



Hardmoor Nursery & Early Years Centre Complaints Policy

Policy Statement and Guidelines
September 2024

Mission Statement:

To provide a happy, secure and stimulating environment in which everyone is included, respected and valued, so that they may grow in self-esteem and develop to their full potential.

Policy Statement: Complaints Procedure

At Hardmoor we believe that:

- We are accountable to parents and committed to paying close attention to their concerns.
- All complaints from parents should be given and received courteously.
- Parents should feel that their complaint has received full attention.
- All complaints should be fully investigated.
- Parents should receive prompt feedback.
- Urgent complaints should receive immediate attention.
- Most complaints should be resolved through open, informal discussion between the parent and the class

Guidelines for Implementation

These guidelines have been written to ensure that all complaints will be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible by the centre. The length of the period will vary with the gravity and complexity of the complaint and the urgency with which it needs to be settled. The intention is that all complaints should be settled within a period which is considered reasonable by all parties.

Any concerns expressed by parents and others about the Centre curriculum and related matters should be considered within informal discussion with the room leaders in the first instance. This includes the operation of charging policies and the provision of information.

There are 5 levels of complaint:

- the informal level to the Base Leader
- the complaint - in writing - to Centre Manager
- the formal complaint - in writing - to the Executive Board
- the formal complaint -in writing - to the chair of Local Leadership Board
- the formal appeal to the Local Leadership Board.

If parents have any concerns about their child's educational progress, they should first discuss their concerns with the base leader. This usually enables concerns to be addressed swiftly and to everyone's satisfaction.

If the concern is in writing, the base leader will immediately share it with the Centre Manager before responding. The response time in this case will be (48 hours)

If, following discussion with the Base Leader, the parent is still not satisfied, they may wish to bring their concerns to the Centre Managers attention. Full investigation and discussion should enable most complaints to be resolved at this stage. The response time in this case will be 48 hours.

Where complaints cannot be resolved informally the matter should then be referred to **SMT**. Should the matter remain unresolved it may then be the subject of a formal complaint and the complainant may then refer it to the Executive Board. The response time in these cases will be 48 hours to ensure concerns are investigated thoroughly.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the Executive Board or the complaint is about the Centre Manager, the complainant should write to the Chair of Local Leadership Board to request that their complaint is considered further. In this case, the response time is 72 hours. If a complaint is received by individual Local Board Members, including the chair, before the above stages have been completed, those members should refer the parent to the Base Leader or Centre Manager and to the Complaints Policy.

A formal complaint to the Leadership Boards' appeal panel will need to be in writing to the clerk of the board. The complaint will then be investigated, and urgent cases will be considered as a priority. The complaint will be heard by a panel consisting of an uneven number of governors, usually 3. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, it may be that action will need to be taken by the chair before the panel meet.

The panel will not previously have been involved in any detailed discussion of the complaint. The complainant Complainants may wish to make an oral presentation in support of the complaint and

may wish to be accompanied by a friend or representative. The panel will consider the complaint and will inform the parents of their decision in writing.

A complainant who remains dissatisfied after his or her complaint has been fully considered under the arrangements described above will be able to make a complaint to the Secretary of State. However, under Section 23 (2) of the Education Reform Act, the Secretary of State may not consider any such complaint unless it has first been through all the stages of approved local arrangements.

Complaints about the education provided for pupils are to be considered as complaints about the Local Leadership Boards responsibilities in respect of the school curriculum but will not cover complaints about the actions of individual staff or the Centre manager. If, during consideration of a complaint, the local leadership board or the local authority conclude that disciplinary or other proceedings should be initiated, they should take separate action as appropriate.

Vexatious complaints

Unreasonably Vexatious complaints

Most complaints raised will be valid, and therefore we will treat them seriously. However, a complaint may become unreasonable if the person:

- Has made the same complaint before, and it's already been resolved by following the school's complaints procedure
- Makes a complaint that is obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, defamatory, or repetitive
- Knowingly provides false information
- Insists on pursuing a complaint that is unfounded, or out of scope of the complaint's procedure
- Pursues a valid complaint, but in an unreasonable manner e.g., refuses to articulate the complaint, refuses to co-operate with this complaint's procedure, or insists that the complaint is dealt with in ways that are incompatible with this procedure and the time frames it sets out
- Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation goes on
- Makes a complaint designed to cause disruption, annoyance, or excessive demands on school time
- Seeks unrealistic outcomes, or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value

Steps we will take

We will take every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns and give them a clear statement of our position and their options. We will maintain our role as an objective arbiter throughout the process, including when we meet with individuals. We will follow our complaints procedure as normal (as outlined above) wherever possible.

If the complainant continues to contact the school in a disruptive way, we may put communications strategies in place. We may:

- Give the complainant a single point of contact via an email address
- Limit the number of times the complainant can make contact, such as a fixed number per term
- Ask the complainant to engage a third party to act on their behalf, such as [Citizens Advice](#)
- Put any other strategy in place as necessary

Stopping responding

- We may stop responding to the complainant when all these factors are met:
- We believe we have taken all reasonable steps to help address their concerns
- We have provided a clear statement of our position and their options

- The complainant contacts us repeatedly, and we believe their intention is to cause disruption or inconvenience

Where we stop responding, we will inform the individual that we intend to do so. We will also explain that we will still consider any new complaints they make.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from our school site.

Duplicate complaints

If we have resolved a complaint under this procedure and receive a duplicate complaint on the same subject from a partner, family member or other individual, we will assess whether there are aspects that we hadn't previously considered, or any new information we need to consider.

If we are satisfied that there are no new aspects, we will:

- Tell the new complainant that we have already investigated and responded to this issue, and the local process is complete
- Direct them to the DfE if they are dissatisfied with our original handling of the complaint
- If there are new aspects, we will follow this procedure again.

Complaint campaigns

Where the school receives a large volume of complaints about the same topic or subject, especially if these come from complainants unconnected with the school, the school may respond to these complaints by:

- Publishing a single response on the school website
- Sending a template response to all the complainants
- If complainants are not satisfied with the school's response, or wish to pursue the complaint further, the normal procedures will apply.

Monitoring this Policy

The Centre Manager will monitor all written complaints and keep a copy of all letters received and sent.

If there are several complaints about the same issue, or a rise in the number of complaints overall, the Head of School/ Executive Headteacher will investigate personally.

The Local Leadership Board will monitor all written complaints made to the clerk or chair.

Date Policy approved by Governing body: Spring 2024

Policy Review date: Spring 2025