointed (this will be the Clerk to the Governing Body). The clerk will be responsible for the following:

- Arranging the time, date and venue for the hearing
- Collating and distributing any written information, including details of the previous stages of the complaint, to all parties in advance of the hearing
- Meeting and welcoming the parties as they arrive
- Notifying all relevant parties of the panel's decision

The Governing Body will decide how often the Complaints Policy is reviewed, taking into account any changes to guidance issued by the Department for Education.

The process of listening to and resolving complaints can be a positive part of school improvement and can be a useful tool in evaluating schools performance. Governors will therefore monitor the handling and outcomes of complaints to improve the effectiveness of the overall policy.

4. Complaints not covered by this policy:

This Complaints Policy will cover all complaints regarding the provision of facilities and services that the school delivers with the **exceptions** below, for which there are other separate, statutory procedures:

Exceptions	Who to Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions to School • Statutory Assessment of Special Educational Needs (SEN) • School re-organisation proposals • Matters likely to require a Child Protection investigation 	<p>Concerns should be raised direct with the Local Authority (LA)</p> <p>Complaints about admission appeals for maintained schools are dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion of children from school 	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found on the DfE website: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusion.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistleblowing 	<p>Fulwell Junior School follow the Whistleblowing Procedures of Sunderland City Council for school based employees and voluntary staff.</p> <p>Other concerns can be raised directly with OFSTED by telephone on: 0300 123 3155 or via e-mail at: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk or by writing to:</p> <p>WBHL, OFSTED Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD</p> <p>The Department for Education is also a prescribed body for whistleblowing in education.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures 	<p>These matters invoke the schools internal grievance procedures, as advised by the City of Sunderland. Complainants will not be informed of the outcome of any investigation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints about services provided by other organisations / individuals who may use school 	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about the service. Parents would be advised to contact</p>

premises or facilities.	the individual organisation in the event of complaint.
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5. The School Hierarchy for reporting a complaint:

When parents have a complaint about a matter involving their child, it is reasonable to expect the first point of contact to be with the Class Teacher.

The following hierarchy shows the stages the school suggest are followed:

Parental complaint	Referred to Class Teacher in first instance
Issue resolved?	Yes : No further action needed No : Refer to Phase Leader and/or Deputy HT/
Assistant HT if	necessary
Issue resolved?	Yes : No further action needed No : Refer to Head Teacher. This referral must be submitted in writing by the complainant.
Issue resolved?	Yes : No further action needed No : Refer to the Chair of Governors This referral must be submitted in writing by the complainant
Issue resolved?	Yes : No further action needed No : Complaint referred to the Governing Body for resolution and complainant invited to Panel meeting.
Complaints Panel	

6. Roles & Responsibilities:

The whole structure of handling and concluding complaints will be more manageable if all parties acknowledge their role and responsibilities in the process. For this purpose, the policy provides clarity of the expectations as set out in the following table:

Role	Responsibility
The Complainant	<p>The complainant will receive a more effective response if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operate with the school in seeking solution to the complaint • Express the complaint in full as early as possible • Respond promptly to requests for information, meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint • Ask for assistance as needed • Treat all parties involved in the investigation of the complaint with respect
The Head Teacher (or delegated Complaints Co-Ordinator)	<p>The Head Teacher (or delegated Complaints Co-Ordinator) should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure • Ensure that all parties are aware of legislation around complaints including the Equality Act 2010, Data Protection Act 1998 and Freedom of Information Act 2000 • Liaise with staff members, the Chair of Governors and the Governors Support Team to ensure the smooth running of the procedure • Keep accurate records • Be aware of issues surrounding the sharing of third party information and additional support (this may be required by complainants when making a complaint including interpretation support)
The Investigator	<p>The Investigator is the member of staff involved in Stage 1 and 2 of the procedure. The Investigator's role can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved; - Consideration of records and other relevant information - Interviewing staff/children any

	<p>anyone else relevant to the complaint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysing information • Effectively liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right • Identifying solutions and recommending courses of action to resolve problems • Being mindful of the timescales to respond • Responding to the complainant in plain and clear language <p>The person investigating the complaint should also make sure they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning • Keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting
<p>The Panel Clerk (Clerk to the Governing Body or the Complaints Co-Ordinator)</p>	<p>The Clerk is the contact point for the panel meeting and is expected to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set the date. Time and venue of the hearing, ensuring the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible; • Collate any written material and send it to all parties in advance of the meeting; • Meet and welcome the parties on arrival; • Record the proceedings; • Circulate the minutes of the panel hearing; • Notify all parties of the panel decision; • Liaise with the complaints co-ordinator
<p>The Panel Chair</p>	<p>The Panel Chair has a key role in ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting is minuted; • The remit of the panel is explained to the complainant and both they and the school have the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption; • The issues are addressed; • Key findings of fact are made; • Parents/carers and others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease (particularly important if the complainant is a child); • The hearing is conducted in an informal manner with everyone treated with respect and courtesy; • The panel is open minded and acts independently;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No member of the panel has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure; • Both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to state their case and seek clarity; • Written material is seen by everyone in attendance.
Panel Member	<p>Panellists will need to be aware that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important that the hearing is independent and impartial and that it is seen to be so. No Governors may sit on the panel if they have had prior involvement in the complaint or the circumstances surrounding it. • The aim of the hearing, which will be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. However it must be recognised that the complainant may not be happy with the outcome if the hearing does not go in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that his/her complaint has been taken seriously. • May complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting and parents can become emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child. The panel chair will ensure proceedings are as welcoming as possible. • The welfare of the child/young person is paramount and needs to be handled with sensitivity.

