

**CYNFFIG
COMPREHENSIVE
SCHOOL**

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Complaints Procedures



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SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. Principles

- 1.1 Schools value the generally good relations they enjoy with parents and the community. These good relations are based on mutual respect and a willingness to listen to other points of view.
- 1.2 Within a school environment it is possible that complaints can arise over a multitude of issues. It is essential, for the efficient running of the school, that all complaints are dealt with quickly and effectively. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all complaints are dealt with efficiently to ensure that the school's standards are maintained.
- 1.3 A copy of the school complaints procedure will be published in the school prospectus.

2. Complaints by Staff

- 2.1 Staff who feel aggrieved by any set of circumstances should attempt to resolve their complaint through the school's grievance procedure. This procedure attempts to ensure that any complaint is dealt with as near to the source as possible, but allows representation throughout the school's line management structure, in order to resolve all issues of complaint.
- 2.2 A copy of the grievance procedure can be obtained from the school office when required.

3. Parental Complaints to Headteacher

- 3.1 Parental complaints should always be referred to the head teacher or other designated member of staff. An informal discussion is likely to resolve most parental complaints.
- 3.2 If an informal discussion fails to resolve the complaint, then the parent will be asked to submit the complaint, in writing to the head teacher, in order that a formal written reply can be sent. If the parent does not wish to put the complaint in writing, the head teacher will arrange a second, more formal meeting which will be followed by a written reply from the head teacher. The written reply should also enclose a copy of the schools complaints procedure.
- 3.3 A formal response from the head teacher will be made within five working days of the meeting. If this time scale is prolonged for any reason, the complainant will be told of what action is being taken and will continue to receive regular progress reports. The head teacher will advise the chair of governors of the action being taken. The head teacher may wish to seek advice / guidance from the directorate's complaints officer before a formal reply is sent to parents.



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- 3.4 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the ultimate written reply there will be a right to register the formal complaint with the governing body. The head teacher's reply to the parent will give notification of this right and the address of the chair of governors to whom the complaint should be referred.

4. Formal Complaint to the Governing Body

- 4.1 Formal complaints to the governing body can be made only if the complainant has sought to resolve the issue with the head teacher.
- 4.2 Any complaint to the governing body should be addressed to the clerk to the governing body, or the chair of the governing body.
- 4.3 The clerk to the governing body or chair of the governing body will send an acknowledgment letter to the complainant, within five working days of receipt of the letter of complaint, indicating that an investigation will be undertaken in an attempt to resolve the issue of complaint. A copy of this letter will be given to the head teacher.
- 4.4 The chair to the governing body may wish to consider whether to refer the complaint to the local education authority's complaint's officer. The LEA complaints officer will ensure that an appropriate officer will be available to support the chair of governors in any necessary investigation if required. The chair of the governing body may also wish to seek advice / guidance from the directorate's complaint's officer before convening the complaints committee.
- 4.5 The clerk to the governing body, in consultation with the chair, will convene a meeting of the school's complaints committee in an attempt to find a solution to the complaint. Whenever possible the complaints committee will be convened within 15 working days of receipt of the complaint. Members of the committee will be given seven working days notice of the meeting. The complainant will be invited to attend the committee meeting. If the invitation is refused, the committee will attempt to deal with the issue by examining documentation submitted by all parties involved. When in attendance parties will be allowed to be accompanied by a friend, colleague or trade union representative.
- 4.6 Following the complaints committee meeting the chair will send a detailed reply to the complainant within 5 working days of the meeting. The reply should indicate that the complainant may choose to refer the matter to the LEA if not satisfied with the process in order that the procedure can be considered. The LEA has no responsibility for reviewing the decision of the governing body.
- 4.7 The complaints committee will be the members of the first panel of the school's disciplinary committee, plus the chair when the chair is not a member of the first panel. Committee members will not be allowed to take part in the proceedings if they have had any involvement in the issues raised in the complaint.



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- 4.8 There will be no appeal committee therefore the decision of the complaints committee will be final.
- 4.9 No governor will take part in the complaints process if they themselves are the subject of the complaint.
- 4.10 The committee will consider written submission from both parties as well as personal representations in order to formulate a view as to how the issues raised might be resolved.

5. Complaints from Children and Other Members of the Public

- 5.1 All complaints received from persons other than staff or parents will be dealt with in accordance with Paragraphs 3 and 4 above. Children giving evidence to the complaints committee will be encouraged to be represented by a suitable advocate.

6 Complaints Concerning the Whole Governing Body

Any complaints about the actions of a number of governors or the whole governing body should be sent to the clerk to the governing body who will inform the head teacher, chair of governors and LEA. The LEA will decide how the complaint should be handled. In some instances the LEA may secure the agreement of the governing body that the complaint be heard by a committee independent of the governing body and specially constituted for that purpose.

