

# HERNE JUNIOR SCHOOL

## COMPLAINTS POLICY



### **RATIONALE**

Here at Herne Junior School, we encourage openness between parents and staff regarding school issues.

The vast majority of concerns are dealt with immediately, satisfactorily and at an informal stage. The publication of an efficient and accessible complaints procedure helps to ensure that all parties are aware of, and have confidence in, a clear process and channel of communication.

This complaints procedure applies to general complaints. Complaints about delivery of the National Curriculum and the provision of religious education and collective worship should be handled under the requirements of Section 409 of the Education Act 1996. Separate procedures also exist for appeals about special needs assessments and school admissions and exclusions. (See the SEN Code of Practice and School Admissions Code of Practice). Concerns about allegations of child abuse and staff discipline will be dealt with through the separate agreed procedures that have been adopted for these purposes.

### **METHODS**

There is a staged complaints process that is followed to ensure that parents can feel that their concerns will be dealt with effectively and as quickly as possible, and that all parties have been treated fairly.

#### **The preliminary stage – the informal stage**

This is obviously the best stage to achieve a satisfactory resolution for all parties at the earliest opportunity and with the minimum disruption. Effective communication systems are important to ensure that parental concerns are heard by the school and dealt with quickly. Parents should be encouraged to speak informally with the class teacher as soon as possible. If the concern is about the headteacher, then the parent should be encouraged to speak with the headteacher. However, depending on the circumstances, parents may need to be advised to approach the chair of governors. Most concerns can be dealt with satisfactorily at this stage but if the matter is not resolved, then the complaint needs to be handled formally.

#### **Stage 1 - headteacher**

Parents should be advised to write to the headteacher, giving details of the concern and enclosing any appropriate paperwork. The headteacher, or designated senior member of staff, should respond to the parent in writing as soon as possible. Standard practice is to acknowledge the complaint or offer a full response within five days. If the complaint requires an in-depth investigation, the headteacher will need to acknowledge this and let the complainant know that a full response will take longer than usual. Standard practice is to

investigate the complaint and prepare a response within 20 days. Following an investigation and any meetings, the headteacher may summarise the main points in a follow up letter to help prevent any misunderstandings and ensure that all parties have a clear record of progress or agreements.

If a parent remains dissatisfied, the headteacher will need to decide when to give a final response and refer the parent to Stage 2 of the complaints process.

### **Stage 2 - chair of governors**

The parents should send a letter outlining their complaint to the Chair of Governors, explaining the reasons for pursuing it beyond the headteacher's response and enclosing any relevant paperwork. Any complaint that reaches this stage will be logged by the Clerk to the Governors (A sample complaints form can be found in appendix 2). The timescales for acknowledging the complaint and making a response at this stage will be similar to those outlined for the headteacher. This stage offers an opportunity for achieving conciliation between all parties. Informal discussions between the chair of governors and the headteacher are key to resolving the complaint and agreeing a way forward. This should prevent any further escalation of the disagreement.

The chair of governors will need to decide who is responsible for dealing with the issues involved, and therefore what powers are available to governors with respect to the particular complaint. Are the issues related to responsibilities that:

- i. are delegated to the headteacher by the governing body; or
- ii. fall within the governing body's remit only; or
- iii. are within the headteacher's terms and conditions of employment and relate to the internal organisation, management and control of the school?

Appendix I contains a decision planner.

For delegated responsibilities and matters within the remit of the governing body, the chair may look at the whole issue afresh.

If the matter relates to the headteacher's conduct, the chair of governors will need to decide whether the matter should be dealt with through the complaints procedure or staff disciplinary procedure. Advice can be sought from the LEA complaints adviser or education personnel services.

For matters that are the headteacher's responsibility, the chair of governors is only empowered to look at whether the headteacher's decision or action was reasonable in the light of the information available at the time.

The parents should be informed of the scope of the governors' powers in their case. In the rare circumstance that a parent is unhappy with the outcome, the chair of governors may offer a right of appeal to the governing body's complaints panel.

### **Stage 3 - governing body's complaints panel - reconsideration or review**

The governing body should include a complaints panel set up along with their other committees for the year. For complaints about the national curriculum or religious education, this might be the curriculum committee.

Parents who wish to appeal to the governors should be advised to request this in writing to the clerk to the governing body rather than to individual governors. Parents should describe

the issues in detail and say why they are dissatisfied with the outcomes of the previous stages.

