



Complaints Procedure

18th March 2018

Version	Date	Author	Status	Summary
-	13/05/09	S Coleman	In Approval	Original Document
1.0	24/06/11	J Priest	Approved	Updated Document
2.0	6/2/13	A Peet	Approved	Revised policy to provide a more structured and detailed format for every eventuality, as well as take into account changes in process within county.
3.0	18/03/15	J Jennings	Approved	Procedure review. No changes.
3.0	12/3/18	J Liddiard	Approved	Requires new Appendix B form when available. No other changes.

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Complaints Procedure

As described in the Complaints Policy, Buryfields Infant School is committed to encouraging the involvement of parents in the community of the school and in their children's education. When something occurs that causes parents concern, it is important that parents or children know exactly what steps to take in order to make sure that any problems are resolved. This procedure is intended to provide guidance to help parents with this process.

Types of Complaint/Issue

This Complaints Procedure only covers the following types of issue:

- Bullying.
- Special needs issues (provision).
- An incident in school.
- Pupil's progress/welfare.
- Action/decision of the Headteacher.
- Pupil/Staff/Governor behaviour.
- School policies, budget management, use of school facilities.

This Complaints Policy and following Procedure does not cover the following type of complaints:

- The Local Authority's decisions on special education needs assessments and school placements

- School admissions and transfers
- Exclusions
- Staff grievance
- Staff disciplinary issues
- Financial impropriety or other criminal activity
- Alleged child abuse
- Extended services, such as educational welfare, educational psychology, behaviour support, youth services.

I have an issue – who should I talk to?

Most concerns can be dealt with most quickly and effectively through informal discussion with members of staff at school. As parents, you are always welcome to come into school to discuss any concerns that have arisen and are encouraged to talk to your child's teacher in the first instance, as the teacher, having knowledge of both your child and events in school, is often the person best placed to help.

Will what I say be kept confidential?

You can expect that matters you raise will be treated in confidence, but parents also need to understand that to resolve problems and find the best way forward, the teacher may have to make further inquiries. When this is the case, you can expect that this will be done with care and that the teachers will be sensitive to how such circumstances may affect your child. This is true for any investigation undertaken by the school, at any time.

What if it is difficult to talk to my child's teacher about my concern?

Sometimes you may feel that approaching your child's teacher could be awkward, especially if the matter you wish to discuss may affect a member of staff. If this is the case, or if having spoken with the teacher previously has not seemed to have resolved a particular problem, you should seek help from the Headteacher.

The Headteacher has responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school and will recognise that situations like this can be difficult and sensitive. You can expect the Headteacher to take the appropriate steps to follow up your concerns and to discuss the outcome with you. Obviously, some time needs to be allowed for this to take place, but in most cases, the Headteacher will contact you again within 2-3 working days.

Can I talk to somebody who is independent of the school staff?

It is always possible to approach a school governor with a concern; however, governors will always encourage you to approach the Headteacher first, if you haven't already done so. This is because the Headteacher has responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school and is therefore best placed to follow up and deal with your concerns. The governor will support you in doing this, if you feel that this may be helpful. Alternatively, you may wish to ask a friend to help you with this.

What is the difference between an informal and a formal complaint?

Each of the situations described above is an example of how concerns may be addressed informally. Good communication and discussion of problems allow issues to be dealt with quickly. The process is a verbal one, and usually only directly involves you, the parent, and a member of staff or the Headteacher. Dealing with matters informally **does not** mean that the concerns are not taken seriously, or that agreed actions will not be followed through.

A complaint becomes formal when you feel that your concern is too serious to be dealt with informally, or when you feel that informal approaches to the school have not been adequately dealt with. A formal complaint should be made in writing to the Headteacher and all investigations resulting from this and any responses made by the school will also be documented.

What happens if I need to make a formal complaint?

In the first instance, formal complaints need to be made to the Headteacher in writing. You can use the template at Annex B or write a personal letter. The Headteacher will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days, in writing. The Headteacher will take the appropriate steps to investigate the matter and will keep written records of the investigation.

Once the Headteacher has concluded their investigation of the complaint, you will receive a written response from the Headteacher, which will include an explanation of any decision/s that have been reached, the reasons for the decision/s and the actions that need to be taken to resolve your complaint. The Headteacher may also wish to discuss this with you directly beforehand and to add any additional information that you feel is important. You can expect to receive the formal response within 10 working days of the original acknowledgement of your complaint – if a delay is anticipated, the Headteacher will keep you informed in writing of progress and when you are likely to receive details of the outcome of the investigation.

