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Broadfield Complaints Procedure

Occasionally, parents may wish to raise concerns, seek reassurances or make a particular complaint about a school matter.

Certain aspects of school life are covered separately under specific statutory requirements including for example school admissions, and parents should ask the Head Teacher or the Local Authority for information about any of these specific procedures.

Matters relating to safeguarding concerns and investigations, and staff grievance or disciplinary investigations lie outside of the remit of this complaints procedure.

Access to the complaints procedure is not limited to parents of pupils at the school, and can be used to address matters raised by other complainants where this is appropriate.

The complaints procedure will only deal with historic matters, (usually those over 6 months old); at the discretion of the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors where they feel that it is reasonable and practical to do so.

This Complaints Procedure is based on and follows the principles laid down within the General Complaints Guidance issued by the Department for Education, and the advice provided to school by the Local Authority.

Although information in respect of complaints received by the school will for monitoring purposes be provided to the members of the School Governing Body, individual governors must not become involved in the progression or investigation of individual complaints. Should a governor be approached direct regarding any concern or complaint the governor should signpost and assist where appropriate the complainant to access the school complaint process.

Broadfield Primary School believes in a partnership between home and school, and we would hope that parents will feel able to discuss any concerns or issues as soon as they arise with their child's class teacher, or the Head Teacher. This enables matters to be addressed and resolved as quickly as possible, and most concerns are resolved informally in this way.

to informally resolve matters have not been successful, and the person raising the concern is not satisfied with the outcome and wishes to progress a formal complaint.

Any complaints received should be considered impartially and attempts made to resolve things as quickly as possible. Realistic time scales should be agreed during the process, and all parties should be kept updated.

Confidentiality issues will be considered at every stage of the process, and where this is required appropriate consent will be sought before any complaint is progressed, or any information is shared.

Advice may be sought from the Local Authority where this is felt to be helpful in aiding the resolution of any complaint. It should be noted however that the Local Authority cannot investigate complaints about school matters, and can only provide advice and support to ensure a proper and fair process.

The Head Teacher has responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school and has, therefore, the responsibility for the implementation of the complaints procedure, including the decision about their own involvement at various stages.

The School Complaint Process:

Stage 1 (Informal resolution)

Parents should discuss their concern or complaint informally with the class teacher or other appropriate member of staff. If the complaint relates to the class teacher the parent should contact the Head or Deputy Head Teacher.

- 1.1 Parents will have opportunity to discuss their concerns with the appropriate member of staff usually the class teacher, who will reassure the parent that the school wants to hear about their concerns. The member of staff will address the concerns ask what outcome is wanted, and try to work with the parent to achieve a resolution.
- 1.2 The member of staff dealing with the concern should make sure that the parent is clear what action (if any) or monitoring of the situation has been agreed, putting this in writing if this seems to be the best way of making things clear.
- 1.3 If the member of staff initially approached feels unable to deal with the concern, s/he should refer it immediately to the Deputy Head or Head Teacher.

- 1.4 If matters remain unresolved the parent can ask that their complaint be progressed to the next stage of the process.

Stage 2 (Formal Complaint Investigation)

- 2.1 The Head Teacher will give an opportunity for the parent or complainant to meet with them to discuss the complaint and supplement any information previously provided. The parent or complainant may be supported at this meeting by a friend or relative, and the parent will be able to elaborate on what they feel would resolve the situation.
- 2.2 The Head Teacher will then where appropriate conduct an internal investigation. Once all the relevant facts have been established, the Head Teacher may wish to meet with the parent or complainant to discuss the outcome of any investigation, along with any possible resolution and will also provide a formal written response to the complaint.
- 2.3 If a parent or complainant remains dissatisfied with the final response received from the Head Teacher, then they are able to progress the complaint to the next stage.

Stage 3 (Chair of Governors)

- 3.1 Parents will need to write to the Chair of Governors within 5 working days of receiving the final response from the Head Teacher to request that the Chair looks into their complaint. They should provide the Chair of Governors with the details of the complaint, what further outcome is being sought and provide a copy of the Head Teachers final response.
- 3.2 On receipt of the complaint the Chair of Governors will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and discuss the matter with the parent or complainant within 5 working days. The Chair may where appropriate further investigate matters, or may want to meet with the parent and the Head Teacher to try to find a resolution or acceptable way forward.
- 3.3 The Chair of Governors will provide a written response which will then conclude this stage of the process.
- 3.4 If a satisfactory resolution or way forward has not been agreed the parent or complainant may ask to progress the complaint to the final stage of the school complaint process, and can do this by writing to

response, to ask that a Governing Body Complaint Appeal Panel be arranged to hear the complaint.

