

# Buckden CofE PRIMARYACADEMY

## COMPLAINTS POLICY



### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Buckden C of E Primary Academy strives to provide excellent education for all our children. The whole team at School work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, Buckden Primary is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents, carers or others. The following policy sets out the procedures that the School follows in such cases.
- 1.2 If any parents are unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or have any concerns relating to the School, we encourage them to talk to the child's Class Teacher immediately. We stress that there is a clear difference between a concern and a complaint. We take concerns seriously and work professionally to resolve them effectively.
- 1.3 Parents should be assured that making a complaint will not adversely affect their child.
- 1.4 This policy is available from the School Office and the website.

### 2. Aims

- 2.1 Buckden Primary Academy aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints, and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding. Our complaints procedure is accessible and simple to use and understand. It aims to be non-adversarial. In all cases we put the interests of the child above all else. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed and then resolved within established time limits.

### 3. The complaints process

<b>Stage 1 Informal</b>  Expression of concern made to the School	If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's Class Teacher. In our experience most matters of concern may be resolved positively in this way. All Teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at School, and is making good progress; they naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before it seriously affects the child's progress. Most issues can be resolved on the spot with apologies where necessary. Members of the School Management
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Team may be involved at this stage.



<p><b>Stage 2</b> <b>Formal complaint to Head Teacher</b></p> <p>Expression of concern made to the School in writing</p>	<p>The Head Teacher considers any such complaint very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved by this stage. The outcome of the Head Teacher's investigation will be communicated to you <b>within 15 school days</b>.</p>
<p><b>Stage 3</b> <b>Chair of Governors</b></p> <p>Complaints rarely reach this formal level but, should you need to, you should make a formal complaint to the Chair of Governors.</p>	<p>Complaints at this stage should be written and received within <b>10 school days</b> of the Head Teacher's decision. Your letter should be addressed to the Chair of Governors (marked "private and confidential") and should set out why you remain unhappy and what you wish to see happen. The Chair of Governors (who will not have previously been involved in the complaint) will consider the case. If a meeting with you and others involved is considered necessary you should be given adequate notice to prepare. The Chair of Governors will make the decision in private and write to you within <b>7 school days</b>.</p>
<p><b>Stage 4</b> <b>Governors' Appeal panel</b></p> <p>You may take your complaint to the Governors' Appeal panel <b>within 6 months</b> of the Chair of Governor's response</p>	<p>If the complaint is not resolved, and all previous stages have been explored, a parent may make representation to the Governors' Appeal panel by sending a letter to the Clerk to the Governing Body c/o the School address, marked "private and confidential". The panel will consist of at least three people who are not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and at least one panel member will be independent of the management and running of the School. The panel will meet to consider the complaint. The complainant will be invited to attend if they would like to and they may also be accompanied if they so wish. The complainant will be provided with adequate notice of the meeting. A decision concerning the complaint will be provided in writing <b>within 15 school days</b> where possible.</p>
<p><b>Stage 5</b> <b>Further representation</b></p> <p>If you still remain dissatisfied you may make further representations</p>	<p>Complaining to the Education Funding Agency (EFA)</p> <p>If, after following all stages of this complaints procedure, you do not think that your complaint has been resolved, you can send your complaint to the Education Funding Agency (EFA).</p> <p>The Education Funding Agency (EFA) will normally only consider a complaint about an Academy after the Academy's own complaints procedure has been exhausted.</p>

The EFA cannot review or overturn decisions about complaints made in respect of Academies. The EFA can only investigate whether the Academy considered the complaint appropriately.

If the EFA finds that an Academy did not consider a complaint appropriately it can ask the Academy to re-consider the complaint or amend its complaints procedure.

Complaints should be sent by post to:

Academies Central Unit (Academy Complaints)  
Education Funding Agency  
Earlson Park  
53-55 Butts Road  
Coventry  
CV1 3BH

Or by email to:

[academy.questions@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:academy.questions@education.gsi.gov.uk)

3.1 Should any parents have a complaint about the Head Teacher, they should first make an informal approach to the Head teacher and/or the Chair of Governors (as at stage 3 above), who is obliged to investigate it. The Chair will do all s/he can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if parents are unhappy with the outcome, they can make a formal complaint, as outlined above.

3.2 In the case of a vexatious complaint where, despite all stages of this policy being followed the complainant remains dissatisfied, they are not entitled to reopen the same issue. In such cases, the Chair of Governors is able to inform them in writing that the process has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

3.3 An anonymous complaint will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances. These would include serious concerns such as child protection issues or bullying allegations, where the school might consider it appropriate to contact outside agencies.

#### 4. Investigating complaints

4.1 It is suggested that at each stage the person investigating the complaint makes sure that they:

- Establish what has happened so far and who has been involved
- Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved
- Meet with the complainant or contact them if further information is required
- Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right
- Conduct any interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- Complete all necessary notes

## 5. Resolving complaints

5.1 At each stage in the complaint, the school and complainant 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 that was the basis of the complaint will not recur
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure it does not happen again. Details of any disciplinary procedures that have taken place as a result of the complaint are not released
- An undertaking to review school policy or procedure in light of the complaint
- An explanation that there is insufficient evidence and thus the complaint cannot be upheld
- An explanation that, following investigation, the concern is not substantiated by the evidence

5.2 An admission that the school could have handled things better is not the same as an admission of negligence.

## 6. Monitoring and review

6.1 The Governors monitor the complaints procedure in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Head Teacher logs all stage 2 complaints received by the school and records how they have been resolved. These logs are presented to the Chair of the Governing Body as part of the Head Teacher's report.

6.2 The Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

6.3 This policy is reviewed as necessary at meetings of the HR and Performance Review committee.

Other policies to refer to:

- Persistent Complaints and Harassment Policy