If the complaint itself relates to the Headteacher, it would be normal for the Chair of Governors to carry out the investigation at this stage.

I still feel that matters have not been resolved to my satisfaction. What should I do?

If you feel that your complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved, then the second stage of the formal complaints process is to write to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days, in writing.

You are reminded that the Governing Body has a largely strategic role; that is, it is responsible for the school's strategic framework, including its aims and objectives, priorities and targets and policy. It is the Headteacher who is responsible for the

internal organisation, management and control of the school day-by-day.

The Chair of Governors will consider the complaint and may look at whether the decision or action was unreasonable. An unreasonable decision might be one that is irrational: a decision that no reasonable Headteacher, properly aware of their duties and taking into account the facts of the case, would make. Having considered the complaint, the Chair of Governors will endeavour to meet with both parties in order to try and resolve the issue. As previously, you can expect to receive your formal response within 10 working days of the original acknowledgement of your complaint – if a delay is anticipated, the Chair of Governors will keep you informed in writing of progress, and when you are likely to receive details of the outcome of the investigation.

[I still feel that matters have not been resolved to my satisfaction. What should I do?](#)

It is very rare that a complaint will reach this stage, but if it does, the next stage in the process will involve an independent and impartial review by a Panel from the Governing Body. You should write to the Clerk of the Governing Body, requesting that your complaint proceeds to this stage. The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of your complaint and will explain that a Panel will meet to review your complaint within 10 working days. The Panel will consist of three Governors who **have had no prior involvement in the matter in question** (*this is why you should not write to every member of the Governing Body with your complaint*). All relevant documents relating to the complaint will be provided to the Panel beforehand.

You will receive notification of the date on which the Panel will meet, 5 working days in advance of the meeting. You will be informed that you have the right to attend the meeting, and to be accompanied by a friend, representative, carer or interpreter. The Headteacher will also be invited to attend the meeting.

At the meeting, the Panel will consider written and verbal submissions from all parties. Whilst discussions at the meeting will be documented, the meeting will be as informal as possible, with the main aim being to resolve the problem raised, and to seek reconciliation between you and the school. The meeting provides an opportunity for you to explain your complaint and concerns; for the Headteacher to explain the school's response, and for all people present to seek clarification through questions and discussion.

Once the discussion has ended, everyone apart from the Panel will leave the meeting, and the Panel will review matters and reach its decision. A written decision on the complaint will be provided to you and to the school by the Panel within 2 working days.

This process is illustrated below in Annex A.

[What next if I am still not happy with the outcome?](#)

This is the final stage in the Buryfields School complaints procedure. If, after this process, you still feel that you want to take the issue further, your next step would be to write to the Secretary of State for Education. A complaint may be made to the Secretary of State for Education if a person believes a governing body or LA is acting unreasonably or is failing to carry out its statutory duties properly. The complaint should set out fully the concerns and reasons why the complaint is

being submitted, enclosing all previous correspondence relevant to the complaint. The complaint should be mailed to the Department.

The following website should be consulted <http://www.education.gov.uk/> for further advice.

Additionally, further advice can be gained from the following website:

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/contact-cs/cs-complaints/education-complainhow.htm>

Annex A – Buryfields School Complaints Process Flow Chart

Annex B – Complaint Form

When we receive a complaint, we aim to acknowledge its receipt within 5 days and send a full or interim response within 10 days.

Name of Parent or Guardian:	
Pupils name:	
Address:	
Post Code:	
Telephone (Day):	Telephone (Eve):
What is your concern and how has it affected you/your child?	

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please list this below:

Have you discussed this matter with a member of staff before completing this form? If so, who did you speak with and what was the response?

What would you like to happen as a result of making this complaint?

Signature

Date

<p><i>Official use only</i></p> <p>Initial response and acknowledgement:</p> <p>By Whom:</p> <p>Date:</p>	<p>C o m p l a i n t s r e f e r e n c e n u m b e r: A c t i o n t a k e n: D a t e:</p>
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Data Protection Act 1998 – We will only process your personal data to respond to your complaint. In general, this data will be used for administrative and statistical purposes.