

Jacobstow Community Primary School and Preschool

Complaints Policy

This policy is in line with Cornwall County Council recommended complaints procedures.

Complaints Officer - Sue Russell Head teacher c/o Jacobstow Community Primary School, Jacobstow, Bude, Cornwall, EX23 0BR

Aims

To ensure that any complaint made against the school or any member of the school community with respect to the position they hold within the school is dealt with in a fair, unbiased and appropriate manner and the issues raised are resolved to the satisfaction of all involved.

Introduction

The school welcomes feedback on the services it provides. Should anyone be unhappy with any aspect of the school it is important that the school learns about it.

As schools have legal responsibilities to deal with many general complaints, this policy outlines how such complaints will be dealt with by the school. The Local Authority can only get involved with general complaints after all the school stages have been tried.

Children as well as parents have legitimate rights to express concerns or to make complaints, but maturity and understanding will vary from child to child. Therefore, the school will consider a complaint on its merits. Please note that the person does not have to be a parent or a pupil of the school to make a complaint. Anonymous complaints can not be dealt with through the school's complaints procedure.

Governors have an important role within the procedure but should not be involved as individuals in investigating complaints, they can only be addressed through the school's complaints procedures and addressed to the school's complaints officer, named above.

It should be noted that should a complaint, formal or informal be made which reveals issues for which another procedure exists, i.e. child protection, then it will be dealt with through those procedures rather than as a complaint.

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

1.1 Many enquires and concerns can be dealt with satisfactorily by the class teacher or the head teacher. The school values such informal meetings and discussions.

1.1 There is no suggested time scale for resolution at this stage given the importance of dialogue through informal discussion although it is expected that most issues would be resolved within 10 days. Should this informal stage require more time then the school will inform the complainant of this in writing as soon as this is known.

1.2 Please note that in writing means a letter or an email although formal complaints should be made by completing a complaints form. The final report of any formal investigation will also be sent in paper form.

1.3 Should face to face discussions appear unlikely to resolve matters, either party may initiate a move to Stage 2 of the procedure. A copy of the school's complaints policy will be forwarded to the complainant at this stage if it has not been provided as part of Stage 1.

Stage 2 - Formal Written Complaints

2.1 The complainant should set out the precise nature of the complaint on the form provided and return it to the complaints officer. The complainant should keep a copy of this form and all other relevant correspondence.

2.2 Should a complaint be about a general matter, the complaints officer may be able to respond immediately. If the complaint relates to specific actions or events there is likely to be a need for further investigation in order to clarify the facts. The complaints officer, or their nominated officer will carry out the investigation.

2.3 If the complaints officer considers that the complaint should be dealt with at Stage 3, it will be sent to the chair of governors and the complainant informed of this decision in writing, immediately.

2.4 Should the complaints officer, headteacher or a governor be the subject of the complaint it will be dealt with under Stage 3. In this case the complainant should send the form directly to the chair of governors via the school in an envelop marked private and confidential.

2.5 Should the chair of governors be the subject of the complaint the form should be send directly to the vice chair of governors via the school in an envelop marked private and confidential.

2.6 All formal complaints will be acknowledged within 5 school days of receipt.

2.6 Investigations at this stage should be completed within 20 days, however should more time be required the complainant will be informed by letter.

2.7 The school will aim to send a formal written report 5 days after the investigations have finished giving 5 school weeks for the process to be completed.

2.8 Following Stage 2 investigations the complaints officer will decided upon 1 of 2 outcomes:

- Recommend that remedial action to resolve the original complaint be taken
- Confirm that all internal investigations have been exhausted and uphold the original informal response that was given (if Stage 1 was completed)

2.9 The decision is confidential between the complainant and the governing body

2.10 The complainant may take the complaint further if they are unhappy with the outcomes at Stage 2 by giving notice of their intention within 10 days of receipt of the formal report. This notice must be made in writing to the chair of the governing body via the school in an envelop marked private and confidential.

Stage 3 The Governing Body

3.1 Should the complaints officer be unable to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant or where the complaint is against the complaints officer, the head teacher or a governor the complainant should send the form directly to the chair of governors via the school in an envelop marked private and confidential.

3.2 Should the chair of governors be the subject of the complaint, the form should be send directly to the vice chair of governors via the school in an envelop marked private and confidential.

3.3 A panel of 3 governors should be convened to investigate the complaint.

3.4 All formal complaints will be acknowledged within 5 school days of receipt.

3.5 Investigations at this stage should be completed within 20 days, however should more time be required the complainant will be informed by letter.

3.6 The school will aim to send a formal written report 5 days after the investigations have finished giving 5 school weeks for the process to be completed.

3.7 Following Stage 3 investigations the complaints officer will decide upon 1 of 2 outcomes:

- Recommend that remedial action to resolve the original complaint be taken
- Confirm that all internal investigations have been exhausted and uphold the original response

3.8 The decision is confidential between the complainant and the governing body.

3.9 Complainants who have exhausted all school based stages and consider that the school has not investigated the complaint in a fair and reasonable manner, may request in writing, that the Local Authority now handle the complaint.

It should be noted that this review will not investigate the original complaint.

Stage 4 – Referral to the Local Authority

4.1 The LA monitor those school complaints that they receive. Whilst they do not investigate individual complaints, notes are kept and senior managers informed. As part of the school's complaints policy they review how the school handled the complaint after all the above stages have been completed but only if the complainant requests this in writing.

4.2 The LA will acknowledge this request within 5 school days and will normally complete the review within 20 school days.

Addresses for correspondence:

Director Children, Young People and Families
New County Hall
Truro
Cornwall
TR1 3AY

Stage 5 – Appeals to the Secretary of State or the Ombudsman

5.1 Finally complainants have the right of appeal to the Secretary of State for Education. In such a case the Department of Education and Skills will examine the complaint and adjudicate. The DfES has the power to require the LA to take certain actions, including the issuing of instructions to the school governing body. Members of staff have the same right of appeal.

5.2 Should the complainant feel there has been maladministration in the manner in which the complaint has been dealt with, this can be referred to the Local Government Ombudsman.

5.3 The Ombudsman can only investigate how the complaint has been handled and can not question the decision simply because the complainant does not agree with the outcome.

Addresses for correspondence:

The Secretary of State for Education
Sanctuary Buildings

Ombudsman
The Oaks

Great Smith St
Westminster
London
SW1P 3BT

Westwood Way
Coventry
CV4 8JB

The following will **not** be addressed through the school's complaints policy:

- Complaints about the curriculum and the provision of acts of worship and religious education
- Complaints about the Local Authority's assessment of a child's special educational need
- Appeals against the refusal to admit a child to their parents school of choice
- Appeals against exclusion (although the governing body will be involved at earlier stages)

Jacobstow Community Primary School

Complaints Standard Form

Please complete and return to Jacobstow Community Primary School who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Daytime telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Details of your complaint:

What action, if any, you have already taken to resolve your complaint?

Who did you speak to and what was the response?

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paper work? If so please give details:

Signature

Date:

Official use: date acknowledged:

by whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date of referral:

