BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

Buckingham Primary School

Complaints Procedure and Policy

Adopted by Governors Full GB: **April 2023**

Date of next review: **April 2027**

Review date: March 2025 Stage 1 Initial Concerns: Removal of 'Assistant Head' and insertion of Deputy Head.

Contents

INTRODUCTION **1**

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES **1**

AREAS NOT COVERED BY THIS PROCEDURE **1**

STAGE 1 – INITIAL CONCERNS **2**

STAGE 2 – FORMAL PROCEDURE **2**

STAGE 3 ..... **3**

MONITORING AND REVIEW **4**

FLOWCHART SUMMARY **5**

APPENDIX ONE - COMPLAINT FORM **7**

APPENDIX TWO - AT THE PANEL HEARING **9**

Introduction

Our governing body has adopted this procedure to deal with concerns or complaints from members of the school community or general public.

Aims and Objectives

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint and to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding.

Careful consideration will be given to all concerns and complaints and we will deal with them as swiftly as possible. We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed.

In all cases we will put the interests of the child above all other issues.

Our procedure is underpinned by the following **framework of principles**: -

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
- 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.

Areas not covered by this procedure

This procedure does not apply to issues concerning admissions, exclusion appeals, and statutory assessments of special educational needs or grievances by school staff. These are the subject of separate complaints procedures; more information can be obtained from the school.

In addition, Ofsted has the power to investigate certain (qualifying) complaints about maintained schools, including those from parents. A qualifying complaint is one that affects the whole school, not an individual. More information can be obtained from the school or Ofsted.

All other complaints are handled by the school according to the arrangements set out below.

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 or Deputy Head*** at the earliest opportunity.

It is **not** appropriate to publicise any concerns you may have on social networking sites. Please speak, or write, to someone at the school at your earliest convenience, rather than using any other means.

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.

Staff will keep a record of the complaint on CPOMs, who it was made by, who was spoken to, the recommended action and outcomes.

.

Most concerns can be resolved at this level, however, if after speaking to ***your child's class teacher and Deputy Head*** 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 can let us know in person, by telephone or in writing.

There is a complaint form (Appendix 1) attached to this procedure which can be helpful to complete. The aim of the form is to give us as clear an understanding as possible of your complaint and includes a section on what actions you feel would resolve the problem.

If you would like support in completing the form from someone unconnected with the complaint, please let us know and we would be happy to organise this for you.

If you are making your complaint in writing, it should be returned to the headteacher. However, if the complaint is about the headteacher or a governor, it should be returned to the chair of the governing body at the school address, marking the envelope 'FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION'. If your complaint is about the chair of the governing body, your completed form should be returned to the clerk of the governing body.

You will receive an acknowledgement of the receipt of your complaint within ***5 school days***.

Investigation

An investigation will be carried out into the complaint and the way it has been handled by the school. This will include a review of any relevant documentation and information and seeking the views of relevant people, where necessary. The person undertaking the investigation will normally write to you with the outcome of this process (this will usually include advising you of the recommended way forward and how the implementation is to be followed up) within ***15 school days*** of receiving the complaint.

If, at any time, it becomes apparent that the complaint is a disciplinary or capability issue, 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, however, you are not entitled to know which procedure, or the final outcome, because of the right to confidentiality of the member of staff involved.

Following the outcome of the investigation, if you feel your concern has not been resolved, you may choose to move to Stage 3 of the procedure. You must let the school know if you wish to do this within ***15 school days*** of the completion of Stage 2.

Stage 3

At this stage the complaint will be considered by a panel, who will meet to consider the complaint and make a final decision about it on behalf of the governing body.

Panel members will have no detailed prior knowledge of the complaint, or connection with the complainant. The meeting will normally take place within ***15 school days*** of your request.

You will have the opportunity to submit 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. Appendix 2 outlines the process that will be followed at a panel hearing.

Outcome of the Panel Hearing

The panel will write to you with its conclusion within ***5 school days*** of the meeting, and its decision is final.

If you are still not satisfied, you may wish to put your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education, who can review whether the school has acted reasonably and followed the correct procedures.

The Schools Complaint Unit (SCU) considers complaints relating to LA maintained schools in England on behalf of the Secretary of State and can be contacted via: -

- National Helpline 0370 000 2288
- online at: www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

- by writing to the Department for Education, School Complaints Unit, 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD

Serial or Persistent Complaints

Unfortunately, in a small 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.