Stage 4 (Governing Body Complaint Appeal Panel)

- 4.1 On receipt of a request, the Chair of Governors will acknowledge the progression request and will arrange a date (as soon as possible within 20 working days of receipt of the request) for a Governing Body Complaint Appeal Panel to be held.
- 4.2 The panel will be made up of 3 governors nominated by the Chair of Governors who have had no prior involvement in the complaint investigation, one of whom will act as the Panel Chair.
- 4.3 Both school and the complainant will need to submit any information and evidence for the panel in advance of the panel meeting, and all parties will receive a panel information pack no less than 3 days prior to the panel meeting.
- 4.4 The Chair will write to inform the parent or complainant, the Head Teacher and at the discretion of the Panel Chair any other relevant attendees, of the date, time and place of the panel. The letter will also inform the parent of their right to be accompanied at the panel for support by a relative, friend or none legal advocate.
- 4.5 The involvement of school staff other than the Head is at the discretion of the Head Teacher and the Panel Chair.
- 4.6 It is the responsibility of the Panel Chair to ensure that the Panel Meeting is properly clerked and minuted.
- 4.7 The aim of the Panel Meeting will be to try to resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the parent and the school. It must be recognised, however, that sometimes it may only be possible to establish facts and make recommendations, which will satisfy the parent or complainant that their complaint has been taken seriously.
- 4.8 **The Chair of the Panel should ensure:**
 - That the remit of the panel is explained, and that all parties are put at ease, and are allowed to put their case without undue interruption.
 - That the Panel is conducted in an informal manner and with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy.

- That the Panel is open minded and independent, with each of the parties given equal consideration.
- If either party wishes to introduce previously undisclosed information, this will be accepted at the discretion of the Panel Chair, and it is in the interests of natural justice to adjourn the meeting so that all parties have time to consider and respond to the new information.
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4.9 **The Panel Meeting should allow:**

- The parent or complainant to explain their complaint and what if any outcome they are seeking to provide for a resolution.
- The panel members may wish to ask for further clarification, or speak with any other attendee.
- The Head Teacher or school representative will have opportunity to address what has been said and to explain the school position.
- The panel members may wish to ask for further clarification, or speak with any other attendee.
- There may be subject to the Chairs discretion, an opportunity for further constructive discussion or questions by all parties. This will be for the purpose of bringing about a resolution to the complaint, or to aid in identifying a way forward where no resolution can be agreed.
- Both parties will be offered a final opportunity to comment prior to the conclusion of the Panel meeting.

4.10 Both parties will leave the meeting and the Panel members will consider and formulate the Panel's response to the complaint.

4.11 A written response outlining the decision of the Panel and any recommendations made will be sent to the parent and the Head Teacher usually within 5 working days of the Panel Meeting. The response will also notify the parent or complainant of their right to contact the Secretary of State or the Local Government Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied with the way the school has handled their complaint.

NB: The Governing Body Complaint Appeal Panel constitutes the last school based stage in the complaint process, and following receipt by all parties of

complaint matter to be closed.

The school will ensure that a record is kept of all correspondence, information and any meeting minutes relating to the complaint. The complaint record will be kept separately from the pupil's records.

Unacceptable Behavior and Vexatious Complaints

This complaint procedure aims to ensure that any complaints received are dealt with in an open, fair and reasonable way as quickly as possible. Most of the complaints received will be resolved in this way.

We do recognise however that there may be occasions when despite all the stages of the complaint procedure having been completed a parent or Complainant may remain dissatisfied with the outcome and may wish to Continue to progress the matter with the school.

If a parent or complainant tries to reopen the same complaint issue, the School will write to inform them that the procedure has been exhausted, And that the matter is now considered by the school to be closed. Following This notification the school will be under no obligation to respond further to Any related contact or correspondence that is received.

A complaint will be considered by Broadfield Primary school to be vexatious when it is repeatedly pursued, pursued in an unreasonable manner or when there is an unrealistic or unreasonable outcome sought.

Broadfield Primary School will not tolerate any behavior that is considered disrespectful, threatening or abusive, and the school will take any action it feels is necessary to manage, or deal with any such behaviors. This may include restricting a person's contact with the school and seeking legal advice.

