

Complaints Policy

March 2017

Aim:

- 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 pupils above all else.

General Principles:

- This procedure is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school, or the services that it provides.
- An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- To allow for a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, the school will not consider any complaint raised more than 3 months after the event.

Raising a concern or complaint

1. Informal Stage

It is normally appropriate to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned. This may be by letter, by telephone or in person by appointment. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information and it is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved by this informal stage.

In the case of serious concerns, it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Headteacher (or to the Chair of the Governing Body, if the complaint is about the Headteacher).

If you are uncertain about where to direct your complaint, please seek advice from the school office or the Clerk to the Governing Body.

2. Formal Stage

2.1 Where you feel a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that your concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, you should make an appointment to discuss it with the Headteacher. The complaint will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. Most formal complaints are resolved at this stage. However, if the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, stage 2.3 should be followed. Also SENDIASS – Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (formerly Parent Partnership), could be involved at this stage. (See Appendix A).

- 2.2 Should you have a complaint about the Headteacher, you should contact the Chair of Governors, who will investigate it. The Chair will do all he/she can to resolve the issue through dialogue with the school, but if you are unhappy with the outcome, you can make a formal complaint, as detailed below.
- 2.3 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 (we are willing to provide a scribe if necessary), stating the nature of the complaint, how the school has handled it to date, the resolution you are hoping for and asking for the complaint to be put before the Complaints Panel. You should send this written complaint to the Clerk to the Governors (See Appendix A), who will refer it to the appropriate person.
- 2.4 The Chair of Governors or their appointed deputy will acknowledge receipt of the written complaint within 10 school days.
- 2.5 The Chair of Governors or the appointed deputy will contact the complainant within a further 10 school days to arrange a date for a Complaints Panel hearing.
- 2.6 The Complaints Panel will comprise of three governors, who have not previously been involved in the complaint, and the Headteacher where appropriate.
- 2.7 If it is not possible to form a panel from within the school governing board, the school has a collaboration agreement with a neighbouring special needs school.
- 2.8 Complaints against the Headteacher will be managed by the Chair of Governors who will, if necessary, refer the complaint to the Complaints Panel.
- 2.9 Complaints against the Chair of Governors or any individual Governors should be made in writing to the Clerk of Governors, who will liaise with the Headteacher and nominate a Governor. The nominated Governor can refer the complaint to a Complaints appeal Panel, if necessary.
- 2.10 The complaints panel will consider all aspects of the complaint including the substance of the complaint and the processes followed.
- 2.11 After hearing all the evidence, the Governors will decide on a course of action and inform the complainant in writing.

The Remit of the Complaints Appeal Panel

3.0 The panel 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 or procedures to ensure problems of a similar nature do not reoccur.

3.1 If you think your school's Governing Body has acted unreasonably, you can write to The Schools Complaint Unit (see Appendix A).

3.2 For further information, including exceptions and serial and persistent complaints, please refer to the Department of Education Best Practice Advice for Schools Complaints Procedures 2016.

Review

This policy will be reviewed and updated, if required, every two years.

APPENDIX A

Contact details:

Clerk to the Governors

c/o Bettridge School
Warden Hill Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AT

Email: kshepherd@bettridge.gloucs.sch.uk

Chair of Governors

c/o Bettridge School
Warden Hill Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL51 3AT

Email: chair@bettridge.gloucs.sch.uk

The School Complaints Unit (SCU)

Department of Education
Second Floor
Piccadilly Gate
Manchester
M1 2WD

SENDIASS

Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (formerly Parent Partnership Children and Young People's Services). Details available from: