

# STEPHEN FREEMAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

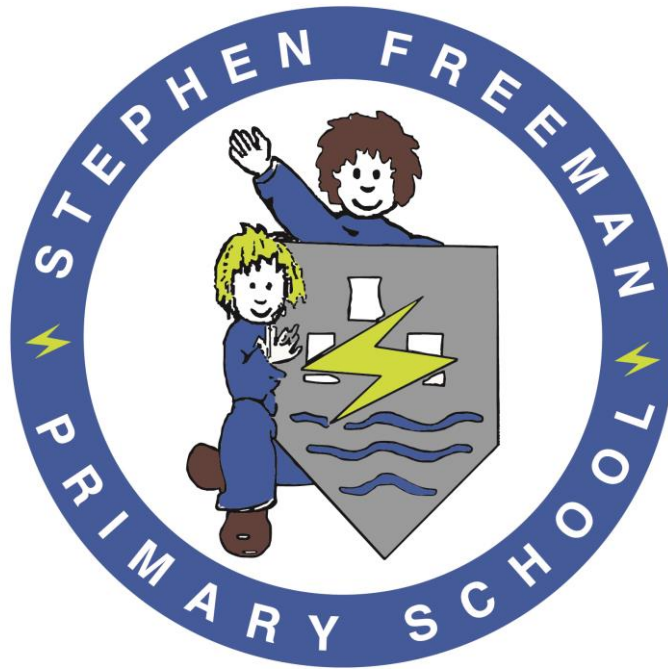
## “Everybody; Every Moment; Every Idea

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## Complaints Procedure

### Stephen Freeman Community Primary School



**Approved by:**

**Date:**

**Last reviewed  
on:**

**Next review due  
by:**



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### Introduction

Governors of Stephen Freeman School have adopted the following procedure to deal with formal complaints from members of the wider school community or general public about appropriate matters relevant to the running of the school. This procedure is to be used only when informal attempts to resolve problems have been unsuccessful.

### Framework of Principles

This procedure is designed to:

- be well publicised and easily accessible
- 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 fair investigation by an independent person, where necessary
- allow for a hearing of a panel of Governors, where appropriate
- respect people's desire for confidentiality, wherever possible
- address all points of issue; provide an effective response and appropriate redress where necessary
- provide information to the school's Senior Management Team so that services can be improved.

### Making a Formal Complaint

#### Stage 1

Where informal attempts have been unsuccessful in resolving a complaint, the matter will be formally investigated by an appropriate person from the school. If the matter is about the day-to-day running of the school or the interpretation of school policies, by members of staff of the school or the actions or inactions of staff at the school, the matter should be investigated by the headteacher or a member of senior staff nominated by the headteacher. If the matter is about school policies as determined by the Governing Body or the actions or inactions of the Governing Body, then the matter should be dealt with by the Chair of Governors or Governor nominated by the Chair.

A complainant wishing to instigate the formal procedure should be asked to complete a complaint form (Annex 1). The school should offer to help an



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individual to complete the form and the person providing this help should be unconnected with the complaint. It is essential to report the progress of any complaint and the final outcome. It is necessary that at each stage, the person investigating the complaint (the designated person) makes sure that they:

- establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved;
- clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information is necessary);
- clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.
- Interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- keep notes of the interview.

### **Resolving the Complaint**

At each stage in the procedure, schools will want to keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An apology;
- An explanation;
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- An assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- An undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

It would be useful if complainants were encouraged to state at each stage of the complaint what actions they feel might resolve the problem. An admission that the school could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence. Equally, an effective procedure will identify areas of agreement between the parties. It is also of importance to clarify any misunderstandings that might have occurred as this can create a positive atmosphere in which to discuss any outstanding issues.

If the school rejects the complaint, it is important to re-assure the complainant that the matter has been thoroughly investigated.



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### Stage 2

Where the complainant is still not satisfied that their complaint has been dealt with fully and properly, they may choose to take it to a second stage. This stage will be referred to a panel of Governors established as outlined in Annex 2.

The Chair of the Panel will be elected by the Panel members and will be responsible for maintaining a further procedure as outlined in Annex 2.

### Timescale

Complaints need to be considered and resolved, as quickly and efficiently as possible. An effective complaints procedure must have realistic time limits for each action within each stage. However, where further investigations are necessary, new time limits can be set and the complainant sent details of the new deadline and an explanation for the delay.

### Mediation

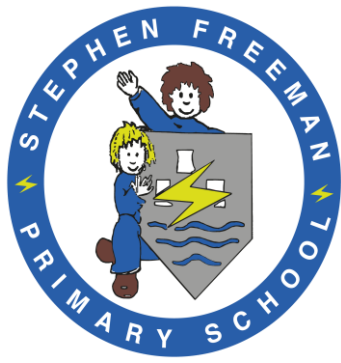
If, at any time, throughout the procedure from informal to the final decision of the Panel, the school feels that external mediation would help resolve the complaint, they can access consultancy advice with the School Development Service (SDS). This procedure can only be used with the agreement of the complainant.

### Monitoring Complaints

As well as addressing an individual's complaint, the process of listening to and resolving complaints would contribute to school improvements. When individual complaints are heard, the school may identify issues that need to be addressed. The monitoring and review of complaints by the school and Governing Body can be useful to evaluating the school's performance. Any discussion of complaints by the Governing Body or others in the school community should not name or be able to identify individuals.

**The Local Authority guidance and annexes can be located via the following link:**

[http://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/public/LandC/EES/governor\\_services/refere\\_nce\\_library/schools\\_complaints\\_procedure-2.pdf](http://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/public/LandC/EES/governor_services/refere_nce_library/schools_complaints_procedure-2.pdf)



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### Stephen Freeman School Complaint form

Please complete and return to the headteacher who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name: .....

Address: .....  
.....  
.....

Postcode: .....

Daytime telephone number: .....

Evening telephone number: .....

If applicable, name of child (ren) at school:

Please give details of your complaint:

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? (Who did you speak to and what was the response?)

Your relationship to the school, e.g. parent, carer, neighbour, member of public:

**What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?**

**Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.**

**Signature:**

**Date:** .....

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**Official Use:**

**Date of acknowledgement sent:** .....

**By Whom:** .....

**Complaint referred to:** .....

**Date:** .....