7 Recording Complaints

Each complaint, including anonymous complaints should be recorded. A record of complaints is important:

- To monitor the progress of a complaint
- To provide evidence that the complaint was considered and of the outcome
- For reference, if further complaints arise relating to the original issue
- To identify trends or recurring themes in complaints cases
- To compile reports to governors (and others) on complaints

It is recommended that a record of the following be kept for at least three school years including a record of the year in which the complaint was finalised:



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- ❖ The name of the complainant
- ❖ Date of receipt of the complaint
- ❖ A brief description of the complaint
- ❖ Action taken to resolve the complaint with the outcome
- ❖ Issues for action by the school and lead member of staff

8 Monitoring Complaints

A report to governors will be made, by the head teacher, annually identifying the number of complaints received and the nature of the complaints.

9 LEA Complaints Officers

9.1 Any correspondence to the directorate's complaints officer should be addressed to:

Mr. Robin Davies, Group Manager, Support for Children and Learning, Bridgend County Borough Council, Civic Offices, Bridgend, for pupil related issues
or

Mrs. A. Gwyther, Principal Adviser, Children's Services, Bridgend County Borough Council, Ravenscourt, Bridgend for complaints relating to staff.

9.2 All correspondence received by the complaints officer will be acknowledged within five working days of receipt.

9.3 The LEA will keep records of all complaints referred, monitoring the progress of the complaint and the outcome.



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COMPLIMENTS OR COMPLAINTS?

ADVICE TO PARENTS

Introduction

Often parents, children and other members of the public would like schools to know their views. Sometimes there are meetings when this is possible. On other occasions a personal comment is more appropriate. Communication, written or spoken, is valued as part of the partnership between home and school. Co-operation between parents, staff and governors leads to a shared sense of purpose and a good atmosphere in school.

This leaflet aims to answer some of your questions about this.

Should I pay a compliment?

Certainly. Staff at the school are always pleased to learn that things have gone well and are appreciated.

Should I tell them my concerns?

Definitely. All members of staff want to know as soon as possible if something concerns you or your child. They can then investigate and give you a response. If need be, they can also take steps to remedy a situation. Misunderstandings can be cleared up. Everyone benefits from the speedy resolution of difficulties and from suggestions for improvement.

Should I complain?

Yes - if you believe that something is seriously wrong. Your view can then be considered and an investigation can establish whether there is something wrong which needs to be corrected. The school's response will be based on the governors' agreed policy and will seek to be fair to all concerned. Writing down your complaint helps to clarify exactly what you are complaining about.

Whom do I contact?

That depends on the particular situation. Often the teacher is able to deal with the matter. More serious problems should be referred to the head teacher or a designated senior member of staff. Mutual courtesy is to be expected and ensures that things go smoothly. There should always be discussion in the hope of solving difficulties informally. Most problems are solved in this way. A complaint about the head teacher goes to the chairperson of governors. Complaints about the chairperson of governors should be referred to the vice chair and complaints about the whole governing body can be referred to the LEA complaints officer. Certain specific complaints (eg about admissions to school) are dealt with separately. The local education authority's complaints officer (telephone number 642659) can advise you where and how to direct your complaint.



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What if the matter is still unresolved?

It will be necessary to write to the head teacher to inform him / her about this. In response the head teacher will invite you to a meeting to talk together about it. After this formal meeting, you may decide to make a formal complaint to the governing body if the matter is still unresolved.

How do I make a formal complaint to the governing body?

You submit a copy of your complaint in writing to the clerk of governors or the chair of governors. The head teacher will provide you with the appropriate address. You will receive an acknowledgment of your letter of complaint within five school days. The chair of governors will arrange for the matter to be considered by the complaints committee of the governing body. The chair of the governing body may decide not to consider a complaint about something which occurred more than six months previously or which has not been referred to the head teacher in the first instance.

What happens next?

You will be informed of the date of the complaint committee meeting and invited to attend. You will have the right to be accompanied by a friend. You will be informed in writing by the clerk of the governing body or the chair, of the decision of the complaints committee within 5 school days of the meeting. If you are not happy with the procedure you can ask for an officer of the local authority, to look at the procedure involved to see if the process followed was fair. The local authority cannot review the decision taken by the committee. Any request for such a review of procedure can be referred to the Complaint's Officer, Children's Directorate, Bridgend County Borough Council, Ravenscourt, Bridgend, CF31 4AP.

Remember

This whole process exists so that your views and the views of others, can be heard. You have rights. Pupils have rights. Staff and governors have rights. The aim is that the complaint should be properly and fairly dealt with. Communications with schools are frequent and are welcome. The later stages of the complaints procedure are used rarely but remain part of the process. Services are improved by a positive response to compliments, concerns and complaints.