



Combe Down CEVC Primary School

Complaints Procedures Policy

Introduction

The Complaints Procedures Policy has been drawn up in line with Local Authority guidance. It does **not** cover complaints about the following, which are subject to different procedures, details of which are kept in the school office:-

1. **The Curriculum**, this includes:-
 - *The provision of the school's curriculum, including Religious Education and Worship*
 - *National Curriculum and National Curriculum Assessment*
 - *Applications for exemption or temporary withdrawal from the National Curriculum*
 - *Operation of charging policies in relation to the curriculum*
 - *Provision of information to parents about the curriculum*
2. **Admissions** to the school
3. **Failure** to assess a child's special educational needs
4. **The Exclusion** of children

The complaints procedure

All other complaints will normally follow the procedures set out below. All references in the policy to "parents" includes a single parent, carer(s) or guardian(s) as appropriate.

Step 1 - Informal discussions with the Class Teacher

Parents should discuss the matter first with the class teacher, or another member of staff (such as the relevant teaching assistant) if the class teacher advises that this would be more appropriate. All such discussions should take place within two school weeks of the original complaint.

Step 2 - Discussion with the Phase Leader

If parents are not happy with the outcome of the discussions with the Class Teacher or other appropriate member of staff, they make an appointment to discuss the matter with the relevant Phase Leader (Foundation Stage, KS1, Lower KS2 or Upper KS2). Such discussions should take place within three school weeks of the original complaint.

Step 3 - Informal discussions with the Head Teacher

If parents remain dissatisfied with the outcome they should make an appointment to discuss the matter with the Head Teacher. These discussions should take place within four school weeks of the original complaint.

Step 4 - Formal investigation by the Headteacher

Following informal discussions with the Headteacher, parents may, if they remain dissatisfied, formally request the Headteacher to carry out a formal investigation of the complaint. All requests for a formal investigation must be made in writing to the Headteacher and should state the outcome which parents consider would satisfy their complaint.

Upon receipt of such a request, the Headteacher must carry out a full investigation, including interviewing all relevant staff and the parents as necessary. A written response will be sent to the parents within four school weeks of receipt of the request for the formal investigation.

Step 5 - Formal investigation by the Governing Body

If parents are not satisfied with the outcome of the Headteacher's formal investigation they should make a formal written complaint to the Chair of Governors, setting out details of why they are dissatisfied with the investigation and what they wish to be done.

Upon receipt of the complaint the Chair of Governors will nominate a minimum of three governors to investigate the complaint. The investigating governors must carry out the investigation and send a formal written response to the parents no later than six school weeks from receipt of the complaint.

Step 6 - Investigation by the Local Authority

If parents do not consider that the Governing Body has acted properly in carrying out its investigation of the complaint, they should refer the matter to the Local Authority Complaints Officer, Children's Services, Bath & North East Somerset Council, Riverside, Temple Street, Keynsham, Bristol BS31 1DN. The Local Authority may not investigate a complaint merely because the parents are unhappy with the Governors' conclusions. The Local Authority will respond to the complaint within four weeks of its acknowledgement.

Step 7 - Appeal to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families

If the complaint to the Local Authority is not upheld by the Local Authority, the investigating officer will inform the parents of their final right of appeal to the Secretary of State, giving details of the parents' rights and the contact address. Any such appeal may only be made on the ground that the Local Authority has acted unreasonably.

Complaints involving the Headteacher

If the complaint involves the Headteacher, the following procedure should be followed:-

Step 1 - Informal discussions with the Headteacher

Parents should discuss their complaint directly with the Headteacher. All discussions should take place with a view to resolving the matter within two school weeks of the complaint being made.

Step 2 - Formal investigation by the Governing Body

If parents are not happy with the outcome of their discussions with the Headteacher they should make a formal written complaint to the Chair of Governors, sending a copy to the Headteacher. The Chair of Governors will appoint a minimum of three Governors to investigate the complaint. The investigating governors must carry out the investigation and send a formal written response to the parents no later than six school weeks from receipt of the complaint.

If the complaint could involve disciplinary action against the Headteacher, the Governing Body must follow separate procedures laid down by the Local Authority and inform the parents of these upon receipt of the complaint.

Step 3 - Investigation by the Local Authority

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Informing Parents

All parents will be given a copy of the Guide to the Complaints Procedure (Appendix 1) when their child(ren) join(s) the school. The Guide shall set out the steps that parents should follow in the event of a complaint in accordance with the terms of this policy. Parents shall also be given a copy of the flow charts (Appendix 2) which set out the timetable to be followed. Copies of the Guide and flow charts shall be included in the School Brochure Pack and placed on the school website.

Review

This policy shall be reviewed within two years of its approval, or earlier if necessary.

