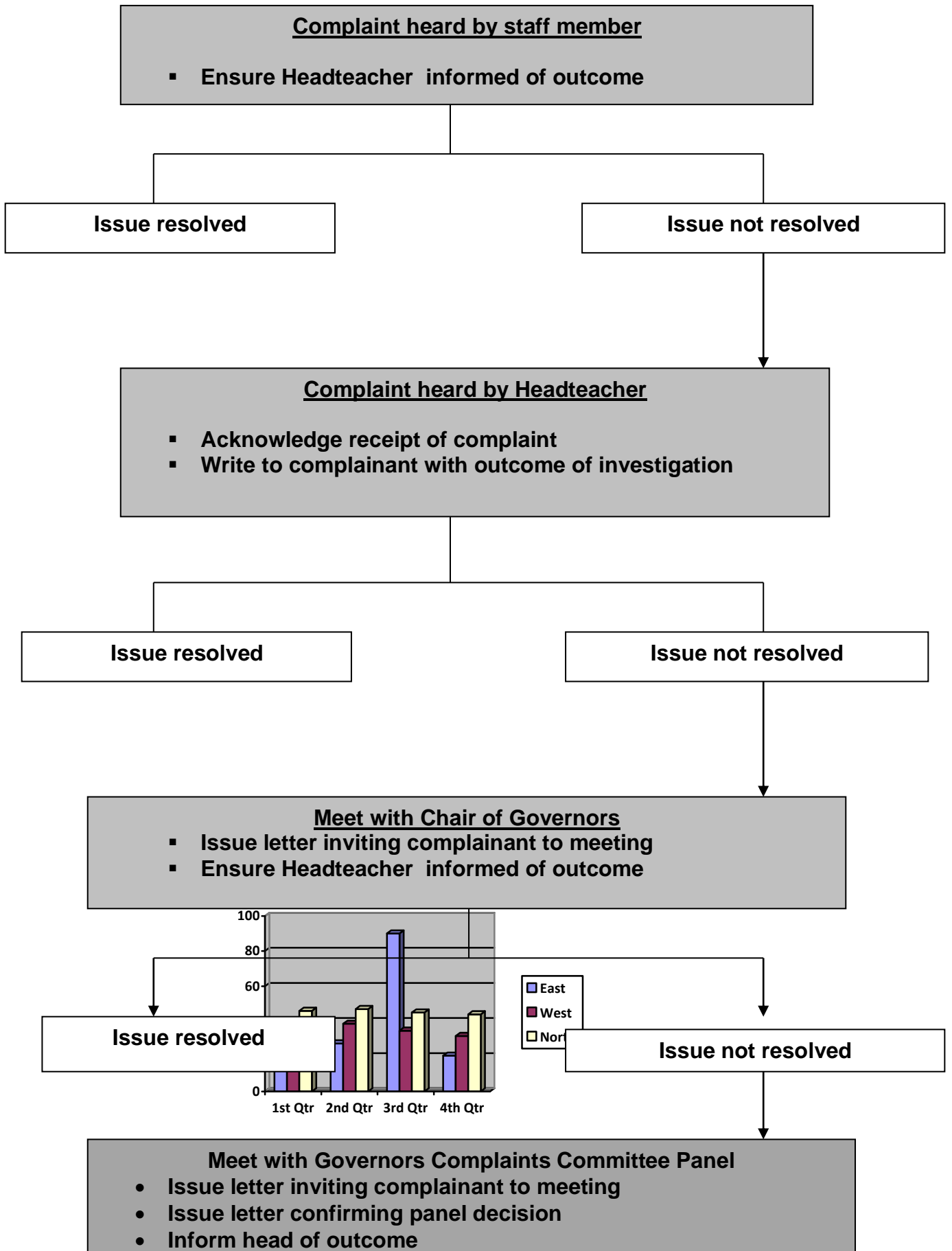


Healey Primary School



Complaints Policy and Procedure

SUMMARY OF DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS FLOWCHART



HEALEY FOUNDATION PRIMARY SCHOOL

COMPLAINT FORM

Please complete and return to the Headteacher who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name

Pupil's name

Your relationship to the pupil

Address

.....

