

Broadbent Fold Primary School and Nursery



Complaints Policy September 2023

Aim

To provide information about the school complaint procedure and how the school will respond to any concerns or complaints received about school matters.

Broadbent Fold aims to resolve all complaints at the earliest possible stage and is dedicated to continuing to provide the highest quality of education possible throughout the procedure. We will continually strive to ensure that everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Each person will be given fair and equal opportunities to develop their full potential regardless of their gender, transgender, ethnicity, culture and religious background, sexuality, disability or special educational needs and ability. The school will actively promote equality and foster attitudes and commitment to an education for equality.

Broadbent Fold strives to achieve the best for the welfare of the pupils at the school, we appreciate that there may be occasions when you have concerns about your child's education or particular incidents which have occurred at the school. If such a situation arises, please follow the procedure outlined below.

Rationale

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, the Governing Board of all maintained schools and nursery schools in England are required to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school and to any community facilities or services the school provides. The law also requires the complaint procedure to be publicised.

The procedure is presented as a series of stages, in a question and answer format. It is important that you follow through the various stages in the order in which they are given.

Informal Stage

In the first instance any concerns should be discussed with the class teacher as most matters can be resolved informally in this way. If the concern or complaint is about the class teacher, then it should be made direct to the Headteacher. You can contact the Headteacher for an appointment by telephone or in writing. The Headteacher will listen to your concerns, investigate the matter, and then report back to you. Please do bear in mind that the Headteacher will have many other responsibilities to attend to, and you may have to wait a few days before a response. Obviously, if the matter is urgent, it will be attended to as soon as possible.

If the matter is a safeguarding issue (including child protection) concerns must be raised with the Headteacher Mrs Parker in her role as Designated Safeguarding Lead. If Mrs Parker is not available, Mrs. Higham and Mrs Butler are Designated Officers. If neither are available and the matter is urgent, please ask the school office staff to identify the most senior member of staff in school.

NB: Individual school governors should not become involved in individual complaint matters and complaints should not be heard by the whole Governing Body at any stage, as this compromises the required impartiality of governors at stage 3 of the process. Unless the complaint is about the Headteacher.

Complaint Records and Monitoring of Complaints

All documentation relating to complaints will be held by the Headteacher in a way that is secure and confidential. Complainant's personal details will not be passed on when complaints are monitored and reported.

Managing Serial and Persistent Complaints

If a complainant tries to open the same issues after having already been through the school complaints procedure, they will be informed that the procedure has been completed and the matter is closed.

Investigating Complaints

Although we try hard to get things right first time, we recognise that sometimes things will go wrong, when this happens, we will deal with any parental concerns or complaints in a positive way and as quickly as possible. For the majority of matters, we will be able to resolve informally without the need to engage the formal procedure. However, if there is a need for a formal complaint investigation then this will need to be conducted quickly, and in a way that is open and transparent.

The person making the complaint will be kept fully informed about what is happening with their complaint, and reassurance will be given that school are listening to and taking any concerns seriously.

Resolving Complaints

At each stage in the procedure we will want to keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- an apology;
- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- where it is appropriate, a review of school practice/policy in light of the complaint.

The Complaint Process

Stage One: Complaint Heard by Member of Staff

In the first instance any complaint is to be discussed with the class teacher who will make every effort to try to resolve matters. If the complaint is regarding the Headteacher or if the complaint cannot be resolved in this way, then it can be progressed to the next stage of the complaint process.

Stage Two: Complaint Heard by Headteacher

At this stage the complaint should be made to the Headteacher either in person (an appointment may be necessary) or in writing.

The Headteacher will acknowledge your complaint within 48 hours and may have to investigate matters further before responding. The Headteacher may have to speak with those involved and look at any information or records that are available.

You will usually receive a response from the Headteacher within 10 working days. If the Headteacher feels that more time is needed to investigate matters you will be informed of the delay and any new timescale.

Following any investigation, the Headteacher will write to you informing you of the outcome and may wish to meet to discuss the outcome and actions the school are going to take as a result.

The majority of complaints are resolved at this stage.

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, you may request that the governing body reviews the process followed by the school, in handling the complaint. Any such request must be made in writing to the clerk to the governing body, within 10 school days of receiving notice of the outcome and include a statement specifying any perceived failures in following the procedure. The procedure described below will be followed.

Stage Three: Review Process

Any review of the process followed by the school will be conducted by a panel of three to five members of the governing body. A panel will usually be arranged within 10 working days of the request.

The Governing Body Panel must be seen to be independent and impartial, the panel is made up of 3 or 5 governors who have no prior involvement in the complaint. The nominated Chair of the panel will oversee the process, both the complainant and the school will be invited to attend. The panel will receive information regarding the complaint in advance of the meeting.

The Chair of the panel will write to the complainant and Headteacher informing them of the outcome and any recommendations (if required) within 5 working days of the panel meeting.

The Panel can:

- Dismiss the complaint in part or whole
- Uphold the complaint in part or whole
- Make recommendations about what actions should be taken to resolve matters
- Recommend changes to school practise, policy or procedures to ensure similar problems do not recur

NB: It is recognised that in some cases it may not be possible for a resolution to be agreed, and in these cases the most that the Complaint Panel may be able to achieve is to identify the best way forward and any options available.

This is the final stage of the school complaint process, and if complainants feel that the school has not properly investigated and responded to their complaint they can write to the Secretary of State for Education.

Information about school complaints procedures and how to contact the Secretary of State is available on the Department for Education website.

Once a complaint has progressed through the whole school complaint process and complainants have received the Panel response to their complaint, the school will consider the matter to be closed. The school will not investigate complaint matters where these have:

- Already been previously investigated via the school complaint process.

Or:

- Where complaints are considered to be vexatious in nature.
- Where the same complaint is made repeatedly with a refusal to accept the outcome.
- Where there is an unreasonable outcome being sought

Unreasonable/Unacceptable Behaviour:

The school will not normally restrict access to the complaint's procedure. However, it is recognised that in a small number of cases where the behaviour of the complainant is felt to be rude, offensive or abusive or where behaviour is unreasonable, persistent and impacting negatively on the ability of the school to carry out day to day business, then in these cases a management plan may need to be put in place, or in extreme circumstances access to the procedure may be blocked.

The school may seek legal advice where this is felt to be necessary to protect pupils and staff from behaviour that is deemed to be threatening in any way or violent.

SCHOOL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FLOWCHART

