

Coleham Primary School



Complaints Procedure

Date of policy: May 2016
Date of review: May 2019

Coleham Primary school

Complaints Procedure

At Coleham Primary School, we welcome your feedback. If you have any concerns, please raise them as soon as possible with your child's class teacher. Please remember that if we are to resolve concerns and complaints, it is essential that we enter into dialogue immediately and avoid raising any school issues on social media sites. Please be mindful of the fact that comments posted on social media are public and are subject to the same laws as any public work.

If you have serious concerns, please contact the Headteacher. Occasionally, it is impossible to resolve all concerns through informal discussions and it may be necessary to follow the official complaints procedures, which are detailed below.

Stage One: Complaint Heard by Headteacher

It is in everyone's interest that concerns are dealt with effectively before they become complaints. If they do become complaints, it is very important that they are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The experience of the first contact between the complainant and the school can be crucial in determining whether the complaint will escalate. To that end, if staff are made aware of the procedures, they know what to do when they receive a complaint.

It would assist the procedure if the school respected the views of a complainant who indicates that he/she would have difficulty discussing a complaint with the Headteacher. Where the complaint concerns the Headteacher, he/she or the complaints co-ordinator can refer the complainant directly to the chair of governors. The Headteacher may seek advice from their professional union.

Similarly, if the Headteacher feels too compromised to deal with a complaint he/she may consider referring the complainant directly to the chair of governors. The ability to consider the complaint objectively and impartially is crucial.

Where the first approach is made to a governor, the next step would be to refer the complainant to the Headteacher and advise them about the procedure. Governors should not act unilaterally on an individual complaint outside the formal procedure or be involved at the early stages in case they are needed to sit on a committee at a later stage of the procedure. If approached with a complaint, governors should immediately refer the complainant back to the Headteacher.

At stage one it is important to clarify the nature of the complaint, which must be formally recorded **in writing** by the person making the complaint via letter (addressed to the Headteacher) or by filling out the form provided in Appendix A. It is on the basis of this information that the complaint is considered and appropriately directed recognising a school will have formal procedures and policies in place which should be referred to when relating to specific issues for example: HR matters, pupil behaviour and discipline, health and safety etc. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, complaints will usually be responded to by the Headteacher, in writing, within 7 working days. If the complainant is satisfied with the outcome, it is requested that they complete the necessary paperwork detailed in Appendix B.

Stage Two: Complaint Heard by Chair of Governors

If the complainant is not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed and the complaint has not been resolved, they may formally request (in writing) that their complaint be considered by the Chair of the Governors. The Chair of Governors may investigate the complaint as originally formally reported, and convey the outcome to the complainant within 7 working days of the complaint being made to the Chair of Governors. If the complainant is satisfied with the outcome, it is requested that they complete the necessary paperwork detailed in Appendix B.

Stage Three: Complaint Heard by the Governing Body Complaints Committee

If the complainant feels that their complaint still hasn't been resolved, and there is need to review the process they should write to the Chair of the Governors' Complaints Committee giving details of the complaint. The chair will acknowledge receipt of the letter within a 10 day period and will ask the clerk to convene a Governing Body Complaints Committee meeting. This meeting should, wherever possible, take place within three weeks (excluding school holidays) of dispatch of the acknowledgement letter unless a longer period (perhaps to arrange suitable dates or collate information) is necessary in which case the Chair of the Complaints Committee must inform the complainant about the reason for the delay.

The complainant and the person representing the complaint (e.g. the Headteacher) should be permitted to bring a supporter (friend, spouse, union representative, LA representative etc) should they so choose. The observer can only attend in a non-participating, observer capacity.

The governors' Complaints Committee is the last school-based stage of the complaints process, and is not convened to merely rubber-stamp previous decisions. However, the committee will not deal with any new issues or concerns introduced at this stage, either verbally or in writing, by the complainant.

If the complainant is satisfied with the outcome of the Complaints Committee meeting, it is requested that they complete the necessary paperwork detailed in Appendix B.

The chair of the committee needs to ensure that the complainant is notified of the decision, in writing, with the committee's response; within seven days of the meeting. The letter needs to explain that the complainant can contact the Secretary of State for Education at the Department for Education if they wish to pursue the matter further (0370 000 2288).

If you would like to read more detailed information and guidance regarding the Complaint Procedure, please click on the following link:

Appendix A

Complaint Form

Please complete and return
to.....(Headteacher) who will
acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give details of your complaint

**What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.
(Who did you speak to and what was the response)?**

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

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

Appendix B

Resolution of a Complaint

Name _____

Following on from my complaint, which was heard by the Headteacher/Chair of Governors/Complaints Committee (please delete as appropriate), I feel satisfied with the outcome reached and will not be pursuing the matter further.

Signed _____

Date _____