**Reconsideration** (considering afresh) When the issues relate to delegated responsibilities, the panel can reconsider the matter, that is, look at the matter afresh, with any new information that the headteacher may not have been aware of at the time of the original response or action. In the light of additional information, the panel may decide to write and ask the headteacher to give the matter further consideration.

Complaints about a governor should also be subject to a reconsideration of the issues.

**Review** If the matter falls within the headteacher's decision-making remit by virtue of his or her terms and conditions of employment, then the panel will only have the power to review the decision, not to consider the matter afresh. It may look at whether the decision or action was unreasonable. An unreasonable decision might be one that is irrational: a decision that no reasonable headteacher, properly aware of his or her duties and properly taking into account the facts of the case before him or her, would make.

The panel will need to consider the facts as they were known to the headteacher at the time and then consider whether the headteacher:

- i. failed to take account of a relevant consideration; and/or
- ii. took into account an irrelevant consideration; and/or
- iii. made a 'perverse' decision in the light of the evidence available at the time.

If new evidence does come to light, the panel should refer it back to the headteacher, who may consider amending the decision in the light of that new information.

In deciding whether the headteacher's decision was perverse, the panel will need to judge whether the decision was one that, on the facts, was open to the headteacher to make; that is, within a reasonable range of responses in the light of the evidence available.

The complaints panel meeting will be arranged by the clerk, the panel should consist of three governors with no prior involvement in the matter and the chair should be designated before the meeting. The meeting should be held in an informal atmosphere but should follow a formal agenda. The clerk will inform the complainant in writing of the panel's decision, preferably within two school days following the meeting. The letter would include:

- a summary of the issues
- an outline of the main points of discussion
- the reasons for the decision
- proposed actions or outcomes.

The panel's letter may also suggest that the parents meet the headteacher again to agree a way forward.

For issues related to the national curriculum or the provision of religious education, parents will be told that they can appeal further to the LEA (stage 4).

For general complaints: this is the final stage of the school's complaints procedure. If a parent believes that the headteacher's and governors' actions have been unreasonable or the correct process has not been adhered to, the only recourse is to the Secretary of State. Parents could be advised to seek advice from the LEA's complaints adviser at this point. There is no right of appeal to the LEA for general complaints as it has no powers to direct the school to change its decision.

## **Stage 4 - local education authority (LEA)**

The local education authority (LEA) offers a further right of appeal for parents who have exhausted the school's procedures, if the complaint is about:

- the national curriculum and related matters
- provision of collective worship and religious education.

### **Outside the school**

#### **Role of the local education authority (LEA)**

If a complaint cannot be resolved further, headteachers, governors and parents or other complainants may seek advice from the LEA's complaints adviser. Governors may also seek advice from the LEA on setting up governors' complaints panels.

In their procedures, schools may wish to remind parents that the governing body has a largely strategic role. This means it is responsible for the school's strategic framework including its aims and objectives, priorities and targets, and policies to achieve those aims and objectives. The headteacher is responsible for the internal organisation, management and control of the school and for advising on and implementing the governors' policies. The headteacher is solely responsible for making day-to-day decisions.

#### **Secretary of State**

If a parent wishes to pursue a complaint because they feel a school has acted unreasonably, they can write to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State will contact the governing body and the LEA for more detailed information. The Secretary of State has the power to direct the school to revise an action using the same criteria as applied by the governors.

#### **Ombudsman**

There is no 'schools ombudsman'. The local government ombudsman (LGO) will consider matters relating to the LEA's responsibility but he cannot consider matters about the internal management of schools.

### **Good practice**

#### **Handling complaints**

Handling complaints effectively will ensure that parents feel confident that staff will respond to any future complaint in a sensitive, non-defensive and sympathetic manner. Parents need to feel assured of confidentiality and that their child will not be adversely affected.

Schools may consider designating a specific member of staff or governor to co-ordinate any concerns that have developed into complaints. The co-ordinator could advise on the process, keep track of developments and keep the complainant informed of progress.

An individual governor should not respond to or investigate a complaint unless designated to do so.

When a parent approaches a member of staff about a concern that has not been resolved at the informal stage, it is good practice to:

- listen sympathetically without comment
- explain the procedures; that is, what will happen next and who will deal with the issue
- offer to help complete a complaints form if the school has one and if the help is appropriate.

The appropriate member of staff will need to create a file and record the relevant details. It is advisable to keep records in the file of any meetings or conversations, with a chronological record of events.

It is good practice to acknowledge written complaints or forms within five days and respond in full within 20 days.

