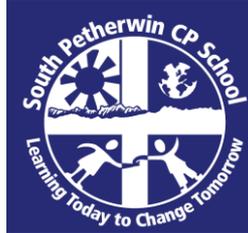


South Petherwin C P School

Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy



It is natural that parents may become concerned about an aspect of their child's education or welfare at school, and we welcome enquiries from parents about any matter.

Most of these concerns can be resolved by the class teacher, but may be passed to the Headteacher if it is more appropriate.

It is also worth noting that compliments are always welcome and very encouraging to teachers and staff.

General Principles:

This policy has been derived from information contained in the DfE publication "Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016"

- This policy aims to set out the steps to follow to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school, or the services that it provides.
- Anonymous concerns or complaints will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- To enable a proper investigation, concerns or complaints must be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, any matter raised more than 3 months after the event, being complained of, will not be considered.
- Records of all concerns will be kept by the Headteacher or Chair of Governors.

This policy does not cover the following types of complaints for which there are statutory or formalised procedures in place:

Procedure dealing with:	Further information available from:
Appeals with respect to admissions	See school's admissions policy or contact the local authority's school admissions team Telephone: 0300 1234 101
Appeals with respect to exclusion of pupils	See school's behaviour policy or contact the local authority's inclusion and attendance manager Telephone: 0300 1234 101
Special Educational Needs, Statements, Education Health and Care Plans	Local authority's 0 – 25 SEND Assessment Team Telephone: 01872 322482
National Curriculum and Religious Education	Local authority's Education and Learning team Telephone: 01872 327421
Child Protection Issues	Local authority's Advice and Assessment team, Children's Social Care Telephone: 0300 123 1116
Child Protection Investigations against staff	Local Authority Designated Officer Telephone: 01872 327343
Whistleblowing	The school has an internal whistleblowing procedure for employees and voluntary staff which is available from the school/academy office. Other concerns can be raised direct with Ofsted on 0300 123 3155 or via email at whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk
Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures	The school has internal grievance and disciplinary procedures for employees which are available from the school office.

Raising a concern or complaint

Compliment: We like to hear when we have done a good job so that we can share what we do well with the staff and children to ensure we continually improve.

Comment: We welcome suggestions for improving our work.

Concern: A concern is an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought. Please tell us of any concern you have as soon as possible so that we can try to resolve it. If you are a parent/carer be assured that no matter what you want to talk to us about, our support for you and your child will not be affected in any way.

Complaint: A complaint is a concern which has not been satisfactorily resolved. If you feel we have not dealt satisfactorily with your concern, please tell us as soon as possible that you wish to make a formal complaint, as it is difficult for us to investigate properly an incident or problem that happened some time ago.

Informal Stage

Most concerns can be sorted out quickly by speaking with your child's class teacher, or another member of staff. 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, requested via the school office. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information and it is anticipated that most concerns will be resolved by this informal stage. All staff will make every effort to respond to your concerns informally. They will make sure that they understand what you feel went wrong, and they will explain their own actions to you. They will ask what you would like the school to do to put things right. Of course, this does not mean that in every case they will come round to your point of view but it will help both you and the school/academy to understand both sides of the issue. It may also help to prevent a similar problem arising again.

If you are dissatisfied with the response to your concern you can make a formal complaint to the complaints co-ordinator. This can be done verbally or by completing the attached complaint form. Please contact the school office if you need assistance with this.

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 concern is about the Headteacher).

If you are uncertain about who to contact, please seek advice from the school office or the Clerk to the governing body.

Formal Stage

If your concern or complaint is not resolved at the informal stage, you make a formal complaint which will be forwarded to the Headteacher, who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately. If the complaint is about the Headteacher, your complaint should be passed to the Clerk to the governing body. If at any formal stage of the complaint it is determined

that staff disciplinary or capability proceedings are necessary in order to resolve the issue, the details of this action will remain confidential to the Headteacher and/or the individual's line manager. As the complainant you are entitled to be informed that action is being taken, but you are not entitled to participate in the proceedings or receive any detail.

A Complaint Form is provided to assist you (see Appendix 2)

You must include any details which might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents.

It is very important that you include a clear statement of the actions that you would like the school to take to resolve your concern. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed.

Please pass the completed form, in a sealed envelope to the school office. The envelope should be addressed to the Headteacher, or to the Clerk to the governing body, as appropriate.

