



# **COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY**

**Priestley Smith Specialist VI School**

**February 2023**

Policy review date: February 2024

Policy status: Statutory

Responsible member of SLT: Joanna Garvey Headteacher

Priestley Smith School is committed to the rights of the child as outlined in the UN Convention and is working towards Rights Respecting Schools Gold award. This belief influences everything the school does and impacts upon all our policies.

**Article 3** The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children.

**Article 5** Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and carers to direct and guide their children as they grow up, so that they can enjoy their rights properly.

**Article 23** A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and independence, and to play an active part in the community.

- To be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint
- To resolve a complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding
- To put the interests of the students above all else

## COMPLIMENTS

It is always good to receive positive feedback. This will always be shared with staff and students in a timely way via briefings and briefing notes; email; in person where appropriate; in assemblies; in celebration assemblies and via student representative groups. Cards, emails and letters will be placed in prominent positions around school. If parents/carers agree, their compliments can be put onto our website. Compliments can be given in any format the parent /carer or other person chooses:

- Email [enquiry@priestley.bham.sch.uk](mailto:enquiry@priestley.bham.sch.uk)
- Letter or card Priestley Smith School, Beeches Road, Great Barr, B422PY
- Telephone 0121 325 3901
- Verbally to any member of staff
- Via the Priestley Smith Website [Contact | Priestley Smith Spec](#)

## COMPLAINTS

We believe that our school aims to provide an excellent education for all our children and that the staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, we are obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents or other parties.

If any parent/carer is unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or has any concern relating to the school, we encourage that person to talk to the child's class teacher immediately. We deal with all complaints in compliance with guidance and regulations set out by the Department for Education, [School complaints procedures: guidance for maintained schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). We have adopted a three-stage process for dealing with complaints:

- Stage 1 – Informal resolution
- Stage 2 – Formal Resolution
- Stage 3 – Complaint Panel

Our Complaints Procedure will:

- Encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
- Be easily accessible and publicised
- Be simple to understand and use
- Be impartial
- Be non-adversarial
- Allow swift handling with established time limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress
- Ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary
- Respect people's desire for confidentiality
- Address all the points at issue and provide effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- Provide information to the school's senior management team to enable services to be improved The school will be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint. We will take concerns seriously at the earliest stage to reduce the numbers that develop into complaints.

## STAGE 1 – INFORMAL RESOLUTION

We expect most concerns to be dealt with informally and parents/carers are encouraged to speak to a member of staff to discuss their concerns.

We aim to resolve informal complaints within 10 working days of receipt. The formal procedures set out below should be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

If a parent/carer is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing within our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school and are making good progress; a teacher will always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the child's progress.

Our school operates an open-door policy and as such, parents/carers may wish to book in some time to talk to the Headteacher (or a person delegated to undertake this meeting) if this would be beneficial in resolving your concern informally.

Should the complaint be about the Headteacher, the Chair of School Governing body will do all they can to resolve the issue informally through a dialogue with the persons concerned.

## STAGE 2 – FORMAL RESOLUTION

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis (as set out above), then parents/carers must put their complaint in writing (using Appendix 1 attached if required) and hand this into the school for the attention of the Headteacher. The Headteacher will consider any such complaint seriously.

The complaint will be investigated thoroughly (by the Headteacher or a person delegated to undertake the investigation). The Headteacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Headteacher will meet or speak with the parents/carers concerned to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage. The Headteacher (or a person delegated to undertake this work) will use reasonable endeavours to speak to or meet parents/carers within 10 working days of the formal complaint being received.

Once the Headteacher is satisfied that, so far as practicable, all the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made which will be communicated to parents/carers in writing giving the reasons for the decision. The written decision should be provided no later than 10 working days after speaking with or meeting with parents/carers to discuss the matter.

The School will hold a written record of all formal complaints, including records of meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint, and the school's decision. The record will be retained for one year after the pupil leaves the school.