It is particularly helpful to establish the desired outcomes at an early stage. Responses might include an apology, a review of a decision, an explanation, an assurance that the incident will not be repeated, a meeting with a member of staff or an official investigation.

If a complaint is complex and lengthy, the school should keep parents informed of progress either by telephone or letter.

At the conclusion, the complainant should receive:

- a specific response rather than a standard reply
- feedback on any outcomes such as an improvement in service or an agreement to review or amend a policy
- advice on any further recourse or the telephone number of the LEA's complaints adviser

## **Difficult complainants**

### **Vexatious complaints**

In rare circumstances a complainant might, having exhausted the complaints procedure, persist with the complaint.

Complaints become vexatious when they are:

- repeatedly and obsessively pursued; or
- unreasonable or seeking unrealistic outcomes; or
- reasonable but pursued in an unreasonable manner.

Governors may need to decide whether all future contacts should be:

- directed to, and only be dealt with by, a named individual
- restricted, for example, to letter only.

If a conclusion has been reached about a complaint but the complainant continues to pursue it, the school may wish to consider writing:

- to reiterate that the matter is concluded and there will be no further correspondence
- to say that, if correspondence continues, it will be read and filed but will receive no acknowledgement
- to give a short response referring to previous documents that have already dealt with the matter.

### **Abusive complaints**

Verbal aggression can be as intimidating as physical aggression. All parties have a right to be treated courteously and with respect. If staff feel threatened, they should report their fears to the headteacher who will consider:

- writing to the complainant requesting that the behaviour cease
- setting restrictions for further contact with staff
- reporting the incident to the police.

If a telephone caller becomes aggressive or offensive, the person taking the call should explain that they will end the call if the behaviour persists. If they need to hang up, they should record this action and any further incidents.

Repeated abusive or aggressive contacts can be considered as harassment and the headteacher will need to consider reporting them to the police.

The school can seek further advice from Legal Services in our Chief Executive's Department.

### **15 Anonymous complaints**

Generally, Herne will not respond to anonymous complaints. Nevertheless, the headteacher or chair of governors would consider whether the issue and the fear of identification are genuine or the issue is one of child protection.

### **ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING**

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed regularly by the Governing Body through any logs of complaints by the headteacher and the clerk to the governors. These records will make a note of the frequency of complaints during an academic year with a simple note of the nature of the complaint. The content of this policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body on a three-year basis.

Approved by Headteacher and Governors notified: Spring 2016

Review Date: Summer 2018 (Subject to Ratification at the July 2018 FGB)

# Appendix 1

## Governing body decision planner

(Adapted from: Roles of Governing Bodies and Headteachers:

Ref DfES 0168/2000 - [http://www.dfes.gov.uk/governor/infodocs/information\\_31.doc](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/governor/infodocs/information_31.doc))

<b>KEY</b>							
Level 1 = decisions made by the GB; Level 2 = decisions made by the GB with advice from the headteacher; Level 3 = decisions delegated to the headteacher; Level 4= decisions made by the headteacher.							
Functions that the whole GB must consider							
<b>Cross:</b>	The function cannot lawfully be carried out at this level.						
<b>Tick:</b>	Recommended level(s), or where the law assigns specific responsibility.						
<b>Blank:</b>	Action could be carried out at this level if the GB so decide, but is not generally recommended.						
<b>Asterisk:</b>	Functions that the whole GB must consider.						
		<b>Action Sheet</b>	<b>Decision level</b>				
<b>Key function</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>LEVEL 1</b>	<b>LEVEL 2</b>	<b>LEVEL 3</b>	<b>LEVEL 4</b>	
		<b>Decisions made by:</b>	<b>GB</b>	<b>GB + HT</b>	<b>Delegated to HT</b>	<b>HT</b>	
School	1	To approve the first formal budget plan each financial year*		–	X	X	
Budgets	2	To monitor monthly expenditure			–		
	3	Miscellaneous financial decisions (e.g. write-offs)		–	–		
	4	To investigate financial irregularities (headteacher suspected)	–	X	X	X	
	5	To investigate irregularities (other suspected)		–	–		
	6	To enter into contracts (above a set financial limit)		–			
	7	To enter into contracts (below a set financial limit)			–		
	8	To make payments		–	–		

