



**Procedure for reporting
concerns or complaints.**



September 2016



In Dunclug Nursery School we are committed to providing a happy, safe and stimulating environment to support young children’s learning and development.

We recognise that the children in our care have individual interests, characteristics and needs and aim to enable each child to develop positive attitudes about themselves and towards their learning by –

- 🦋 providing experiences that extend learning and challenge thinking
- 🦋 maintaining positive relationships as a staff team, with our children, their parents, the community, the Board of Governors and other relevant agencies
- 🦋 promoting the health and wellbeing of our staff, children and their families
- 🦋 inspiring and developing all members of our school community

Reporting Concerns and Complaints

In order to,

‘maintain positive relationships as a staff team, with our children (and) their parents...’ (Dunclug Nursery School’s Mission Statement)

we operate an ‘open door’ policy when it comes to communicating with parents, in the hope that we can allay any concerns and deal with any issues promptly. Parents and carers are encouraged to speak with their child’s class teacher or the Principal, should they have any concerns about their child or a complaint about a member of staff, using the procedure detailed in this Policy Statement.

The procedure for reporting concerns regarding the wellbeing of any other child who attends Dunclug Nursery School is detailed in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Document.

In operating the following complaints procedure we aim to –

- ✚ encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
- ✚ allow swift handling of a complaint within established time-limits for action, keeping people informed of progress
- ✚ ensure a full and fair consideration of the complaint
- ✚ have due regard for the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved
- ✚ respect confidentiality
- ✚ address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- ✚ provide information to the Board of Governors and Education Authority, so that services may be improved, where deemed necessary.

The procedures are designed to be –

- ✚ easily accessible - a copy is available in the Nursery School's entrance hall or from the school office on request
- ✚ simple to understand
- ✚ impartial
- ✚ non-adversarial.

What to expect when making a complaint –

In dealing with your complaint we will ensure that you receive –

- ✚ fair treatment
- ✚ courtesy
- ✚ a timely response
- ✚ accurate advice
- ✚ respect for your privacy, allowing for the possibility that we may have to consult with other appropriate parties about your complaint
- ✚ reasons for our decisions.

The following are your responsibilities when making a complaint –

- ✚ raise issues in a timely manner
- ✚ treat our staff with respect and courtesy
- ✚ provide accurate and concise information in relation to the issues you raise
- ✚ use these procedures fully and engage in them at appropriate levels.

Rights of parties involved during the consideration of a complaint –

Person making the complaint

The complainant may be accompanied by another person where it is accepted, by the Principal and the Board of Governors, that this will assist the consideration and resolution of the complaint.

Staff

Staff may seek the advice and support from their professional body or trade union and may also be accompanied by another person where it is accepted, by the Principal and the Board of Governors, that this will assist the consideration and resolution of the complaint.

A member of staff who is directly referred to in a complaint will be provided with a written copy of the complaint and details of any information brought by the parent / carer before being required to respond to the matters raised.

Legal Representation

Legal Representation or representation by a person(s) acting in a professional capacity **is not** permitted within this procedure.

This procedure does not take away from the statutory rights of any of the participants.

Who will deal with your complaint?

- ✿ Your complaint should, if appropriate, be raised and dealt with by the class teacher or Principal.
- ✿ If the complaint relates to a member of staff in the school, it should be referred to the Principal.
- ✿ If a complaint proceeds to a formal stage, the Principal will assume responsibility for the process, unless she is the subject of the complaint, in which case the Chairperson of the Board of Governors will assume responsibility. The Chairperson will make a decision as to whether it is appropriate for him/her to conduct a preliminary investigation or whether it is necessary to establish a Complaints Sub-Committee to consider and resolve the matter.
- ✿ Every effort should be made by all parties to resolve complaints in a timely manner. The entire procedure, should a complaint proceed right to the Appeals Stage, should be dealt with in 40 days, where possible.

Making a Complaint

Informal Stage : Step 1 – Speaking with the teacher concerned

In the first instance a complaint should be raised verbally with the teacher concerned, so that she has an opportunity to address the issue(s).

This approach will not prevent you from choosing to enter the formal process later, if you believe that to be an appropriate course of action.

Informal Stage : Step 2 – Contacting the Principal

If your complaint is against a member of staff, or if your complaint remains unresolved after having spoken to the class teacher, you should arrange a meeting with the Principal to discuss the issue(s). In advance of this meeting you should inform the Principal, either verbally or in writing, of the nature of your complaint, so that she may be in a position to resolve the problem without further delay.

In some circumstances the Principal may not be able to deal effectively with your complaint immediately and she may require some time to consider and prepare a response. If further time is required you will be informed of the timescale and the likely date by which a response will be issued.

Formal Stage : Step 3 – Making a formal written complaint to the Principal or Chairperson of the Board of Governors

Sometimes it will not be possible for you to have your complaint resolved through the informal processes detailed above, or indeed it may be more appropriate to initiate the procedures at Step 3.

You should write to the Principal or the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and state the grounds for your complaint as concisely as possible addressing the specific issue(s) that are of concern to you.

If your complaint is against the Principal you should write directly to the Chairperson. You will then receive a written acknowledgement of your letter from the Principal or Chairperson. This will confirm that your letter has been received, and either –

- provide a response to the issue(s) raised, or
- state who is considering your complaint and indicate when you can expect a response to be issued.

Formal Stage : Step 4 – Appeals Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors

If you are dissatisfied with the decision of the Board of Governors you may write to the Chairperson appealing its decision. Your written request should be as concise as possible and set out specifically the grounds for your appeal.