Approved by Governing Body

10th July 2008

Guide to the Complaints Procedure

Introduction

Whilst we hope that it will not be necessary, sometimes things do occur in school which parents, carers or guardians may be concerned about. The Governors have therefore drawn up the following complaints procedure in the belief that it is important that parents and others are clear about the procedures to be followed when making a complaint and with the assurance that any complainant will be dealt with sympathetically and speedily. The procedures are in line with the local authority guidance.

All references in this guide to parents include one parent, carer(s) and guardian(s) as appropriate.

There are separate procedures for the following areas which the Governing Body must follow. In the event that you may wish to complain about one of the areas a copy of the procedures can be obtained from the Chair of Governors.

1. **The Curriculum** under Section 409 of the Education Act 1996. The areas covered by Section 409 include:
 - the provision of the school's curriculum including Religious Education and Worship
 - National Curriculum and National Curriculum Assessment
 - Applications for exemption and temporary withdrawal from the national Curriculum
 - Operation of charging policies in relation to the curriculum. Provision of information to parents about the curriculum
2. **Admission** to a school.
3. **Failure** to assess a child's special needs.
4. **The Exclusion** of children

Our Complaints Procedure for all other complaints

We believe there is a free flow of information between home and school but recognise that there may be times when misunderstandings arise, you are concerned about aspects of your child's progress or you may be unhappy about a particular event or activity which you have heard has taken place. In any event it is important that you do not keep a problem or concern about yourself but approach the school.

Step 1 Informal Discussions with Class teacher

Before making a complaint we would suggest that you are clear about your concern and also that you discuss this with the appropriate member of staff. The first point of contact should always be the appropriate member of staff. If you are not sure who this is, explain your concern to your child's class teacher who will be able to suggest to whom it is best to speak. It is

preferable that you agree a time and place to discuss your concerns in peace and quiet rather than a time when the staff member concerned is possibly surrounded by other children and or/ parents. This could be a telephone conversation at an agreed time. We would expect most problems to be sorted out in this informal way by a frank and open discussion. Please remember that all members of staff wish to help reassure you by listening to you and helping you to meet and discuss matters with the most appropriate person. This stage of the procedure should normally be completed within two school weeks.

Step 2 Discussion with the Phase Leader

Sometimes you may be dissatisfied with the outcome of your discussions and want to take the matter further. If you are in this situation you may wish to make an appointment to contact the Phase Leader who is the member of staff responsible for the Phase in which your child is in school. The Phases are Reception, Key Stage 1 (years 1 & 2), Lower Key Stage 2 (years 3 & 4) and Upper Key Stage 2 (years 5 & 6). Your child's class teacher or the school office will be able to tell you who the appropriate Phase Leader is if you are not sure. This stage of the procedure should normally be completed within three weeks.

Step 3 Informal Discussion with the Headteacher

If you are still dissatisfied with the outcome of your discussions and want to take the matter further on you may wish to make an appointment to contact the Headteacher. Discussions with the Headteacher should normally be completed within four school weeks.

Step 4 Formal Investigation by the Headteacher

If following your informal discussions you wish an investigation to be undertaken by the school you should put your concerns in writing to the Headteacher. You should state the outcome which you feel would satisfy your complaint. The Headteacher will undertake a full investigation which may require a further interview with you or a request for additional information. A written reply will be sent to you following the investigation. This will normally take place within 4 working weeks.

Step 5 Formal Investigation by the Governors

If the problem cannot be resolved by you and the Headteacher you may make a formal complaint to the Governing Body. The complaint should be sent to the Chair of the Governors c/o the school office. The complaint should set out precisely why you are dissatisfied and what you wish to be done. The Chair of Governors will nominate a small group of Governors to investigate your complaint. You may be invited to attend for an interview by the investigating governors in addition to any written submission you make. Following the investigation by the Governors you will be sent a formal response informing you of their decision. The investigation will be completed within a maximum six week school period.

Step 6 Investigation by the Local Authority

Following your formal complaint to the Governing Body, you have the right of appeal to the Local Authority if you consider the Governing body has not acted properly in carrying out its investigation into your complaint. The Local Authority cannot investigate if you are simply unhappy with the conclusion the Governors have reached. Complaints should be sent to the Local Authority's Complaints Officer at Children's Services, Bath & North East Somerset Council, Riverside, Temple Street, Keynsham, Bristol BS31 1DN. You should receive a reply to your complaint within 4 school weeks of it being acknowledged.

Step 7 Appeal to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families

After appealing to the Local Authority, you have the final right of appeal to the Secretary of State that the Local Authority has acted unreasonably. If your complaint to the Local Authority is not upheld the officer investigating it will inform you of your rights and the address for contact.