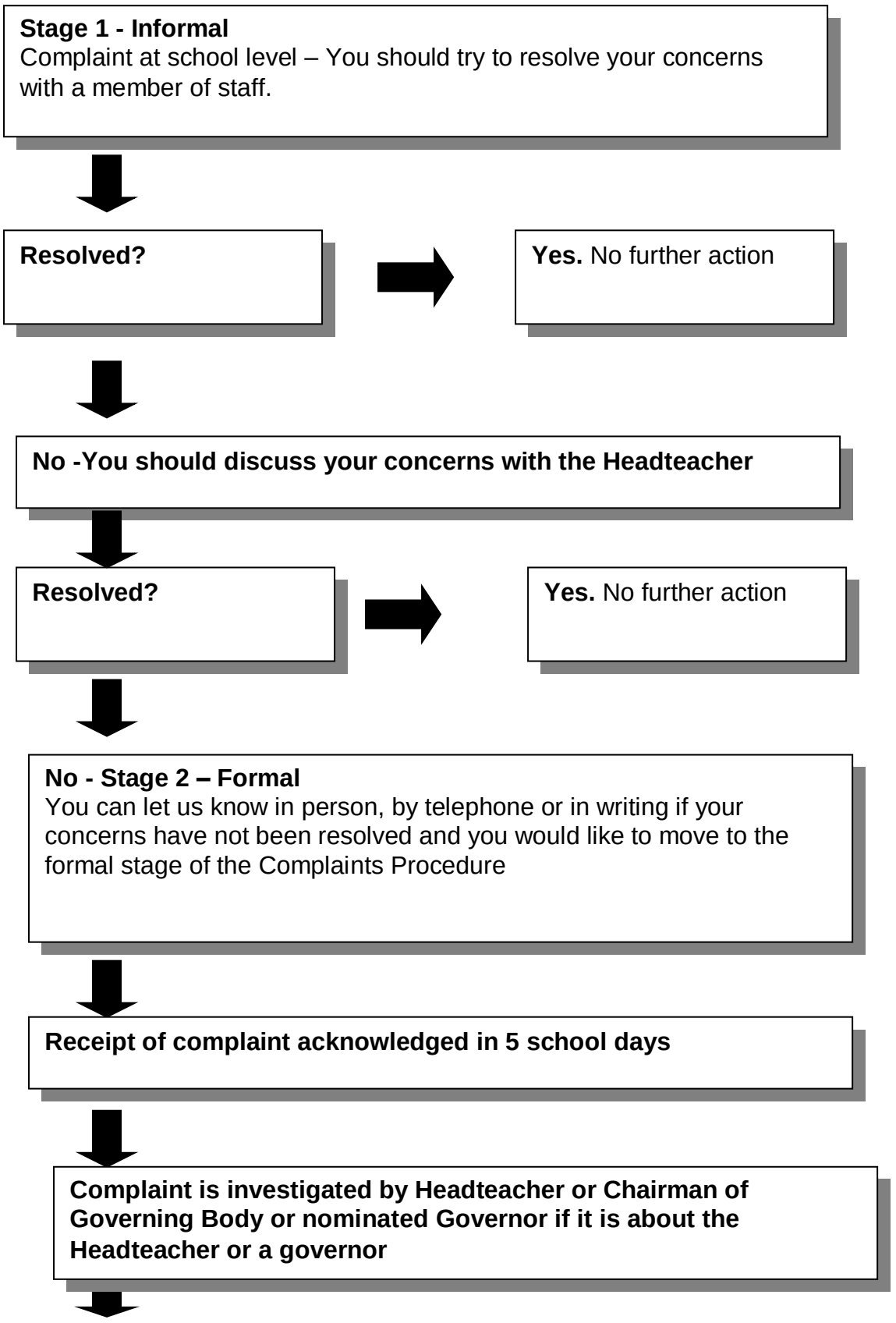
In such cases, the school will follow advice from the Department for Education and the Local Government Ombudsman for unreasonable complainants.

Monitoring and Review

The governing body monitors the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The headteacher logs all formal complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis and consider the need for any changes to the procedure.

Flowchart Summary*

* Please refer to the procedure for more detailed information.



You will be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 15 school days of receiving the complaint.

Resolved?

Yes. No further action

No - If you wish to take your complaint to Stage 3 of the procedure you will be asked to confirm this within 15 school days of the completion of Stage 2.

Governor Complaints Panel meets to consider your complaint with 15 school days. If you wish to submit evidence to the panel you will be invited to do so in advance of the meeting. You will also be invited to attend the panel meeting to explain the nature of your complaint

Panel will make a final decision on behalf of the Governing Body and writes to you within 5 school days

Resolved?

Yes. No further action

No - You can write to the Secretary of State of Education and Skills if you feel the school has acted unreasonably or not followed the correct procedures.

Appendix One - Complaint form

Please complete and return to Mrs Brewer 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 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:

Appendix Two - At the panel hearing

- After introductions, the complainant will be invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses (if any).

- The headteacher/Chair of Governors may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.

- The headteacher/Chair of Governors is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses (if any).

- The complainant may question both the headteacher/Chair of Governors and the witnesses after each has spoken.

- The panel may ask questions at any point.

- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.

- The headteacher/Chair of Governors is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.

- The Chair of the panel explains that both parties will hear from the panel within five school days.

- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.

- The clerk remains to support the panel.