

This document sets out detailed guidance on the process for dealing with comments and complaints (an expression of dissatisfaction about the school) at Edu Valem.

## **1. Investigating Complaints**

At this stage the school will aim to:

- Establish what has happened insofar, and determine who has been involved in the conflict.
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved
- Contact the complainant
- Listen to the suggestion of the complainant about what would resolve the conflict
- Interview other sides involved in the conflict
- Inform the complainant about discussions and agreements reached with other sides involved.

## **2. Resolving Complaints**

At this stage Edu Valem will focus not the successful resolution of the complaint. If appropriate one or more of the following may be offered:

- 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

Complainants will be encouraged to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage.

### **Time Limits**

Complaints will be considered and resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible, within realistic time limits. However, where further investigations are necessary, new time limits may need to be set. The complainant will receive the details of the new deadline and an explanation for the delay. On occasion, the school may need to extend the time to respond to a Stage 1 or Stage 2 complaint. This may be because of resource or capacity issues, or because additional information needs to be obtained to investigate the complaint. I

### **Record Keeping**

All complaints will be responded to in writing.

All correspondence, statements and records of complaints must be kept confidential but must be shown to the Administration of Edu Valem on request.

### **STAGE ONE (informal):**

Where a complainant is unhappy with an issue in school they should contact a member of staff in the first instance who is not involved in conflict. In most cases this will be either a child's teacher or the school office.

The member of staff receiving the complaint will either:

- Provide a response to the complainant (after discussions with relevant colleagues if necessary)
- Refer the complaint to the appropriate person within the school.

If the complainant indicates that he/she would have difficulty discussing a complaint with a particular member of staff, or the complaint relates to the staff member, the complainant may be referred to another staff member (or the Headteacher). The ability to consider the complaint objectively and impartially is crucial. The school will respond in writing within five school days, with a brief summary of the complaint and a response. If the complainant wishes to move to Stage 2 (formal complaint), a request must be submitted to the school in writing within 15 school days. Otherwise the matter is considered closed, and will not be considered further. The letter must explain why the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

## **STAGE TWO (formal):**

### **2a) Concern/Complaint Heard by Headteacher**

If dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage One, the complainant should contact the Headteacher about the issue. The Headteacher will provide a response to the complainant (after discussions with relevant colleagues, if necessary). The school will respond in writing within 15 school days, with a summary of the complaint and a response.

### **2b) Concern/Complaint Heard by Chair of the Governing Body**

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, the complainant should contact the Chair of the Governing Body about the issue. The Chair can be contacted by letter addressed to the school. The Chair of the Governing Body will discuss the concerns with the headteacher and provide a response to the complainant. The Chair will respond in writing within 15 school days, with a summary of the complaint and a response. If the complainant wishes to move to Stage 3, a request must be submitted to the Chair in writing within 15 school days. Otherwise the matter is considered closed, and will not be considered further. The letter must explain why the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2b.

The Governing Body can:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- Recommend changes to the school's systems, policies or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

Parents must be allowed to attend and be accompanied to a panel hearing if they wish.