

## **Concerns and Complaints about the School**

### **Guidance Notes for Parents**

#### **The Aim of White Court School**

White Court School aims to create an environment where all pupils will have opportunities to develop their intellectual, social physical, moral and aesthetic qualities in accordance with age, aptitude and ability.

#### **If you have a suggestion or a concern:**

We would like you to tell us about it. We welcome suggestions for improving our work in the school and want to know if you have any concerns. Be assured that no matter what you wish to tell us, our support and respect for you and your child in the school will not be affected in any way. If you have a concern, please let us know as soon as possible. It is difficult for us to properly investigate an incident or problem which happened some time ago.

#### **What to do first**

Most concerns can be sorted out quickly by speaking with your child's class teacher.

If you have a concern which you feel should be looked at by the headteacher in the first instance you can contact her straightaway if you prefer. It is usually best to discuss the problem face to face.

You may need an appointment to do this, and you can make one by ringing or calling into the school office. You can take a friend or relation to the appointment with you if you would like to.

All staff will make every effort to resolve your problem informally. They will make sure that they understand what you feel went wrong, and they will explain their actions to you. They will ask what you would like the school to do to put things right.

Of course, this does not mean that in every case it will be possible to achieve a satisfactory outcome, but it will help both you and the school to understand both sides of the question. It may also help to prevent a similar problem arising again.

#### **If you are still concerned**

We will do all that we can to resolve matters straight away but if you are not entirely satisfied with the response you can make a formal complaint to the headteacher. This should be made in writing.

If your complaint is about an action of the headteacher personally, then you should refer it to Mr C McCann, the governor designated by the governing body to deal with complaints. You can contact him by letter through the School Office.

You may find it helpful at this stage to have a copy of the full statement of the governing body's complaints procedure as this explains in detail how complaints are dealt with. This is available from the School Office.

The headteacher (or designated governor) will contact you to discuss the problem. Usually you will be invited to a face to face meeting. Again you may take a friend or someone else with you if you wish. The headteacher (or designated governor) will then conduct a full investigation of the complaint and may interview any members of staff or pupils involved. You will receive a written response to your complaint.

**If you are still unhappy**

We very much hope and expect that we will have been able to resolve the problem by this stage. However, if you are still not satisfied you may wish to make a formal complaint to the governing body.

Initially your complaint may be dealt with by the governor designated by the governing body to deal with complaints. He will try to see if there is a way forward. (Note that at this stage your complaint will not be made known to other governors. This is so that if it is necessary for the governors to hold a formal hearing of your complaint they will not be prejudiced in advance.)

If the designated governor is unable to resolve the matter, or was involved at the earlier stage because the complaint related to the headteacher, your complaint will then be heard by a panel of three governors. As explained above, they will have no prior knowledge of the case and will thus be able to make a fresh, unbiased assessment. You will be invited to attend the panel meeting, accompanied by a friend or representative if you wish, and to put your side of the matter. The headteacher will also attend to give his/her account. The governing body's complaints procedure explains how these meetings are conducted.

**Further action**

Complaints about school problems are usually settled within the schools but in exceptional cases it may be possible to refer the matter to an outside body such as the local education authority or the Secretary of State for Education and Employment. If necessary we will let you know whom to contact at that stage.