Postcode

Phone No (Day)

Evening

Please give details of your complaint

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. Who did you speak to and what was the response?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Signature

Date

OFFICIAL USE

Date acknowledgement sent

By whom

Complaint referred to

Date

***in line with the DFE guidelines the school has 20 days to respond.**

HEALEY FOUNDATION PRIMARY SCHOOL

SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Overview (summarised)

From September 2003 Governing Bodies of all maintained schools are required, under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school. The law also requires the procedure to be published.

1. General Principles

Initial concerns

Schools need to be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint. Taking informal complaints seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints.

The underlying principle is that concerns should be handled without the need for formal procedures. The requirement to have a Complaints Procedure need not undermine efforts to resolve the concern informally. In most cases the class teacher will receive the first approach. It would be helpful if staff are able to resolve the issue on the spot, including apologising where necessary.

Formal procedures

These need to be invoked when initial attempts at resolution have failed, and the issue is to be taken further.

This school has nominated a member of the Senior Management Team to have responsibility for dealing with complaints. This will usually be the Headteacher, unless the complaint has been made against them.

Framework

An effective Complaints Procedure will:

- Encourage resolution by informal means.
- Be easily accessible and publicised.
- Be simple to understand and use.
- Be impartial
- Be non-adversarial
- Allow swift handling with established time limits for action and keeping people informed
- Ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary
- Respect confidentiality
- Address all points raised and provide an effective and appropriate response.
- Provide information to the Senior Management Team so services can be improved.

Investigating complaints

The person investigating the complaint should:

- Establish what and who
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved
- Contact the complainant
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right
- Interview all involved (allowing them to be accompanied)
- Conduct the interview with an open mind
- Keep detailed notes

Resolving complaints

At each stage a complaint should try to be resolved, or upheld either in whole or in part. It may be appropriate to:

- Apologise.
- Explain.
- Admit the situation could have been handled differently.
- Assure the incident will not recur.
- Explain steps taken so far.
- Undertake a review of school policy.

Complainants should be encouraged to state what actions could resolve the problem. An admission the situation could have been handled differently is not an admission of negligence.

An effective procedure will identify areas of agreement. A clarification of misunderstanding can create a positive atmosphere.

Serial and persistent complaints

There may be occasions when the complainant remains dissatisfied, and all procedures have been followed. The Chair of the Governing Body is able to inform them in writing that the procedures have been exhausted and that the matter is now closed. If the complainant writes again on the same issue, then the correspondence may be recognised as serial or persistent and there will be no obligation on the part of the school to respond. New and separate complaints, however, must be responded to in accordance with the complaints procedure.

Unreasonable Complaints

We are 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.

Please see Appendix 1

Time-limits

Complaints need to be considered and resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible. Each stage should have realistic time limits. However, should the complaint persist, new time limits need to be set and the complainant sent details of the new deadlines with an explanation for the delay.

It is reasonable to expect parents to make a complaint as soon as possible after an incident arises but there may be good reasons why a parent has not made a complaint earlier. In this case the complaint needs to be considered.

Typically the complaint process should be completed within 20 working days.

2. Formal complaints procedure (see flowchart)

Stage 1: Complaint heard by (another) staff member

Stage 2: Complaint heard by Headteacher

Stage 3: Complaint heard by Chair of Governors

Stage 4: Complaint heard by Governing Body Complaints Panel

3. Managing and recording complaints

Recording

A complaint may be made in person, by phone or in writing. A complaint form is attached. At the end of the call / letter a brief note should be made to ensure that all parties have the same understanding of what has been discussed and agreed.

All records should be held centrally.

Governing Body review

The GB should monitor nature and level of all complaints. Individuals should not be named.

The process of complaint resolution will contribute to school improvement and evaluation of school performance.

Publicising the procedure

There is a legal requirement for the Complaints Procedure to be publicised;

- School prospectus
- Information given to new parents
- Information given to children
- Home-school agreement
- Bulletins and newsletters
- A complaints leaflet
- posters
- School website

Appendix 1

A complaint may be regarded 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 complaints procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible 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;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- 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 school's complaint 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 email 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.

