

2015

Complaints Policy

Blackwood Comprehensive School
Ysgol Gyfun Y Coed Duon

This document contains the specific policy and associated information relating to Complaints at Blackwood Comprehensive School.



Responsible Staff Members Mr R K Pawar (Head)
Mr A Farina-Childs (Chair of Govenors)



Introduction

The following policy embeds the principles outlined in the Guidance for school Governing Bodies, circular 03/2009, on establishing a formal complaints procedure.

The key feature of any complaints procedure is that there should be a way of ensuring that anyone with an interest in the school can raise a concern, with confidence that it will be heard and if well founded, addressed in an appropriate and timely fashion.

An essential component of the complaints procedure is record keeping. This is important in terms of tracking how a complaint has been handled and resolved and can assist the school in defending its actions if the complainant has recourse to external bodies or is dissatisfied with the outcome. In addition the Governing Body will have to establish a complaints committee and have an appeals committee in the event that these become necessary.

Investigating Complaints

At each stage the person dealing with the complaint should adhere to the following procedures:-

- Establish what has happened so far and who has been involved
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved
- Meet with the complainant or contact them if unsure or further information is necessary
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right
- Talk to those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- Approach matters with an open mind and keep records

All complaints should also be kept confidential. Pupils under the age of 16 may give evidence to a complaints committee only with the authorisation of a parent or guardian.

Every effort should be made to ensure that complaints are acted upon quickly and the guidance indicates 10 working days as a maximum. If this timescale cannot be achieved the complainant should be notified of the new proposed timescale. Anonymous complaints should be treated carefully but they should also be considered and a judgement made if an investigation is warranted.

The Three Stage Approach to Complaint Resolution

- Stage 1 Complaint raised with and resolved by the first recipient or the complaints officer
- Stage 2 matter referred to the Headteacher for investigation, decision and resolution
- Stage 3 matter referred to the Governing Body for investigation, decision and resolution

Procedures

- Stage 1 At this stage a complaint can be made orally or in writing. The majority of complaints should be settled at this stage by the first recipient or the complaints officer. The complainant should be given every opportunity to meet the investigating officer. Another member of staff, teaching or non-teaching, should be present to take notes and for the protection of both parties. In the event that the complaint cannot be resolved the complainant should be provided with a copy of the school complaints procedure and informed of their right to move to stage 2 of this procedure.
- Stage 2 It is good practice, at this stage, to have all complaints in writing. On receipt of the written complaint it must be acknowledged by the Headteacher and a target date for the resolution of the issue, usually within 10 working days, provided. At the meeting with the Headteacher the complainant has the right to be accompanied by a friend. Notes will be taken by another member of staff, teaching or non-teaching. A written response will be provided once the Headteacher has made a judgement.
- Stage 3 If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the consideration of the Headteacher, the governing body complaints committee will meet and investigate the complaint. Any complaint must be acknowledged by the clerk to the governing body within 5 working days and the committee should meet within 15 working days. The letter of acknowledgement will set out the timetable for events and the meeting will be arranged, as far as possible, at a mutually convenient time to all parties. It is important that a person against whom a complaint is made is given sufficient time, usually 10 school days, to consider all the evidence and take advice before providing a response and before any hearing takes place. The advice contained in the circular will be followed by the governing body. This advice relates to the conduct of the meeting, the procedures for holding the meeting and the procedures for reaching and reporting a decision. The Governing Body will also establish an appeals committee in accordance with the guidance in circular 03/2009.

Adaptations to the 3 stage approach

Specific advice is contained in circular 03/2009 for the following situations: a complaint against the Headteacher, complaints against the complaints officer, complaints against the Chair of Governors, a complaint against the Headteacher and Chair of Governors, complaints against the vice chair and chair of governors, complaints against any member of the governing body and a complaint against the whole Governing Body. These procedures will be adopted as and when necessary.

National Assembly for Wales Circular 03/2009, entitled School Governing Bodies Complaints Procedure, can be obtained at www.learning.wales.gov.uk entering the section entitled publications/circulars.

Complaints procedure

Complaints are dealt with by the school's senior staff. In the event of a problem arising, parents are asked to telephone the school if they wish to arrange an appointment. However, many simple problems can be dealt with over the telephone.

If the issue is still not resolved parents can contact the Chairman of Governors, Councillor L. Lewis and/or the Local Education Authority, Caerphilly County Borough Council.

We aim to make the schools complaints procedure easy to follow with three easy steps:

Step 1 – Informal Stage

You should contact the Headteacher of the school first as the vast majority of complaints are resolved at this stage.

The school will deal with your complaint within 5-10 working days.

Step 2 – Chair of Governors

If you are still unhappy then the next step is to write to the Chair of Governors (or a Governor nominated to fulfil this role by the Chair of Governors). The Chair of Governor or nominated Governor will investigate your complaint.

You will receive a reply in 5-10 working days.

Step 3 – Complaints Panel

If you are still unhappy after this investigation you must write in to the school and request the Complaints Panel to review your complaint.

Your complaint will be heard within 15 working days of receipt of your complaint letter.