
DEFINITION

A 'concern' may be defined as '*an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought*'. A complaint may be generally defined as '*an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action*'.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

This policy statement aims to set out Norton Junior School's approach to dealing with parental concerns and complaints. Further details on the process of raising a concern or complaint and how the school handles them are contained in Norton Junior School's Concerns and Complaints Procedure document. You will find this document on the school website or on request you can collect one from the school office.

1. We value good home/school relations and will, therefore, do everything we can to establish and maintain them. This includes:
 - having an open and transparent policy and procedure which is easy to understand
 - seeking to resolve any concerns or complaints promptly, and to the satisfaction of all concerned.
2. The school welcomes feedback from parents on what they feel we do well, or constructive suggestions on what we could do better. We will consider carefully all feedback, whether positive or negative, and will review our policies and practices ensuring information is provided to the school's senior management team accordingly.
3. We will treat all concerns and complaints seriously and courteously and will advise parents and others of the school's procedures for dealing with their concerns. In return, we expect parents and other complainants to behave respectfully towards all members of the school community. In particular, any disagreement with the school should not be expressed inappropriately or in front of pupils.
4. Complaints will be considered and resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible and the expectation is that a concern or complaint will be made as soon as possible after an incident arises and preferably in writing. Within the procedures a time frame is included to support this. The school will consider exceptions to the time frame and also the method of communicating the complaint where appropriate.
5. All school staff and members of the governing body will receive a copy of this policy statement and will be familiar with the school's procedures for dealing with parental concerns and complaints.
6. The school's concerns and complaint policy and procedure will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary.
7. Staff and governors will receive training in handling parental concerns and complaints as appropriate. This may be on an individual basis or as a group activity.

-
8. The school will seek to resolve concerns and complaints to the satisfaction of all parties.

Norton 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.

Norton 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 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

Complainants should limit the number 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 Norton 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 the Norton Junior School premises. Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Norton Junior School will therefore act to ensure the school remains a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of their community.

The decision to stop responding will only be taken when:

- School has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's needs;
- The complainant has been given a clear statement of the school's position and their options (if any);
and
- The complainant is contacting school repeatedly but making substantially the same points each time.

POLICY FOR UNREASONABLE COMPLAINTS



Ratified by Full Board 1.11.16