7. Next Steps:

We will endeavour wherever possible to resolve complaints in a timely and mutually beneficial manner, however there may be instances where the complainant feels that the schools local procedures have been unsatisfactory.

In such instances, individuals have the right to refer their complaint to the Secretary of State for Education. The Secretary of State has a duty to consider all complaints raised but will only intervene when:

- The Governing Body have acted unlawfully or unreasonably
- Where it is expedient and practical to do so.

The Schools Complaints Unit (SCU) considers complaints relating to Local Authority maintained schools in England on behalf of the Secretary of State. The SCU will look at whether our policy and any other statutory policies were adhered to, and whether we are following advised education legislation. However the SCU will not normally re-investigate the substance of the complaint, as this remains the responsibility of the school.

The SCU will not overturn the schools decision about a complaint except in exceptional circumstances where it is clear the school have acted unlawfully or unreasonably. If it is found by the SCU that we have not handled a complaint in accordance with our Policy, it may request that the complaint is looked at again. They will also suggest corrective action is taken if it is found that we have breached legislation, seeking written assurances as to future conduct. If we fail to act upon such remedial suggestions, we could ultimately be privy to a Direction being issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 496 and 497 of the Education Act 1996.

Further information can be sought from the SCU by calling the National helpline on 0370 000 2288 or going on-line at: www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus or by writing to:

Department for Education
School Complaints Unit
2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

APPENDIX A : SERIAL AND PERSISTENT COMPLAINANTS:

We will do our best to be helpful to people who contact us with a complaint or concern or a request for information. However, in cases where we are contacted repeatedly by an individual making the same points, or who asks them to reconsider their position, we need to act appropriately.

There will be occasions when, despite all stages of the complaint procedure having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. It is important for school to recognise when they have really done everything they can in response to a complaint. It is a poor use of schools time and resources to reply to repeated letters, e-mails or telephone calls making substantially the same points. If a complainant tries to re-open the same issue, the Chair of Governors can inform them that the procedure has been completed and that the matter is now closed.

If the complainant contacts the school again on the same issue, then the correspondence may be viewed as 'serial' or 'persistent' and the school may choose not to respond. However, we acknowledge that a complaint should not be deemed as 'serial' before the complainant has exhausted all stages of the complaints procedure.

Note: The Department for Education does not itself use the term 'vexatious' when dealing with persistent or serial correspondents as it could potentially be inflammatory. However, it is a recognised term. In the context of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, the Upper Tribunal concluded that 'vexatious' could be defined as the '.....manifestly unjustified, inappropriate or improper use of a formal procedure'. An exemption therefore exists in Section 14(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. However, this exemption can only be applied to requests themselves, and not the individuals who submit them.

Further information about dealing with vexatious requests for information is available on the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) website.

Under no circumstances should an individual be marked as serial for exercising their democratic right to refer their complaint to their local MP regardless of which stage the complaint has reached. The application of 'serial' or 'persistent' should be against the subject or complaint itself, not the complainant.

When is it time to stop responding?

The decision to stop responding is not done so lightly, and we need to be able to say YES to all of the following:

- The school has taken every reasonable step to address the complainants need
- The complainant has been given a clear statement of the school's position and their options (if any) and
- They are contacting the school repeatedly but making substantially

the same points every time.

The case is stronger if one or more of these statements apply:

- The school has reason to believe the individual is contacting them with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience – have they actually said as much in a letter, e-mail or telephone call?
- Their letters/e-mails/telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive
- They make insulting personal comments about or threats towards staff.

We will not stop responding just because an individual is difficult to deal with or asks complex questions. In most circumstances the subject matter is what you can refuse to respond to, not the correspondent.

We will provide parents with information they are entitled to under The Education (Pupil Information)(England) Regulations 2005.

Where an individual's behaviour is causing a significant level of disruption, we may choose to implement a tailored communications strategy such as restricting them to a single point of contact via an e-mail address or by limiting the number of times they make contact (e.g. a fixed number of contacts per term).

Complainants have a right to have any new complaint heard and failure to respond at all could mean the school is failing to comply with its legal obligations. However, we need to ensure we are acting reasonably and that any genuine complaint can still be heard.

Where we feel an individual is difficult to deal with because of their unreasonable behaviour, and strategies are not working to conclude the matter, we will liaise with the Governor Support team and the Local Authority for assistance. It is possible that complainants may be advised not to contact the school but to communicate instead with the LA who will co-ordinate any response.

Ultimately, if we believe a complainant persists to the point where we consider it harassment, legal advice will be sought to ascertain the next steps.

POLICY FOR DEALING WITH UNREASONABLE COMPLAINANTS:

Fulwell Junior School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

Fulwell Junior School defines unreasonable complainants as 'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints'.

A complaint may be considered as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:-

- Refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- Refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaint procedure;
- Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are not compatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- Introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- Makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- Repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- Refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the schools complaints procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;
- Seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- Makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in

person, in writing, by e-mail and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:-

- Maliciously
- Aggressively
- Using threats, intimidation or violence
- Using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language
- Knowing it to be false
- Using falsified information
- Publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media, websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the Head Teacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Fulwell Junior School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from Fulwell Junior School.

Barring from the School Premises:

Although we fulfil a public function, schools are still private places and the public have no automatic right of entry. We will therefore act to ensure we remain a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of the community.

If a parent's behaviour is cause for concern, a school can ask him/her to leave the premises. In serious cases we can notify a parent in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any representations that the parent may wish to make.

Anyone wishing to complain about being barred can do so by letter or email to the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors. However, complaints about being barred cannot be escalated to the Department for Education. Once the school has invoked its own complaints procedure, the only remaining avenue of appeal is through the Courts, subject to independent legal advice being sought.

