



## **Policy – Complaints**

**Date – January 2016**

**Review Date – January 2019**

**Based on –** “Dealing with Concerns and Complaints” Bradford Council

**Signed by the Headteacher**

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**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed on behalf of Governors**

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**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Aims of our school**

1. Enable all pupils to reach their highest level of achievement and attainment in all areas of the curriculum.
2. As a church school, promote high standards of spiritual and personal development, recognising that this includes activities undertaken outside the school day.
3. Develop and implement consistent whole school policies which help children towards self-discipline and respect for themselves and others.
4. Maintain a well ordered and stimulating working environment by the use of effective classroom organisation, attractive displays and the ongoing development of the school grounds.
5. Encourage all pupils to become involved in the development of the school and grounds, to appreciate our surroundings and to develop a sense of responsibility for its upkeep.
6. Ensure that the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are met and that the provision is both appropriate and relevant for each child.
7. To have assessment and planning procedures that ensure the continuity and progression of learning required for each child to reach his or her full potential.
8. Emphasise the vital and continuing role of parents in their child's education and involve them in that process through regular consultation and communication.
9. Ensure that all individuals working in the school receive the resources and training necessary to enable them to carry out their roles effectively and encourage continuing professional development.
10. To work with St Mary's church, the other local churches and the local community through regular visits and participation in local events.

### **Our Vision**

Our school is strongly committed to providing a happy, secure and attractive environment in which all members of our school community - children, teachers, parents, ancillary staff and governors - work together in an atmosphere of friendship, tolerance and understanding. We strive to ensure that the children in our care are able to make the most of their educational opportunities and experiences, with the ultimate aim of preparing them for a confident and responsible adult role within our ever changing society.

Meeting the spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical needs of our children, whatever their ability, is our priority. The provision of an accessible and appropriate curriculum is based on legal requirements and the needs identified within the school. To enable teachers and other staff to meet these demands, they will be supported professionally through access to relevant training. There will be careful and sensitive management of human, physical and financial resources to enable the school to make the most of educational and professional opportunities.

Central to the values expressed in our school is respect. Through respect, each one of us can recognise our own worth, the value in being part of the school community and also appreciate the rich diversity of the wider community. We promote a sense of respect for each other, responsibility towards property and an active concern for the needs of our local area, our country and the wider world. Recognising and valuing the different strengths, weaknesses and experiences each member of our community brings helps us support each other.

Our school places great value on its Christian values and works closely with St. Mary's Church, other Burley in Wharfedale churches and the local community. We place particular importance on involving parents through recognising and valuing their continuing role in the education of their children. By listening to their concerns, we hope to promote an atmosphere of mutual respect and a shared role in helping each child to reach their full potential. We develop appropriate codes of behaviour that support the values and aims of our school, ensuring that we can work together to provide the best possible education for all our children.

## **Complaints Policy**

1. This policy statement sets out the school's approach to dealing with concerns and complaints. Further details of how we handle them are contained in our procedures document, which is shown as appendix I to this policy.
2. We value good school relations and will, therefore, do everything we can to establish and maintain them. This includes seeking to resolve any concerns or complaints promptly, and to the satisfaction of all concerned.
3. We will treat all concerns and complaints seriously and courteously and will advise parents and others of the school's procedures for dealing with their concerns. In return, we expect parents and other complainants to behave respectfully towards all members of the school community. In particular, any disagreement with the school should not be expressed inappropriately or in front of pupils.
4. All school staff and members of the governing body will receive a copy of this policy statement and will be familiar with the school's procedures for dealing with concerns and complaints, to which they will have access as required. The policy is available on request and is published on our website.
5. The school's procedures will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary.
6. Staff and governors will receive training in handling concerns and complaints as appropriate. This may be on an individual basis, or as a group activity for all staff, or for specific groups, such as the office staff or members of the governing body.
7. The government and the local authority advocate resolution of concerns and complaints at school level wherever possible, in the interests of maintaining good school relations.
8. In most cases a complaint must be presented within three months of the action or matter complained of.

The majority of concerns from parents, carers and others are handled under the following general procedures.

The procedure is divided into three stages:

#### **Stage 1 - Appropriate member of staff**

- Complainants should be given the opportunity to discuss their concerns with an appropriate member of staff, such as the class teacher.
- In many cases complainants' concerns and complaints are resolved at this early part of the informal stage.
- If the concern remains unresolved the staff member should advise the complainant that they may complain to the Head Teacher/Deputy.

#### **Stage 2 - Head Teacher/Deputy**

Your written complaint should be made using Burley and Woodhead C of E Primary School's Complaint/ Feedback form, which can be found in Appendix II of these procedures and should be addressed to the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher. If, however, your complaint concerns the Head Teacher personally, it should be sent to the school marked "For the attention of the Chair of Governors". We will acknowledge your complaint in writing as soon as possible after receiving it. This will be within ten school days.