<b>Staffing</b>	9	Headteacher appointments (selection panel)*	–	X	X	X
	10	Deputy appointments (selection panel)*	X	–	X	X
	11	Appoint other teachers (the GB may, if they wish, be involved in the selection panel)		–	–	X
	12	Appoint non-teaching staff (the GB may, if they wish, be involved in the selection panel)		–	–	X
	13	Pay discretions (the headteacher should not advise on his/her own pay)		–		X
	14	Establishing disciplinary/capability procedures		–		X
	15	Dismissal (of the headteacher). NB: the GB must act through the Dismissal Committee*	–	X	X	X
	16	Dismissal (of other staff). NB: the GB must act through the Dismissal Committee	X	–	X	X
	17	Suspending the headteacher	–	X	X	X
	18	Suspending staff (except the headteacher)		–		–
	19	Ending a suspension (of the headteacher)	–	X	X	X
	20	Ending a suspension (except of the headteacher)		–	X	X
	21	Determining dismissal payments/early retirement		–		
	22	Determining the staff complement		–		
	23	In VA and foundation schools: to agree whether or not the Chief Education Officer/diocesan authority should have advisory rights	–		X	
<b>Curriculum</b>	24	To ensure the national curriculum (NC) is taught to all pupils and to consider any disapplication for pupil(s)		–		–
	25	To draft curriculum policy			–	
	26	To implement curriculum policy				–
	27	To agree or reject and review curriculum policy		–	X	X
	28	Responsibility for standards of teaching				–
	29	To decide which subject options should be taught, having regard to resources, and build flexibility into the curriculum (including				–



		activities outside the school day)				
	30	Responsibility for each individual child's education				–
	31	In the provision of sex education, to make and keep up to date a written policy*		–	X	X
	32	To prohibit political indoctrination and ensure the balanced treatment of political issues*		–		–
	33	To draw up a charging and remissions policy for non-NC based activities in consultation with the LEA*		–		
<b>Performance Management</b>	34	To establish a performance management policy		–	X	X
	35	To implement the performance management policy		–		–
	36	To review annually the performance management policy		–	X	X
<b>Target setting</b>	37	To set and publish targets for pupil achievement		–	X	X
<b>Exclusions</b>	38	To decide a discipline policy*		–	X	X
	39	To exclude a pupil for one or more fixed terms (not exceeding 45 days in total in a year) or permanently	X	X	X	–
	40	To review the use of exclusion and to decide whether or not to confirm all permanent exclusions, and also fixed-term exclusions where the pupil is either excluded for more than five days in total in a term or would lose the opportunity to sit a public examination. NB: The GB must act through its pupil discipline committee		–	X	X
	41	To direct the reinstatement of excluded pupils	–	X	X	X
<b>Admissions</b>	42	To consult annually before setting an admissions policy (but in community and controlled schools only where the LEA has delegated this power to the GB)*		–	X	X
	43	To consult annually before setting an admissions policy (VA and foundation schools)*		–	X	X
	44	To set an admissions policy (special schools where pupils do not have a statement) acting with the LEA*		–	X	X

	45	To set an admissions policy (special schools where pupils have statements) for the LEA after consultation with the GB*		–	X	X
	46	Admissions: application decisions (but in community and controlled schools only where the LEA has delegated this power to the GB)		–	X	X
	47	Admissions: application decisions (VA, foundation and special schools)		–	X	X
	48	To appeal against LEA directions to admit pupil(s) (VA, foundation and special schools; also community and VC schools where the LEA is the admissions authority)		–	X	X
<b>Religious Education</b>	49	Responsibility for ensuring the provision of RE in line with the school's basic curriculum (all schools)		–	X	–
	50	Decision to revert to a previous RE syllabus (former GM schools except VA of religious character)		–		
	51	Decision to provide RE according to trust deed/specified denomination in VA schools with religious character (but in foundation and VC schools of religious character at the request of parents)	–			
	52	Decision to provide RE in line with a locally agreed syllabus (VA schools - only if parents request it. All other schools not covered in 51 above)		–		
<b>Collective worship</b>	53	In all maintained schools, the LEA and headteacher shall ensure that all pupils take part in a daily act of collective worship. The GB also has similar duties.		–	X	–
	54	To make application to the advisory councils, SACRE, concerning requirements for collective worship (schools without a religious character) to disapply. Headteacher must consult GB	X	X	X	–
	55	Arrangements for collective worship (schools without religious character). The headteacher must consult the GB	X	X	X	–
	56	Arrangements for collective worship (foundation schools of religious character, VC or VA schools)*	X	–	X	X
<b>Premises</b>	57	Buildings insurance - the GB to seek advice from the LEA, diocese or trustees where		–		