The Headteacher (or Chair) will invite you to a meeting to clarify your concerns and to explore the possibility of an informal resolution. If you accept that invitation, you may be accompanied by a friend, if you wish, to assist you in explaining the nature of your concerns.

It is possible that your complaint will be resolved through a meeting with the Headteacher (or Chair). If not, arrangements will be made for the matter to be fully investigated, using the appropriate procedure. In any case you will learn in writing within **5 days** of the school receiving your formal complaint, of how the school intends to proceed. This notification will include an indication of the anticipated timescale.

Any investigation will begin as soon as possible and when it has been concluded, you will be informed in writing of its conclusion.

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, you may request that the governing body reviews the process followed by the school, in handling the complaint. Any such request must be made in writing to the clerk to the governing body within **10 school days** of receiving notice of the outcome, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure. The procedure described below will be followed. A Review Request form is provided for your convenience (see Appendix 3).

Review Process

Any review of the process followed by the school will be conducted by a panel of three members of the governing body. This will take place within **10 school days** of receipt of your request.

The review will normally be conducted through a consideration of written submissions, but reasonable requests to make oral representations should be considered sympathetically.

Unreasonable Complainants

South Petherwin School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

South Petherwin School defines unreasonable complainants as 'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints'.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:

- maliciously;
- aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowing it to be false;
- using falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact South Petherwin School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from South Petherwin School. Anyone wishing to complain about being barred can do so, by letter or email, to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors. However, complaints about barring cannot be escalated to the Department for Education. Once the school's own complaints procedure has been completed, the only remaining avenue of appeal is through the Courts; independent legal advice must therefore be sought.

The Role of the School Complaints Unit

If a complaint has completed the local procedures and the complainant remains dissatisfied, you have the right to refer your complaint to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State has a duty to consider all complaints raised but will only intervene where the governing body has acted unlawfully or unreasonably and where it is expedient or practical to do so.

The School Complaints Unit (SCU) considers complaints relating to LA maintained schools in England on behalf of the Secretary of State. The SCU will look at whether the complaints policy and any other relevant statutory policies were adhered to. The SCU also looks at whether statutory policies adhere to education legislation. However, the SCU will not normally re-investigate the substance of the complaint. This remains the responsibility of schools.

If legislative or policy breaches are found, the SCU will report them to the school and the complainant, and where necessary, ask for corrective action to be taken. The SCU normally also seeks written assurances as to future conduct. Failure to carry out remedial actions or provide written assurances could ultimately result in a formal Direction being issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with her powers under sections 496 and 497 of the Education Act 1996.

Further information can be obtained from the SCU by calling the National Helpline on 0370 000 2288 or going online at: www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus or by writing to: Department for Education School Complaints Unit 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD

Appendix 1
South Petherwin CP School: Meeting Request Form

I wish to meet [*name of teacher*] to discuss the following matter:

Brief details of topic to be discussed:

Dates/times when it would be most convenient for a meeting:

Your name:

Relationship with school (e.g. parent of a pupil on the school roll):

Pupil's name (if relevant to the matter to be discussed)

Your Address:

Telephone numbers

Daytime:

Evening:

e-mail address:

Signed

Date

[Please complete this form and return it to the school office]

School use:

Date Form received:

Date response sent:

Received by:

Response sent by:

Appendix 2
South Petherwin CP School: Formal Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it to the school office or to the Headteacher who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name:

Relationship with school (e.g. parent of a pupil on the school roll):

Pupil's name (if relevant to your complaint):

Your Address:

Telephone numbers

Daytime:

Evening:

E-mail address:

Please give concise details of your complaint, (including dates, names of witnesses etc...), to allow the matter to be fully investigated:

You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of Additional pages attached =

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? (i.e. who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?)

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

Signature:

Date:

School use:

Date Form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

<i>Complaint referred to:</i>			
<i>Date:</i>			

Appendix 3
South Petherwin CP School: Complaint Review Request Form

Please complete this form and return it to Headteacher (or Clerk to the governing body), who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name:

Your Address:

Telephone numbers:

Daytime:

Evening:

E-mail address:

I submitted a formal complaint to the school on and am dissatisfied by the procedure that has been followed.

My complaint was submitted to and I received a response from on

I have attached copies of my formal complaint and of the response(s) from the school.

I am dissatisfied with the way in which the procedure was carried out, because:

You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of Additional pages attached =

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

Signature:

Date:

School use

Date Form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

<i>Request referred to:</i>			
<i>Date:</i>			