The Chairperson will establish an Appeals Sub-Committee comprising of at least three members of the Board of Governors who were not involved in the consideration of the original complaint.

You will receive written acknowledgement of your letter. This will confirm that your letter has been received and provide you with the date and time of the meeting with the Appeals Sub-Committee at which you will have an opportunity to explain the grounds for your appeal. The Appeals Sub-Committee will also review all information and correspondence from the original complaint and the consideration by the Complaints Sub-Committee.

You should expect a final written response detailing the findings of the Appeals Sub-Committee, the reasons supporting its decisions and any recommendations, if applicable. Any recommendations will be brought to the Board of Governors for ratification.

The decision of the Appeals Committee is final. At the end of the process the Chairperson will inform you, in writing, that the Complaints Procedure has been exhausted and the matter is considered closed.

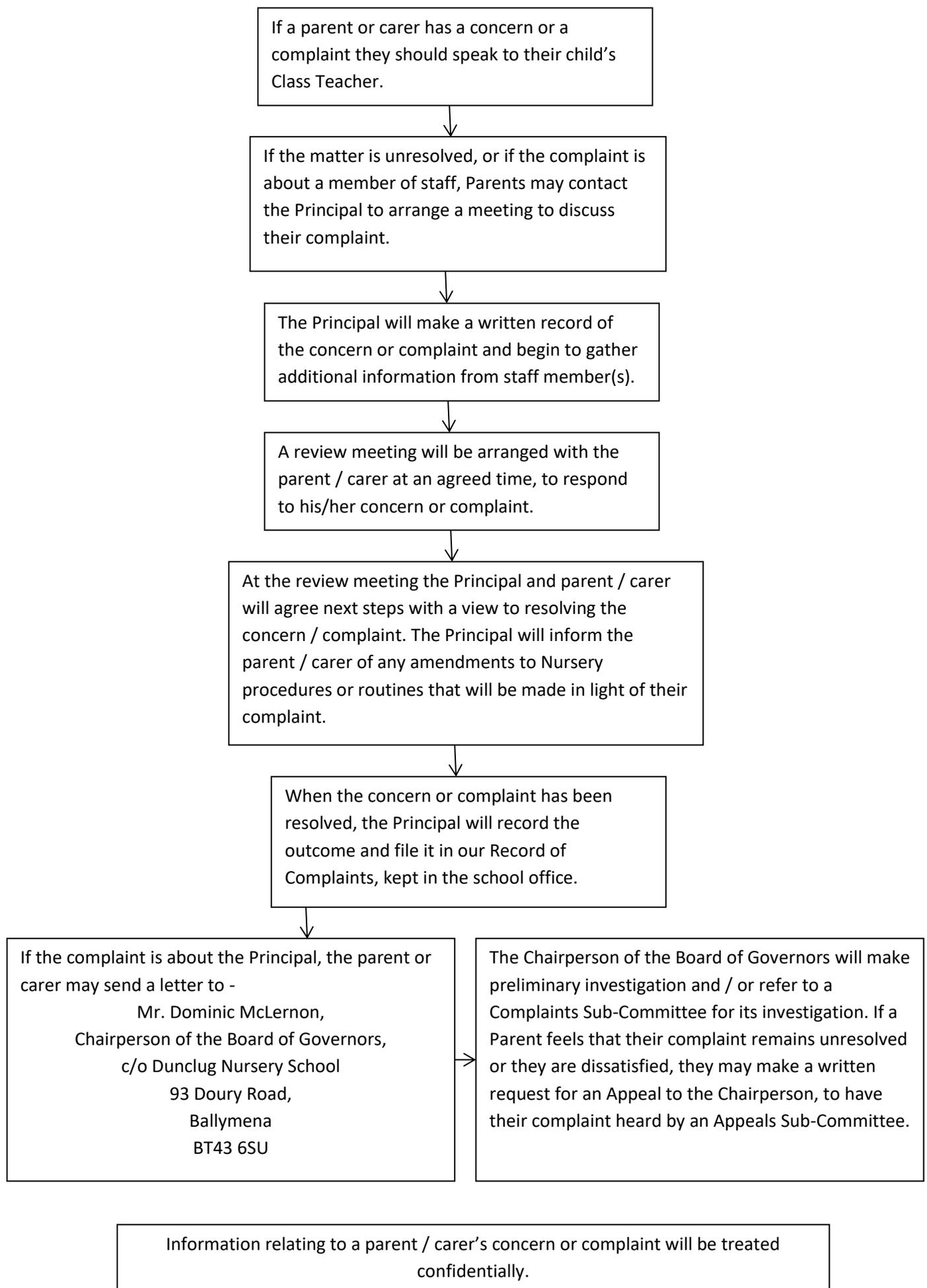
Record Keeping

The Principal and the Board of Governors will keep a record of all correspondence, conversations and meetings concerning your complaint. These records will be held confidentially in the school and will be kept apart from any pupil records. All such records will be destroyed three years after the date of the last correspondence on the issue.

Malicious or Vexatious Complaints

Where a Board of Governors consider the actions of a parent/group of parents to constitute frivolous or vexatious behaviour, they will seek advice from the Education Authority in order to protect staff from such further actions.

Procedure for reporting a concern or complaint





RECORD OF ACTIONS FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF A COMPLAINT

Parent / Carers' Name - _____

Child's Name and Class - _____

Date	Action	Signed