Should the complaint be about the Headteacher, it will be considered by the Chair of Governors who will follow the above steps. Only if Stage 2 proceedings fail to resolve the matter should a complaint progress to Stage 3

**SENDIASS - Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (Formerly Parent Partnership), could be involved at this stage [SENDIASS | Birmingham City Governing body](#)**

## STAGE 3 COMPLAINT PANEL

Only if an informal complaint fails to resolve the matter should a formal complaint be made to the Governing Body. This complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it to date. You should send this written complaint to the Chair of Governors. (See Appendix A)

The committee of three governors and the Headteacher will consider all written complaints within two weeks of receipt. A meeting with the complainant will be arranged to discuss the problem within a further two weeks. The complainant will be given at least seven days' notice of the meeting.

The following are entitled to attend a hearing and/or, submit written representations and address the Panel:

- The parent(s)/carer(s) who may be accompanied should they wish this to be the case
- The Headteacher of the School
- Any other interested person whom the Complaints Panel considers having a reasonable and just interest in the appeal and whose contribution would assist the Panel in their decision-making

After hearing all the evidence, the governors will decide on a course of action and inform you in writing. The request for further assessment of the complaint will, for the purposes of this procedure, be known as an 'appeal'. Parents/carers must lodge their appeal in writing within 10 working days of the date of the School's decision made in accordance with the Stage 2 procedure.

The parents/carers should provide in writing the complaint(s) made against the School and how they believe the complaint has been unsatisfactorily resolved, along with the remedies sought in respect of each. The Complaints Panel is only obliged to consider the complaint lodged in this 'initial submission' although they may use their discretion to consider other relevant and related matters that may subsequently arise.

Where an appeal is received by the School, the School will, within 5 working days, refer the matter to the Clerk to the School Governing body who will likely act as Clerk for the Complaints Panel. Where the appeal is received by the School during School holidays, or within 2 working days of their commencement, the School has 5 working days upon commencement of the school term to refer the matter to the Clerk to the School Governing body. The Chair of the School Governing body will not be involved in the panel if he/she heard the original complaint at stage 2.

## NEXT STEPS

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 2.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Priestley Smith Specialist School. They will consider whether Priestley Smith Specialist School has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint. The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus), by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for Education  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD.

A written record will be kept of all formal complaints and any actions taken regardless of whether they are upheld or resolved following a formal procedure or proceeded to a panel hearing. Complaint records are kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection request access to them.

## 4 MONITORING AND REVIEW

The governors monitor the complaints procedure in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Headteacher logs all complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis.

Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents/carers so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

**Stage 2 – Formal Complaint Form**

<b>Your Name</b>	
<b>Your child's name</b>	
<b>Your child's class</b>	
<b>Your address</b>	
<b>Daytime telephone number</b>	
<b>Evening telephone number</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Please provide full details of your complaint, including relevant dates and persons concerned where possible in the box below. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary</b>	
<b>What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? (who did you speak to and what was their response?). Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.</b>	
<b>How do you feel the problem could be resolved at this stage? Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.</b>	
<b>Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please provide details. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary</b>	
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

Thank you for completing the form and providing us with details of your complaint. Please send in your completed form to the Headteacher, care of the school reception or via email. All paperwork will be held on file securely by the school.

**Contact details:**

**SENDIASS**

Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service.  
(Formerly Parent Partnership) [SENDIASS | Birmingham City Council](#)

Contact online: [Contact SENDIASS \(birmingham.gov.uk\)](#)  
Alternatively, contact by telephone on 0121 303 5004.

**Chair of Governors**

C/o Priestley Smith Specialist School  
Beeches Road  
Great Barr  
Birmingham  
B42 2PY

**Birmingham City Council complaints**

1. Visit Contact Page [Complaints | Birmingham City Council](#)
2. Email Customer Services on [contact@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:contact@birmingham.gov.uk).
3. Call General enquiries on 0121 303 1111.