

Brentry Primary School Complaints Policy



Rationale

The school complaints policy is in place to ensure that parents/carers and others are able to express their concerns in an open and honest way in accordance with a published procedure.

The complaints procedure is designed to

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
- be easily accessible and well-publicised
- be simple to understand and use
- be impartial
- be non-adversarial
- allow swift handling, with established time limits for action, and keep people informed of 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 an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- provide information to the school's leadership team so that services can be improved

Investigating complaints

At each stage, the person investigating the complaint will make 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

Procedure

Stage 1

Informal Stage (Concern raised with class teacher or member of staff responsible for the area of concern)

Any problem or concern should be raised promptly with the class teacher/ or member of staff responsible for the area or action you are concerned about. All staff will make every effort to resolve your problem promptly at this informal stage. Most concerns and potential complaints can best be resolved through informal discussion with the headteacher or relevant member of staff. If your concern is more serious you may prefer to make an appointment to discuss it with the Headteacher. If the first approach is made to a governor, the governor would need to refer the complainant to the appropriate person and advise them about the complaints procedures.

Stage 2 (Headteacher)

If you are dissatisfied with the response of the member of staff (or the headteacher if they have been involved at the informal stage) then you may wish to put your concerns in writing to the headteacher as a complaint. You should make it clear if you wish the matter to be dealt with as a complaint. An acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant within 48 hours of receipt of the written complaint. The headteacher will investigate the complaint and provide a written response. This will normally be within 10 school days of your letter, but you will be kept informed if, for example, more time is needed to complete the investigation.

If you require this policy in a larger text format please ask the School Office

If your original concern was about an action by the headteacher personally, and you have already discussed it at the informal stage, then you should put your complaint in writing to the chair of governors (as a stage 2 procedure).

Stage3 (Chair of Governors)

If you are not satisfied with the headteacher's response, you need to write to the chair of governors, giving details of the complaint. The chair's name is available from the school office. An acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant within 48 hours of receipt of the written complaint. The chair will investigate the complaint and may decide there is a need to convene a governing body complaints panel to investigate further. A written response will be sent to the complainant within 1 week to clarify the decision. If a complaints panel is convened this will normally be arranged within fifteen school days of your complaint being received, depending on the availability of all concerned. You may be invited to speak to the panel at a meeting and be accompanied by a friend or representative. After the meeting you will be advised of the outcome in writing, this will normally be within 10 school days of the meeting. The letter will also indicate whether there are any further rights of appeal and, if so, to whom they need to be addressed. The governors' appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process. For most complaints the decision of the governors is the last step in the procedure. Individual complaints would not be heard by the whole Governing body at any stage, as this could compromise the impartiality of any panel set up for a disciplinary hearing against a member of staff following a serious complaint.

Other Complaints

There is a specific procedure for complaints about the school curriculum under Section 23 of the Education Reform Act 1988 and matters relating to it.

In general these are dealt with in a similar way to other complaints. However, there are some specific differences –

You may complain either to the LEA or the Governing Body in the first instance.

The complaint will be investigated by whichever of these is responsible for the matter complained about.

The Governing body will inform both the complainant and the LEA of the outcome of its investigation.

There is a right of appeal to the LEA, and then to the Secretary of State.

If you are in doubt whether your complaint comes into this category, or would like a copy of the full procedure for complaints relating to the school curriculum, please contact the school.

In general, internal school matters are the responsibility of the school governing body. However, you may have a complaint which relates to something which is the Local Authority's responsibility. Arrangements for complaining to the Council are summarised in a separate leaflet available from the LEA.

The LEA will provide advice to parents and schools on best practice procedures for dealing with complaints. The LEA will, where appropriate, check to make sure that the complaint has been reasonably dealt with. Where required, LEA officers may play a role in helping schools to investigate and resolve particular complaints.

School admissions and exclusions

Separate complaint and appeal procedures exist for these matters, and appropriate information is available on request from the school.

Complaints about failure to assess a child's special educational needs

There is a separate appeal procedure for these matters, and appropriate information is available on request from the school.

Complaints against school staff

If you require this policy in a larger text format please ask the School Office

If your complaint amounts to or includes an allegation against a member of staff, this may need to be considered under the school's disciplinary procedure for employees, rather than the complaint procedure. You will be advised if these procedures are to be used in dealing with your complaint.

A complaint about the Local Authority

Procedures for complaining about the Local Authority are set out in a separate leaflet about the Council's complaints procedure. A copy of this leaflet is available from the school, libraries and Council offices. Complaints should be made in the first instance to the head of the service or section concerned. If you are still not satisfied you may complain to the Director of Children and Young People's Services.

Conclusion

By the school having a clear, published procedure, the governors hope that this will help resolve problems and confirm good working relationships between all people involved with the school.

School Complaints Procedure - Complaint Form

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

Your name :

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address :

Postcode:

Daytime telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

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)?

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

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

Signature:
Name in Capital letters
Date

For official use only

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Action :

Date :