		appropriate				
	58	Strategy (including budgeting for repairs etc) and Asset Management Plans		–		
	59	To ensure health and safety issues are met		–		–
	60	To set a charging and remissions policy*		–	X	X
<b>School organisation</b>	61	To draw up instruments of government and any ensuing amendments*	–		X	X
	62	To publish proposals to change the category of a school*		–	X	X
	63	A proposal to alter or discontinue [?] the status of a voluntary, foundation or foundation special school*		–	X	X
	64	To draft a school Action Plan following an Ofsted inspection, and distribute copies to parents		–		
	65	To set the times of school sessions and the dates of school terms and holidays, except in community and VC schools where the LEA* does this		–	X	X
<b>Information for parents</b>	66	To hold an annual parents' meeting		–	X	X
	67	To approve and distribute the annual report to parents		–	X	X
	68	To provide information for the GB to publish (ie in the school prospectus)*		–	X	X
	69	To ensure the provision of free school meals to pupils meeting the criteria			–	X
	70	The adoption and review of home/school agreements		–	X	X
<b>GB procedures</b>	71	To appoint (and remove) the chair and vice-chair of a permanent or a temporary GB*	–	X	X	X
	72	To appoint and dismiss the clerk to the governors	–	X	X	X
	73	To hold a GB meeting once a term, or a meeting of the temporary GB as often as occasion may require*	–		X	X
	74	To appoint and remove co-opted governors, including temporary additional co-opted governors*	–		X	X

	75	To set up a register of governors' business interests		–	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
	76	To approve and set up an expenses scheme		–	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
	77	To discharge duties towards pupils with special needs by appointing a "responsible person" in community, voluntary and foundation schools		–	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
	78	To consider whether or not to delegate functions to individuals or committees*	–		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
	79	To regulate the GB's procedures (where not set out in law)*	–		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
	80	To review at least once a year the establishment, terms of reference and membership of committees, including selection panels*	–		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
	81	To consider and decide whether or not to delegate functions to an EAZ Forum*		–	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

## Appendix 2: Sample complaints form



<b>Complaints Form</b>	
When we receive a complaint, we aim to acknowledge its receipt within ... days and send a full or interim response within ... days.	
<b>Name of parent/carers</b>	.....
<b>Pupil's name</b>	.....
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Postcode:</b>	.....
<b>Telephone (day):</b>	.....
<b>Telephone (evening):</b>	.....
<b>What is your concern and how has it affected you?</b>	
<b>Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please list this below:</b>	
<b>Have you discussed this matter with a member of staff before filling in this form? If so, who did you speak to and what was the response?</b>	
<b>What would you like to happen as a result of making this complaint?</b>	
Signature Date	
<b>Official use only</b> Initial response and acknowledgement: By whom: Date:	Complaints reference number: Action taken: Date:
<b>Data Protection Act 1998</b> - We will only process your personal data to respond to your complaint. In general, this data will be used for administrative and statistical purposes.	

## Appendix 3: Guide for parents



### **COMPLAINTS GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS:**

#### **WHAT TO DO WHEN THINGS GO WRONG**

Herne Junior School is committed to encouraging the involvement of parents in the community of the school and in their children's education. One aspect of this commitment is reflected by recognising that, from time to time, things may occur which cause parents concern, and that it is important that parents or children know what steps to take, to make sure that any problems are resolved. These notes are intended to provide guidance to help parents with this process.

#### **WHO SHOULD I TALK TO?**

Most concerns can be dealt with most quickly and effectively through informal discussion with members of staff at school. You are always welcome to come into school to discuss any concerns or problems that arise and are encouraged to talk to your child's teacher in the first instance, as the teacher, having knowledge of both the child and events in school, is often the best placed person to help.

#### **WILL WHAT I SAY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

You can expect that matters you raise will be treated in confidence, but parents also need to understand that to resolve problems, and find the best way forward, the teacher may have to make further enquiries. When this is the case, you can expect that this will be done with care, and that teachers will be sensitive to how such circumstances may affect your child. This is true for any investigation undertaken by the school, at any time.

#### **WHAT IF IT IS DIFFICULT TO TALK TO MY CHILD'S TEACHER ABOUT MY CONCERN?**

Sometimes you may feel that approaching your child's teacher could be awkward, especially this is the case, or if talking to the teacher on a previous occasion does not seem to have resolved a particular problem, you should seek help from the Head or Deputy Headteacher. They have responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school and will recognise that situations like this can be difficult and sensitive. You can expect them to take the appropriate steps to follow up your concerns, and to discuss the outcome with you. Obviously some time needs to be allowed for this to take place, but in most cases you will be contacted again within a relatively short space of time (ideally within two to three working days).