Complaints involving the Headteacher

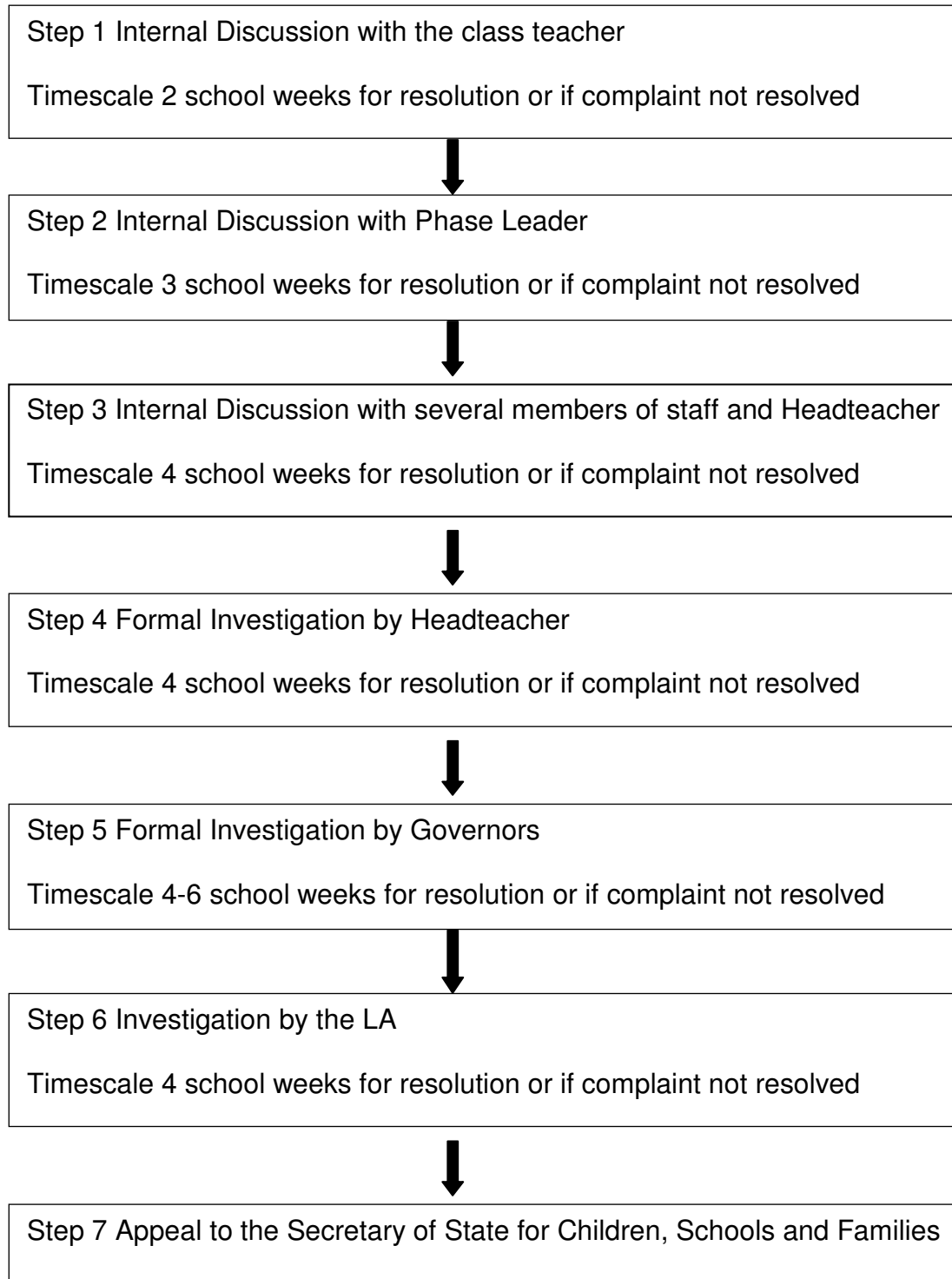
If your complaint involves the Headteacher you should firstly have direct discussions with the Headteacher. Where it is not possible to resolve the complaint through discussions you should set out your complaint in writing and send it to the Chair of Governors with a copy to the Headteacher. The Chair of Governors will appoint a small number of Governors to investigate the complaint and Steps 5 to 7 set out above will be followed, as necessary. If your complaint could involve the disciplinary action against the Headteacher the Governors should follow separate procedures set out by the Local Authority. If this situation arises, the Chair of Governors will inform you of the procedures to be followed.

Timescales

Two flow charts are attached to this Guide which set out the procedure and the time within which each part of the procedure should normally be concluded.

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Flow Chart for Procedure to be used when the Headteacher is not the subject of the complainant





Flow Chart for Procedure to be used when the Headteacher is the subject of the complainant

