

HILL VIEW SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS and ALLEGATIONS POLICY

Adopted June 2010, Reviewed Nov 2014, Reviewed April 2017

This policy provides pupils and parents with a route to be heard if they feel aggrieved or have concerns about the behaviour of a member of staff or volunteer at Hill View School. Complaints against staff may indicate that a member of staff or volunteer is unsuitable to work with children. Having a clear policy and procedure for how to make complaints is fundamental to successful safeguarding and child protection practice.

COMPLAINTS and ALLEGATIONS

Complaints and allegations may be made in a number of ways:

- Direct disclosure by young people
- Indirect disclosure; i.e. through written work or art work
- Complaints to the class teacher, Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher from parents
- Complaints to Social Care from parents
- Complaints to Police from parents
- Reports by other colleagues or agencies (see Whistleblowing policy)

Any complaint or allegation made will be either a conduct/competency issue or an incident which could be viewed as having a Safeguarding concern. This policy applies to all staff, paid or unpaid, with direct and indirect contact with children and includes support and administration staff and volunteers. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

CONDUCT/COMPETENCY COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

If any parent or pupil is unhappy with the education or treatment that their child is receiving, or has any concern relating to the school, that does not indicate any unsuitability for the person concerned to be working with children, they should:

- Talk to the class teacher immediately
 - Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they always want to know if there is a problem, in order to take action before the problem seriously affects the child's progress.
- Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher.
 - Any such complaint will be considered serious and will be investigated thoroughly. Most complaints are resolved at this stage.
- If a parent has a complaint about the Headteacher, they should make an informal approach to one of the members of the governing body.
 - This governor will investigate it and do all they can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school. If the parent is unhappy with the outcome a formal complaint should be made.
- A formal complaint should be made to the governing body if all procedures above have been followed without suitable resolution.
 - A formal complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far. The parent should send this written complaint to the Chair of Governors.
- The governing body will consider all written complaints within three weeks of receipt.
 - A meeting with the complainant will be made to discuss the complaint. The complainant will be given at least three days' notice of the meeting.
- The governors will consider their decision and inform the parent about it in writing.
 - All possible will be done at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction.
- If a suitable resolution is still not found, a parent may make representation to the LA. (information about this process is available from the school or directly from the LA).

- A complaint at this level will result in a further meeting, chaired by an independent person, who will consider all the evidence and make a further judgment in an attempt to resolve the complaint.
- If there is still no suitable resolution then the parent is entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education.

SAFEGUARDING COMPLAINTS

The following procedure should be followed if a pupil or parent is making an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer from Hill View School that is of safeguarding concern. This is a complaint/allegation which indicates that the person concerned may have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may harm a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Headteacher and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead will immediately be notified of any complaint/allegation made which could be of safeguarding concern.
- The Chair of Governors will be notified if a safeguarding concern is raised against the Headteacher
- The LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) will be informed, by the Headteacher or DSL, of all allegations that may be of a safeguarding nature

PROCEDURE

- Parents or pupils who make a complaint/allegation against a member of staff, will be kept informed of what is happening throughout the investigation process.
- If a complaint/allegation is made, which is potentially of safeguarding concern, the Headteacher, DSL or Chair of Governors will contact the LADO, as soon as possible, for advice.
- An initial discussion with the LADO will impart all information and will seek to establish whether there is any evidence/information which indicates that the complaint/allegation is false or unfounded.
- The LADO will decide, during this initial discussion, if the matter should be investigated and handled internally or should be escalated, due to Safeguarding concerns, to either the police and/or Social Services.
- If the complaint/allegation is escalated, Social Services will convene a strategy meeting to discuss the information available and to decide what action should be taken and by whom.
- Representation for the person whom the complaint/allegation is made against is essential at this strategy meeting.

AFTER A COMPLAINT

In all cases, complaints/allegations against staff or volunteers will be taken seriously and appropriate action will be taken. In severe cases this may result in a police prosecution and/or disciplinary action. Most complaints/allegations made will require internal investigation and resolution (following advice from the LADO in concerns of a safeguarding nature).

All complaints/allegations will result in a consideration if any changes or improvements to the school's policy or practice are required in order to prevent similar events in the future.

SUPPORT FOR STAFF AGAINST WHOM A COMPLAINT/ALLEGATION IS MADE

All employees will be treated fairly and reasonably throughout any investigation made about them. They will be informed about the process to be followed and progress throughout.

Employees who have a complaint or allegation made against them of a safeguarding nature are referred to the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board at www.oscb.org.uk.

This policy supports and complements Hill View's Safeguarding policy to ensure the school takes all necessary steps to protect the welfare of all children in our care. It will be reviewed annually.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

A copy of this policy is included in Hill View School's Safeguarding Portfolio which is held in the staff room, a hard copy is available on request from the school office and it can be viewed at any time through the school website. www.hillview-school.co.uk