



## Nottage Primary School Complaints Policy 2022

### Introduction

We believe that our school provides a good education for all our children, and that the headteacher and other staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. We also recognise the frustration caused when a decision must be made that will go against a parent or carers wishes. Whatever the circumstance, we want to work with families and the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents. The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases.

If any parent is unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or has any concern relating to the school, we encourage that person to talk to the child's class teacher as soon as possible. We deal with all complaints in accordance with procedures set out by the LA. If the school cannot resolve any complaint itself working with the head teacher and Governing body it can ask the LA for help.

### Aims and objectives

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We consider all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

### The complaints process

If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. Most matters of concern can be and are dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the child's progress or wellbeing. A complaint concerning the education or support for children with ALN will also be subject to the new ALN act and reflect the parent and pupil rights within the act. Staff will have specific training on this and parents will be given information as it is made available.

Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make contact with the deputy head, head of department or head teacher to discuss their concerns further. The headteacher considers any such

complaint very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage.

Should a parent have a complaint about the headteacher and cannot resolve it with the head teacher, s/he should first make an informal approach the chair of the governing body, who will investigate it. The governor in question will do all s/he can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if a parent is unhappy with the outcome, s/he can make a formal complaint, as outlined below.

Only if an informal complaint fails to resolve the matter should a formal complaint be made to the governing body. This complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far. The parent should send this written complaint to the Chair of Governors, this can be done via the school.

The governing body must consider all written complaints within three weeks of receipt. It can arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint, and invites the person making it to attend the meeting, so that s/he can explain her complaint in more detail. The school gives the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting.

After hearing all the evidence, the governors consider their decision and inform the parent about it in writing. The governors do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction. If the complaint is not resolved, a parent may make representation to the LA. If any parent is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then s/he is entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education.

## **Monitoring and review**

The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

## **NOTTAGE PRIMARY 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 or electronically/website.

## **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 Any complaints or concerns should initially be communicated to the class teacher, who will try their best to resolve the matter. If the matter is unresolved the complaint should be taken to the Head teacher or senior management, who again will do their utmost to resolve the complaint.

- 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 headteacher, in order that a formal written reply be sent. If the parent does not wish to put the complaint in writing, the headteacher will arrange a second, more formal meeting which will be followed by a written reply from the headteacher. The written reply should also enclose a copy of the school's complaints procedure.

3.3 A formal response from the headteacher will be made within seven 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 headteacher will advise the chair of governors of the action being taken. The headteacher may wish to seek advice / guidance from the directorate's complaints officer before a formal reply is sent to parents.

- 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 headteacher's reply to the parent will give notification of this right and the name of the clerk to governors to whom the complaint should be referred.

## **4. Complaints 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 headteacher.

- 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 (details from the school office)

- 4.3 The clerk to the governing body or chair of the governing body will send an acknowledgment letter to the complainant, within seven 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 headteacher.

- 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 LA 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.
- 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 a 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 will inform the headteacher, 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**

Why we record complaints:

- 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:

- 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 headteacher, annually identifying the number of formal/written complaints received and the nature of the complaints.

## 9 LEA Contact

9.1 Any correspondence to the directorate should be addressed to:

**Group Manager, Business Strategy and Performance, Directorate of Education, Leisure & Community Services, Bridgend County Borough Council, Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB**

9.2 All correspondence received 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.

Please note our staff have the right to carry out their roles without fear of intimidation or threat, including that by e-mail or on social media. Should a complaint or behavior become egregious the school maintains the right to report the individual.