



Beaufort Primary School

Complaints Policy

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BEAUFORT PRIMARY SCHOOL COMPLAINTS POLICY

At Beaufort Primary School, we undertake to provide a friendly and safe environment in which pupils will be helped to achieve their potential, both academically and socially. We recognise that sometimes things can go wrong and parents, carers and members of the public may need to make a complaint or raise concerns they have with the school.

General Principles

- This procedure is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school, or the service that it provides.
- An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- To enable a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, any matter raised more than 3 months after the event, being complained of, will not be considered.

Raising a concern or complaint

INFORMAL STAGE

Most concerns can be resolved informally and quickly by discussion with the member of staff concerned, a member of the Senior Leadership Team or the Headteacher.

Concerns may be communicated by letter, by telephone or in person by appointment requested via the school office. Members of the public should address their concerns to the Headteacher.

Any complaint/issue that is put in writing should be written clearly outlining all the issues and what it is hoped that the preferred outcome should be. All complaints will be acknowledged in writing within 5 school days.

Parent/carers should make an appointment to discuss their concerns with the member of staff who knows about the issue or incident. If the complaint relates to a pupil, ideally the member of staff concerned should be directly involved with the pupil, for example, class teacher. If the matter is related to a safeguarding issue the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher must be consulted.

In the case of serious concerns it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Headteacher (or to the Chair of Governors if the complaint is about the Headteacher).

If you are uncertain about who to contact, please seek advice from the school office.



FORMAL STAGE

If your concern or complaint is not resolved at the informal stage you may choose to put the complaint in writing and pass it to the Headteacher, who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately. If your complaint is about the Headteacher, your complaint should be addressed to the Chair of Governors. This can be handed in at the school office.

You should include details which might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents. It is very important that you include a clear statement of the actions that you would like the school to take to resolve your concern.

The Headteacher may choose to refer your complaint to the Chair of Governors.

The Headteacher/Chair of Governors may invite you to a meeting at a mutually convenient time to clarify your concerns and to explore the possibility of an informal resolution. If not, arrangements will be made for the matter to be fully investigated, using the appropriate procedure. You will be informed, in writing, usually within 5 school days of the school receiving your complaint of how the school intends to proceed and the anticipated timescale.

Any investigation will begin as soon as possible and when it has been concluded, you will be informed in writing of its conclusion.

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 Governors within 10 days of receiving notice of the outcome, and including a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure.

The review process will be conducted by a panel of 3 Governors who have not had any previous involvement with your complaint. This will usually take place within 10 school days of receipt of your request.

You will be able to attend a meeting of the Review Committee to put forward your case. The Headteacher and/or Chair of Governors will also attend to explain what they have done to investigate and resolve your concerns.

The Committee will write to you after listening to all parties and coming to their conclusion.

In the very rare case that you remain dissatisfied you may pursue your complaint with the Secretary of State for Education.

All complaints will be recorded formally by the school.

UNREASONABLE COMPLAINANTS

Beaufort Primary School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. Sometimes, however, parents/carers pursuing complaints or other issues treat staff and others in a way that is unacceptable or behave in an unacceptable manner. Whilst we



Complaints Policy

recognise that some complaints may relate to serious and distressing incidents, we will not accept threatening, inappropriate or abusive behaviour.

An unreasonable complainant may be anyone who engages in unreasonable behaviour when making a complaint. This includes parents/carers who pursue complaints in an unreasonable manner and those who do not act in an appropriate manner towards staff.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:-

- does not make their complaint or resolution clear, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which do not follow the complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:-

- maliciously;
- aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowing it to be false;
- using falsified information;



Complaints Policy

- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns about unreasonable and inappropriate behaviour with the complainant informally.

If the behaviour continues the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Beaufort Primary School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. DfE guidelines will be followed if any behaviour would result in a parent/carer being barred from the school premises.

This policy has been reviewed in line with Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures (DfE) January 2016.