The Head Teacher/Deputy should:

- Meet with the person making the complaint and discuss full details of the complaint.
- Discuss this with the member of staff involved.
- Where a complaint concerns a pupil that pupil should normally be interviewed.
- Ensure written records are kept of all meetings, telephone discussions, and any other relevant documents.
- Consider all the facts and reach a conclusion.
- Write to the person making the complaint giving a full explanation of the decision, the reasons for it and, where appropriate, what action the school proposes to take. Normally we would expect to respond in full within 15 school days but if this is not possible we will write to explain the reason for the delay and let you know when we hope to be able to provide a full response.
- The letter should inform the complainant that if they are not satisfied with the outcome they may complain to the Chair of the governing body within 10 school days.

A named member of the governing body will meet with the Headteacher every term to review any complaints which have been received and ensure the correct procedures, as set out in this document, have been followed when resolving any matter.

If you are unhappy with the way in which we reached our conclusions, you may wish to proceed to stage three, as described below.

#### **Stage 3 - Chair of Governors**

a) If a complaint has been through stages 1 and 2, the Chair would normally pass the complaint straight to the Complaints Appeal Committee unless it is clear that the matter can be immediately resolved by the Chair.

b) A complaint against the Head Teacher/Deputy should be referred straight to the Chair of Governors:

- This would usually involve the Chair speaking with the person making the complaint and the Head Teacher/Deputy to ascertain whether or not the complaint can be resolved at this informal meeting.
- If the matter cannot be resolved and the complaint falls within the scope of the procedure the Chair should then refer the complaint straight to the Complaints Appeal Committee.

- If the Chair has had some prior involvement in the matter which is being complained of, he or she should ask the Vice-Chair to undertake this role instead of the Chair.

### **Formal Stage**

The Complaints Appeal Committee of the governing body deals with any complaint which has reached the formal stage.

This involves:

- Receiving the complaint
- Investigating the complaint
- Making a decision on the complaint
- Reporting the decision of the Complaints Appeal Committee to the governing body.

### **The governors appeal panel operates according to the following formal procedures:**

1. The governing body will convene a panel of three governors and will aim to arrange for the panel meeting to take place within **20 school days**.
2. You will be asked whether you wish to provide any further written documentation in support of your appeal.
3. The Chair of the appeals panel will give at least ten school days in advance, of the date, time and place of the meeting. We hope you will feel comfortable with the meeting taking place in the school but we will do what we can to make alternative arrangements if you prefer.
4. With the letter, you will receive any relevant correspondence or reports regarding stage two and you will be asked whether you wish to submit further written evidence to the panel.
5. The letter will explain what will happen at the panel meeting and that you are entitled to be accompanied to the meeting. The choice of person to accompany you is your own, but it is usually best to involve someone in whom you have confidence but who is not directly connected with the school. They are there to give you support but also to witness the proceedings and to speak on your behalf if you wish.
6. The Chair of the panel will bear in mind that the formal nature of the meeting can be intimidating for you and will do his or her best to put you at your ease.
7. As a general rule, no evidence or witnesses previously undisclosed should be introduced into the meeting by any of the participants. If either party wishes to do so, the meeting will be adjourned so that the other party has a fair opportunity to consider and respond to the new evidence.
8. The Chair of the panel will ensure that the meeting is properly minuted. Please understand that any decision to share the minutes with you, the complainant, is a matter for the panel's discretion and you do not have an automatic right to see or receive a copy as the minutes are the property of the governing body. Since such minutes usually name individuals, they are understandably of a sensitive and, therefore, confidential nature.
9. Normally, the written outcome of the panel meeting, which will be sent to you, should give you all the information you require. If, however, you feel that you would like to have a copy of the minutes it would be helpful if you could indicate this in advance. If the panel is happy for the minutes to be copied to you, the clerk can then be asked to maintain confidentiality in the minutes.
10. During the meeting, you can expect there to be opportunities for:

- The panel to hear you explain your case and your argument for why it should be heard at stage 3;
- you to raise questions via the Chair;
- you to be questioned through the Chair;
- the panel members to be able to question you;

11. In closing the meeting, the Chair will explain that the panel will now consider its decision and that written notice of the decision will be sent to you and the Head Teacher/Deputy within ten school days. All participants other than the panel will then leave.

12. The panel will then consider the complaint and all the evidence presented in order to:

- reach a unanimous, or at least a majority, decision on the case;
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken, if necessary;
- recommend, where appropriate, to the governing body changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that similar problems do not happen again.

13. The Chair of the appeals panel will send you and the Head Teacher/Deputy a letter outlining the decision of the panel. If you are unhappy with the outcome, the letter will also explain that you are entitled to contact the Secretary of State for Education on the grounds that the governing body has failed to discharge its statutory duties.

14. We will keep a copy of all correspondence and notes on file in the school's records but separate from pupils' personal records.

Whilst we will seek to resolve concerns and complaints to the satisfaction of all parties, it may not be possible to achieve this in every case. Even if the complainant remains unhappy, once the complaints procedure has been fully exhausted and school has done everything it can to resolve the complaint, then there is no reason for school to continue to re-visit the complaint and it will be closed.

This does not, of course, prevent you from referring your complaint to the Secretary of State for a review of the way it has been handled.



What do you feel would resolve your problem at this stage?

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

For school use:

Date received and acknowledged	
By whom	
Complaint referred to	
Date	