



# Brereton C of E (A) Primary School

## Complaints Policy

At Brereton we pride ourselves on the quality of teaching provided for its pupils. However, if parents have concerns, they can expect any issues to be treated seriously by the school in accordance with this policy document. The aim of this policy is to ensure that those concerns or worries are dealt with quickly and reassuringly in the interests of maintaining positive and mutually supportive home-school relations. The Complaints Policy has been created to deal with any complaint against a member of staff or the school as a whole, relating to aspects of the school or the provision of facilities or services.

### **Dealing with concerns informally**

The school recognises that a vast majority of complaints and concerns can be resolved informally. The complainant must feel able to raise concerns and complaints with members of staff, either in person, by telephone or email/in writing. A preliminary discussion may be undertaken to help clarify if he or she is making a complaint or expressing an opinion and whether they wish to take the matter further. The complainant should be able to bring a friend to any discussion. The member of staff dealing with the concern should make the complainant is clear what action (if any) or monitoring of the situation has been agreed. The process should be completed speedily and concluded in writing/informal discussion with appropriate detail. Where no satisfactory solution has been found, the complainant should be informed that he/she is able to make a formal complaint to the Head teacher, in writing or using Appendix 1.

### **Special Circumstances**

If the complainant suggests that a child has been at risk of significant harm through violence, emotional abuse, sexual interference or neglect, it may be referred without further notice to Children's Social Care and/or to the Social Services authority for the area the child lives. If a Social Services authority decides to investigate a situation, this may postpone or supersede investigation by the Head teacher or Governing Body. Where a matter can be resolved through a legal appeal, it will not be considered as a formal complainant.

### **The complaints process**

#### **Stage One**

Parents should contact the class teacher or if they prefer another member of the school's teaching staff at the earliest possible opportunity, if they have concerns regarding:

- their child's welfare or progress
- the curricular provision for their child

Parents are reminded that approaches should be made in a courteous and respectful manner. Class teachers will note the nature of the concern and advise the complainant of any action/measures to be taken.

The Governing Body should not be involved in this stage of the process, in case they are needed to sit on a panel at a later stage of the procedure. Unless, where the complaint concerns the Head teacher, the complaint should be referred to the chair of the Governing Body.

This process should be completed within 10 school days or as soon as practicable.

If a resolution cannot be sought at this stage, or the complainant remains dissatisfied at the outcome, then the complainant may wish to escalate to the next stage of the Policy.

#### **Stage Two**

Parents should contact the Head teacher when:

- they are dissatisfied with the outcome of stage 1 of the complaints procedure
- discussions with the class teacher have not resolved the issue
- they feel that a member of staff has behaved in an unacceptable manner

The Head teacher will fully investigate and document the concerns raised. Parents will then be contacted, as soon as possible, to be informed of the findings and/or resolutions/measures put in place. This stage should be completed within 15 school days or as soon as practicable.

If the parent/carer is not satisfied with the outcome at this stage then the complainant can be moved to the next level (stage 3) for an independent review by the Governing Body Panel.

#### **Stage Three**

Complaints at this stage should be made in writing to the Chair of Governors or using Appendix 1 no later than 10 school days following receipt of a stage 2 outcome. The chair of Governors/clerk will convene a Complaints Appeals Panel (CAP).

Written acknowledgement of the complaint will be made within 3 school days informing the complainant the complaint will be heard within 20 school days.

A CAP will be arranged with 3 members of the Governing Body and the complainant. 5 days notice will be given to all attending. The chair of the CAP should write to the complainant (copy to Head teacher) to explain how the review will



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be conducted. At the meeting everyone's case will be put across and discussed. Questions can be asked by Head teacher and complainant and the CAP has an opportunity to question and challenge. Any party can bring a witness and final statements are provided by complainant and head teacher. The complainant will be informed of the decision in writing within ten school days.

### **The Complaints Appeal Panel**

The panel can:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur

The aim of the hearing, which will be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant.

The panel will acknowledge that parents often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child. The panel chair will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming and informal as possible. A checklist for a panel hearing is found in Appendix 2

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The clerk is the contact point for the complainant and will:

- set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- collate any written material and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing
- meet and welcome the parties as they arrive at the hearing
- record the proceedings
- notify all parties of the panel's decision

The Chair of the Governing Body will:

- check that the correct procedure has been followed
- notify the clerk to arrange the panel

The Chair of the Panel has a key role, ensuring that:

- the remit of the panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption
- the issues are addressed
- key findings of fact are made
- parents and others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease
- the hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy
- the panel is open minded and acting independently
- no member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions
- written material is seen by all parties. If a new issue arises it would be useful to give all parties the opportunity to consider and comment on it.

### **Complaints from Members of the Public**

Occasionally the school receives complaints regarding children's behaviour on the way to and from school. In such cases the Headteacher will try to establish the names of the children involved and ask the class teacher to investigate. The matter will then be dealt with in accordance with our Behaviour Policy. Parents will be contacted and informed if necessary.

*This policy was approved by the Governing Body, after due consultation with staff at its meeting on 5th March 2015.*

*This policy will be reviewed in March 2017*



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APPENDIX 1

## Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors 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)?



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*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:*



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### *Checklist for a Panel Hearing*

- *The panel hearing is as informal as possible.*
- *Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence*
- *After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint and be followed by their witnesses*
- *The Head teacher may question both the complainant and witnesses.*
- *The Head teacher is then invited to explain the schools actions and be followed by school witnesses*
- *The complainant may question the Head teacher and witnesses*
- *The panel may ask questions at any point*
- *The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint*
- *The Head teacher is then invited to sum up the schools actions and response to the complaint*
- *Both parties leave together whilst the panel decides on the issues*
- *The chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within 10 school days.*