## **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN INFORMAL AND A FORMAL COMPLAINT?**

Each of the situations above is an example of how concerns may be addressed informally. Good communication and discussion of problems allow issues to be dealt with quickly. The process is a verbal one and usually only directly involves you, as the parent, and a member of staff or the Headteacher. Dealing with matters informally does not mean that the concerns are not taken seriously, nor that agreed actions will not be followed through. A complaint becomes formal when you feel that your concern is too serious to be dealt with informally, or when you feel that informal approaches to the school have not been adequately dealt with.

## **WHAT HAPPENS IF I NEED TO MAKE A FORMAL COMPLAINT?**

A formal complaint should be made in writing to the Headteacher and all investigations resulting from this and any responses made by the school will also be documented. If the complaint itself relates to the Headteacher, then the complaint needs to be made in writing to the Chair of the Governing Body (c/o Herne Junior School). Certain types of complaint are already covered by statutory procedures laid down by Hampshire County Council and the Government. These cover complaints about the curriculum, admissions and exclusions of pupils from school. You can expect to receive written acknowledgement of your complaint from the school within three working days of them receiving your letter. If the complaint is covered by a statutory procedure the school will provide you with details of how the procedures work. You will also be offered an opportunity to discuss the process and to provide the school with any further information you think should be considered. This will happen even if your concern falls outside the areas covered by the statutory arrangement, because the school follows similar principles to deal with complaints about other aspects of school life.

## **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

When you receive the formal acknowledgement of your complaint from the Headteacher, you will also be given an estimated date by which you can expect a full response. The Headteacher will provide you with an opportunity to discuss the process and to add any additional information you feel is important. The Headteacher will also take the appropriate steps to investigate the matter, and will keep written records of the investigation. As soon as the relevant facts have been established, you will receive a written response from the Headteacher, which includes an explanation of the decision that has been reached, the reasons for the decision and the actions that need to be taken to resolve your complaint. The Headteacher may also wish to discuss this with you directly beforehand. You can expect to receive your formal response within ten working days of the original acknowledgement of your complaint. If a delay is anticipated, the school should keep you informed, in writing, of progress and when you are likely to

receive details of the outcome of the investigation. If complaints were made about the actions of the Headteacher, it would be normal for the Chair of the Governing Body to carry out the investigation at this stage.

### **I STILL FEEL THAT MATTERS HAVE NOT BEEN RESOLVED. WHAT SHOULD I DO?**

It is very rare that a complaint will reach this stage, but if it does, the next step in the process will involve an independent and impartial review by a panel from the Governing Body. You should write to the Governing Body, requesting that your complaint proceeds to this stage. Your letter can be sent via the school marked for the attention of the Chair or Vice- Chair of Governors, whose details are below.

They will acknowledge receipt of your complaint and will explain that a panel will meet to review your complaint within ten working days. The panel will consist of three governors **who have had no prior involvement in the matter in question**. All relevant documents relating to the complaint will be provided to the panel beforehand. You will receive notification of the date and location that the panel will meet five days in advance of the meeting. You will also be informed that you have the right to go to the meeting and to be accompanied by a friend, legal representative or interpreter. The Headteacher will also be invited to attend the meeting.

Whilst discussions at the meeting will be documented, the meeting will be as informal as possible, with the main aim being to resolve the problem raised and to achieve reconciliation between you and the school. It provides an opportunity for you to explain your complaint and concerns, for the Headteacher to explain the school's response and for all people present to seek clarification through questions and discussion. Once the discussion has ended, everyone, apart from the panel, will leave the meeting and the panel will review matters and reach its decision. A written decision on the complaint will be provided to you, and to the school, by the panel, within fifteen working days. You will also be advised of what options are open to you to appeal against the decision. It is very rare though, that a complaint will need to progress to these stages.

#### **Chair of Governors:**

##### **Mary Fair**

Please write to the school address **marking the letter as confidential** with the Chair of Governor as the addressee. *Herne Junior School, Love Lane, Petersfield GU31 4BP.*

#### **Vice Chair of Governors:**

##### **Pauline Judge**

Please write to the school address **marking the letter as confidential** with the Vice-Chair of Governor as the addressee. *Herne Junior School, Love Lane, Petersfield GU31 4BP.*