

Bledlow Ridge School Complaints Procedure

Introduction

This document sets out the school's procedure for addressing complaints. It should be used only when informal attempts to resolve problems have been unsuccessful. If you have any concerns about the school or the education provided, please discuss the matter with your child's class teacher at the earliest opportunity. The school considers any concerns very seriously and most problems can be resolved at this stage. Please note that this procedure does not apply to issues concerning the curriculum, collective worship, admissions, exclusion appeals, decisions about your child's special educational needs or grievances by school staff. These are the subject of separate complaints procedures. Copies of these procedures can be obtained from the school. All other complaints are handled by the school according to the arrangements set out below.

Aims and Objectives

The school will give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them fairly and honestly. We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and aim to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding.

Framework of Principles

- be easily accessible and publicised
- be simple to use and understand
- be impartial
- be non-adversarial
- allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress
- ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary
- respect people's desire for confidentiality, wherever possible (some information sharing may be necessary to carry out a thorough investigation)
- address all points of issue, providing an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- Provide information to the school's senior management team so that services can be improved.

Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – initial concerns

If you have any concerns about the school, or the education we are providing at any time, please discuss the matter with your child's class teacher at the earliest opportunity. Please do not publicise any concerns you have on social networking sites, but speak to someone at the school as soon as possible.

The school considers any concerns very seriously and most problems can be resolved following discussion and a shared understanding of the issues. All members of staff work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school and is making good progress and they always want to know if there is a problem so they can help to resolve it. Most concerns can be resolved at this level, however, if after speaking to your child's class teacher you are still concerned, please discuss the matter with the Headteacher.

Stage 2 – formal procedure

Most concerns are resolved at Stage 1, however if you remain dissatisfied and wish to take the matter further you will be asked to complete a complaint form.

If the matter is about:

- the day-to-day running of the school
- the interpretation of school policies
- the actions or inactions of staff at the school

it will be investigated by the head teacher.

If the matter is about:

- school policies as determined by the governing body
- the actions or inactions of the governing body
- the head teacher

then it will be investigated by the Chairman of Governors.

The person carrying out the investigation will review the way in which the complaint has been handled by the school and ensure that the issues have been dealt with properly and fairly. He/she will normally write to you with the outcome of this process within 15 working days of receiving the complaint. If it becomes apparent that the complaint is a disciplinary or capability issue, then the matter will be dealt with by following the appropriate procedure rather than the complaints procedure. You will be notified if this is the case with your complaint, but you are not entitled to know which procedure or the final outcome.

Stage 3

If you are not satisfied with the result from Stage 2, you may choose to refer your complaint to Stage 3 of the procedure. This must be done in writing to the school within 15 working days of the completion of Stage 2. At this stage the complaint will be considered by a panel of 3 governors, who will meet to consider the complaint and make a final decision about it on behalf of the governing body.

The panel will consist of governors who have no detailed prior knowledge of the complaint, or connection with the complainant. The meeting will normally take place within 15 working days of your request. You will have the opportunity to submit written evidence on the complaint prior to the meeting of the panel and also to attend, accompanied by a friend/partner if you wish, to put your case. The Headteacher will be given the same opportunities. The panel will write to you with its conclusion within five working days of the meeting.

The decision of the panel is final. If you are still not satisfied, you may wish to put your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education.

Unreasonably persistent complainants and unreasonable complainant behaviour

Unfortunately, in a minority of cases, people pursue their complaints in a way which can either impede the investigation of their complaint or can have significant resource issues for the school. These actions can occur either while the complaint is being investigated, or once the school has concluded the complaint investigation. In such cases, the school will observe the Local Government Ombudsman's Guidance Note on 'unreasonably persistent complainants' and 'unreasonable complainant behaviour.'

Complaint form

Please complete and return to the school office.

Your name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give concise details of your complaint, including dates, names of witnesses etc, to allow the matter to be fully investigated

**What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.
(Who did you speak to/write 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 whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date: