



Callow End CE Primary School

Policy and Procedure for responding to non-curricular complaints

At Callow End we provide a welcoming, safe and supportive environment in which Christian values are central to the ethos of the school and its teaching. We have high aspirations for all our pupils so that they can achieve their fullest potential in life.

The Governing Body adopted this Policy at a meeting held on 14th July 2009

It is based on a Model published by Worcestershire Children's Services. It was amended on 4th July 2012 following further advice from Children's Services and is reviewed by the Headteacher and Full Governing Body annually.

Callow End School recognises that parents and carers are important partners in providing a happy, safe environment in which children may learn. This equal partnership is based on good communications between staff and parents/carers.

Callow End School endeavours to make all parents/carers aware of how they can raise concerns using the procedures that can easily be accessed by them all. This legal requirement is placed upon the Governing Body. These procedures are published on the school website and are available from the School Office.

If the procedure needs to move as far as stage 3, (where a Governing body committee becomes involved), there are tight time limits. A 'pool' of five Governors, is nominated at the first Governors Meeting of each school year. Members of this 'pool' should not include any Governor who sits on a Staff Disciplinary panel. The Chair should not be part of the pool, as s/he may have to act in a decision-making capacity in stage 2. If the third stage of the Procedure is initiated, the Chairman will select three from the 'pool' to serve on a Complaints Panel.

There are other specific complaints procedures available for certain specialist areas (as listed below). If the complaint relates to any of the following, the appropriate procedure should be followed:

complaints about the National Curriculum
 collective worship
 religious education
 pupil admissions
 pupil exclusion
 special educational needs
 child protection
 employee grievances and disciplinary proceedings.

A. General Principles. This procedure contains advice for resolving complaints; flowcharts to indicate time limits; and advice on the conduct of meetings.

Every attempt will be made to adhere to the time limits specified in the flow charts and detailed procedures which follow, but these may in exceptional circumstances be exceeded. In such cases the School/ Governors will advise the reasons and set a new time-scale.

A complaint will usually be considered as 'out-of-time' if it is raised more than three months after the matter is known to the complainant.

Anonymous complaints will not be investigated, except in exceptional circumstances – such as child protection issues.

The aim of this policy is to resolve concerns at the earliest opportunity, and effect reconciliation if there has been friction. If the complaint needs to be formalised, the complainant will be asked to write down the substance of the complaint on a form, an example of which is found in Annex C. This form will also invite a view about what actions might be felt to resolve the problem.

B. Possible resolutions. Many concerns may be resolved by explanations, others by a simple apology. Other complaints may result from a school procedure which could have been handled differently. Such an acknowledgement would be an appropriate resolution, as would assurances that events complained about, (if justified) will not recur. Others may be resolved by an undertaking to review school policies in the light of a complaint.

C. Later Stages. Where concerns are not resolved on an early timescale, the procedure allows for formal consideration by the Headteacher, and later still, by a Governors' Complaints Panel.

D. Unresolved Complaints. Occasionally, a complainant may remain dissatisfied, even though this procedure has been used through all its stages. However, it will not normally be possible to re-open the same issue. In such circumstances, the Chair of Governors will inform the complainant that the procedures have been exhausted and that the matter is closed.

E. School Complaints Stages in Detail

This school will monitor and record parents/carers compliments, concerns and complaints. This will endorse and ensure the continuation of our good practice.

Stage 1 (Informal)

Where any member of staff becomes aware of a voiced concern, they should deal with it themselves if it is appropriate, and they feel comfortable in doing so. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information. It is anticipated that most concerns can be readily resolved at this informal stage. In the case of serious concerns (or where the school deems it more appropriate to do so) it may be necessary to refer these matters directly to the Headteacher.

Where the complaint is specifically about the Headteacher, similarly the parent/carer should discuss this with her at this stage first.

It is not appropriate for a complaint to be directed through a Governor. Any Governor receiving a complaint will give advice that there is an established procedure, and refer the complainant to the appropriate person. (This is because a Governor acting unilaterally could prejudice the involvement of Governors at a later stage)

The concern will be noted (including the outcome) and reported to the Headteacher. Where the subject of the complaint is the Headteacher, she will copy the record to the Chair of Governors.

Where informal attempts by the school have failed to bring about a satisfactory resolution for the parent/carer, the parent/carer is entitled to make a formal complaint be treated more formally to the Headteacher. Where the complaint directly concerns the Headteacher, the parent/carer can access Stage Two by contacting the Chair of Governors.

Stage 2 (Formal) Dealt with by Headteacher

If the complaint concerns the Headteacher, the Chairman of Governors is personally responsible for following the procedures in Stage 2. Otherwise, the Headteacher deals with this Stage.

This stage can be initiated if/ when dissatisfaction with the outcome of stage one is received by the school. At this point, a copy of these Procedures and Policy will be sent to the complainant within 3 school days, together with the formal complaint form (Appendix 1).

The form is structured so that each party has a common understanding about the complaint. As the main purpose of the process is to achieve reconciliation, parents/ carers are also asked what actions might resolve the problem.

After the formal complaint form is returned, it will be acknowledged within 3 school days and the investigation will commence.

This is the first stage of the formal complaints process and as a result, all communications between parties will be recorded.

Before proceeding with a formal investigation, the Headteacher may wish to meet with the individual and discuss his/her concerns and wishes. It may still be appropriate and satisfactory to reach an informal resolution at this point. If not, the Headteacher will decide whether the individual's complaint will be dealt with by this policy or another statutory procedure. In the latter case, the Headteacher will advise the complainant on what will need to be done.

The head may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member, but not the decision on the action to be taken. The investigation should involve the review of any relevant documentation and information. If necessary, witnesses will need to be interviewed and statements taken from those involved. If the complaint centres around a pupil, the pupil will also usually be interviewed.

The outcome of the investigation should be communicated to parents/carers, either at a meeting (followed up in writing) or as a written response. This response should explain the outcome and should be supported by reasons for reaching this decision and what action, if any, will be taken. (If management action is subsequently required against an employee of

the school, the parents/carers will not have access to this information). This response should be provided within 10 school days of acknowledging the complaint.

If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the response given and would like to take the complaint further, they should make this clear in writing to the Headteacher. On receipt, she will send on the complaint form and all associated information to the Chair of Governors. In the case of the Headteacher, if the complainant is still dissatisfied, and wishes to take it further, the Chair should be so advised, and Stage 3 initiated.

Stage 3 (Formal) Dealt with by Governors' Panel

On receipt of the information from the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will verify that the parent/carer has properly exhausted all stage 2 procedures. If not satisfied, the Chair will refer the matter back to the Headteacher. When satisfied, the Chair will contact the Clerk and liaise with him or her to make preparatory arrangements for the Governors' Complaints Panel Meeting.

The Clerk may be the Clerk to the Governing Body, or, in exceptional circumstances, another Governor acting as Clerk, (over and above those selected for the Panel).

The Chair of Governors will identify three governors chosen from an agreed pool of governors to form the Complaints Panel, and the Panel will appoint its own chair.

The Chair of Governors or Clerk to the Governors' Complaints Panel will acknowledge (to the complainant) receipt of the information from the Headteacher within 5 school days.

This letter will inform the parent/carer that the complaint will be heard by the Complaints Panel within 15 school days. In exceptional circumstances, the parent/carer will be notified where this timed period will need to be extended and the reasons for this.

The Clerk of the Panel will convene a meeting of the Complaints Panel, (as identified by the Chair of time and date for the meeting. All relevant documentation from the Headteacher and the parent/carer will be distributed to all parties, (including the Panel members) in advance of the meeting.

The Panel has discretion as to how it will carry out its duties. As part of this, parents /carers will be asked to attend a meeting of the Panel (with accompanying relative or friend if desired).

The Chair of the Panel needs to ensure that the parent/carer is notified of the Panel's decision in writing within 5 school days of the meeting. The response will include action (if any) that needs to be taken and where appropriate, suggest changes to, or review of, the school's systems or procedures to ensure that similar problems do not happen again.

If the parent/carer is dissatisfied with the response they have been given, and would like to take the complaint further, they should be referred to stage four of this procedure.

Equally, if the Headteacher perceives due process has not been followed, s/he may wish to refer the matter to Stage 4.

Stage 4 (Formal) Parents/carers are entitled to complain in writing to The Secretary of State for Education if they believe that their complaint was not handled fairly and in accordance with the school's complaint procedures. The Complaints must be submitted in writing to

The Secretary of State for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW17 3B7

The written complaint must include the following information:-

- details of the original complaint
- the decision and recommendations/ action (if any) of the Governors' Complaints Panel
- reason for believing the original complaint was not dealt with fairly and in accordance with the school's complaints procedures
- the expected desired outcome.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Date compiled	June 2009/July 2012
Date ratified	July 2012
Reviewed by Sarah Wilkinson Re-ratified by FGB	June 2016
Next review date	June 2017

Appendix 1



Callow End CE Primary School

Complaint Form to be supplied with a copy of the adopted procedure

Please complete and return to the Headteacher who will acknowledge receipt .

The Procedure, at Stage 2, explains what action will be taken after receipt.

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.

(Whom did you speak to, when, and what was the response)?

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem?

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

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom?:

Complaint referred to:

Date: