

**Broad Oak
Primary
School**



COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

December 2016

BROAD OAK PRIMARY SCHOOL COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES 2016

Policy for resolution of concerns and complaints

This policy was ratified by the governing body on 12th December 2016, and is due for review in December 2018.

School Complaints Procedure

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 enable a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should 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.

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, requested via the school office. 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 issues that cannot be resolved by the member of staff concerned you should then contact the Headteacher directly. (Or, if the complaint is about the Headteacher, to the Chair of Governors via a letter, marked private and confidential, through the school office).

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

2) Formal Stage

If your concern or complaint is not resolved at the informal stage you may choose to put the complaint in writing and pass it to the head teacher, who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately. If the complaint is about the head teacher, your complaint should be passed to the school office, in a sealed envelope marked "Private and Confidential", for the attention of the chair of the governing body.

A complaint form is provided on line via the school website, or in hard copy at the school office, to assist you.

You must include 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 head teacher, or to the chair, as appropriate.

The head teacher (or chair) may 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 head teacher (or chair). If not, arrangements will be made for the matter to be fully investigated, using the appropriate procedure. In any case you should learn in writing, usually within 5 days of the school receiving your formal complaint, of how the school intends to proceed. This notification should 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 chair, within 10 school days of receiving notice of the outcome, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure outlined above. The process described below will then be followed. A review request form is provided for your convenience, again on line or via the school office.

Review Process

The words review and appeal are synonymous in this context – the complainant appeals against the decision of the investigator and the consequent review panel will consequently take a second look at that decision.

The review is a mechanism for the complainant to challenge the school over its application of the complaints policy and whether the school has applied its other published policies fairly and equitably. This is not the route to challenge the content of a policy which is passed by the governing body and published on the school website.

A review panel is convened by the chair on receipt of a formal appeal request. Any review of the process followed by the school will be conducted by a panel of 3 members of the governing body.

This will usually take place within 10 school days of receipt of your request.

The review will often be conducted through a consideration of written submissions, but reasonable requests to make oral representations will be considered sympathetically. Once the panel is convened, any correspondence is to be passed through the school office in a sealed envelope marked "Private and Confidential", and addressed to the review panel.

The decision of the review panel is final and cannot be changed by any of the parties involved (complainant, school or governors).

Complaints concerning policy, facilities and services

Complaints that cannot be dealt with by the above policy or other statutory policies of the school may result in actions as detailed below.

If the school receives a formal complaint about such a matter it may be necessary to convene a governing body panel to consider the matter and formulate a response.

The complaint is likely to relate to matters such as:

- the content or the application of a governing body policy;
- school facilities;
- services that the school provides.

If necessary, the chair will convene a panel of 3 governors, who have not previously been involved with the complaint.

The complainant should submit the initial outline of their concerns, in writing, to the chair who will decide the best way forward to address the concerns raised in the outline complaint. The chair will then seek similar written responses from the school, where this is necessary. All material will then be passed to the panel for their consideration. All communications, apart from the initial outline, should be sealed in an envelope and labelled private and confidential so that they can be passed directly to the panel once it is convened.

A meeting of the panel will take place, usually within 10 school days, to consider the matter. The complainant (who may be accompanied by a friend if they wish) and representative(s) from the school (who may also be accompanied by workplace colleagues or representatives from their professional associations) may be invited to attend this meeting in order to clarify the matter. As the panel meeting is intended to be investigatory, rather than adversarial, the persons giving evidence or making representations to the panel will normally attend separately.

When the panel has collected sufficient information, it will deliberate and then inform the complainant, the head teacher and the governing body of the outcome, in writing.

Consideration of the complaint by the governing body and the school, save for any actions that are agreed, will terminate at this point.

If the complainant is **not satisfied that the appropriate procedure has been followed**, they may request a review of that process by another panel of the governing body.

Review meeting

Any review of the process followed by the school will be conducted by a panel of 3 members of the governing body. This will usually take place within 10 school days of receipt of a written request.

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

The panel will first receive written evidence from the complainant. The panel will then invite representatives of the school (usually the head teacher or the chair of the governing body panel that has considered the matter), as appropriate, to make a response to the complaint.

The panel will also have access to the records kept of the process followed.

The complainant and the school representative(s) will be informed in writing of the decision of the panel, usually within 5 school days of the panel meeting. The matter will then be considered closed.