



Complaints Procedures

March 2024



www.teaguesbridgeprimary.org

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Staff Responsibility	Mrs S. Abdulla
Governor responsibility	Stephen Reynolds

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE 2024-2025

A complaint is defined as an expression of grievance or dissatisfaction received from parents/carers or members of the community regarding (actions taken by school and the school community, standards of the service we provide, or discrimination in its delivery, or our policies).

We hope that parents will feel able to approach the school about any concerns they may have. Most difficulties can be resolved providing they are identified early and kept in proportion. In many cases misunderstandings can be prevented if parents make contact with the school.

Stage 1: Informal discussion

Parents/Carers

Most complaints or queries can be dealt with quickly and easily if parents contact the relevant class teacher at the end of the school day. It should be noted that all teaching staff are available from 3.30 – 3.45 p.m., or appointments can be made. Each child in school also has a communication diary where parents/carers can request discussions with teachers or to raise any concerns. Parents/carers are also able to request telephone consultations with teachers if they would like to have an informal discussion over the phone.

Parents/carers can also contact or request support from the key stage leader (Mrs Woods – KS1 or Mr Hale KS2) after initially contacting the class teacher. This should form the next stage after contact with the class teacher.

We do not expect the staff at Teagues Bridge Primary School to deal with parents or anyone who is rude or aggressive in their manner or who shout and use inappropriate language. In such cases the person will be asked to leave until they can return in a more appropriate manner. In some extreme cases the Head teacher may decide to revoke a parental licence to enter school.

If a complaint cannot be dealt with informally by the teacher or Headteacher, the person making the complaint may wish to enter into a Formal Complaints System. All such complaints will be recorded and monitored.

Complaints not in scope of a procedure

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN) • School re-organisation proposals • Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation 	Concerns should be raised direct with local authorities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion of children from school 	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistleblowing 	Schools have an internal whistleblowing procedure for their employees and voluntary staff. Other concerns can be raised direct with Ofsted by telephone on: 0300 123 3155, via email at: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk or by writing

	<p>to: WBHL, Ofsted Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD.</p> <p>The Department for Education is also a prescribed body for whistleblowing in education.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures 	<p>These matters will invoke the school's internal grievance procedures. Complainants will not be informed of the outcome of any investigation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities. 	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. They should be contacted direct.</p>

Stage 2 Formal: Complaint heard by head teacher

- Details about the complaint will be taken and transferred onto written record as early as possible.
- The recorded complaint will include the name of the person making the complaint and telephone number if complaint is made by telephone.
- If possible you will be asked what action would satisfy the grievance.
- We will then investigate the grievance with the relevant people. The Head may delegate the task of collating the information to another member of staff but not the decision on the action to be taken.

- Complaints involving insurance claims will be directed to the Telford and Wrekin Insurance Officer.

Stage 3 (formal): complaint heard by Chair of Governors

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the Head teacher or the complaint is about the Head teacher, the complainant should write to the Chair of Governors via school to request that their complaint is considered further. The Chair of Governors will respond within 20 working days. If he/she cannot give a complete answer, they will tell you what is being done to investigate your complaint and how long it is expected to take.

Stage 4 (formal): complaint heard by Governing Bodies Complaints Appeal Panel

The complainant usually needs to write to the Clerk to the Governing Body giving details of the complaint and asking that it is put before the appeal panel.

The Chair, or if the Chair has been involved at any previous stage in the process, a nominated governor, will convene a GB complaints panel.

The governors' appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process and is not convened merely to rubber-stamp previous decisions.

Individual complaints are not heard by the whole Governing Body at any stage, as this could compromise the impartiality of any panel set up for a disciplinary hearing against a member of staff following a serious complaint.

The governing body may nominate a number of members with delegated powers to hear complaints at that stage:

- drawing up its procedures;
- hearing individual appeals;
- making recommendations on policy as a result of complaints.

The panel will be drawn from the nominated members and may consist of three or five people. The panel may choose their own Chair.

The remit of The Complaints Appeal Panel

The panel can:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

Here are several points which any governor sitting on a complaints panel needs to remember:

Roles and responsibilities:

The role of the clerk

Any panel or group of governors considering complaints will be clerked. The clerk would be the contact point for the complainant and be required to:

- set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible;
- collate any written material and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing and at least five school days in advance;
- record the proceedings;

- notify all parties of the panel's decision.
- The Clerk should share copies of the panel meeting minutes with all parties involved in the panel hearing, providing a reasonable opportunity for the minutes to be agreed and if necessary, challenged.
- meet and welcome the parties as they arrive at the hearing;

The role of the Chair of the Governing Body or the nominated governor

The nominated governor role:

- Check that the correct procedure has been followed;
- If a hearing is requested, notify the clerk to arrange the panel.

The role of the Chair of the Panel

The Chair of the Panel has a key role, ensuring that:

- the remit of the panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption;
- the issues are addressed;
- key findings of fact are made;
- parents and others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease;
- the hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy;
- the panel is open minded and acting independently; no member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions; written material is seen by all parties. If a new issue arises it would be useful to give all parties the opportunity to consider and comment on it

Notification of the Panel's Decision

The Chair of the Panel needs to ensure that the complainant is notified of the panel's decision, in writing, with the panel's response (including the reasons for the decision) within 20 working days. The letter needs to explain if there are any further rights of appeal and, if so, to whom they need to be addressed. For this school it is Telford & Wrekin Local Authority.

The final stage of appeal is to the Secretary of State for Education.

Unreasonable Complainants

Teagues Bridge Primary School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

Teagues Bridge Primary School defines unreasonable complainants as *'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints'*.

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

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, 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 are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects 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;
- 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 with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

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 Teagues Bridge Primary 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. This may include banning an individual from Teagues Bridge Primary School.

Banning from the School Premises

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Schools will therefore act to ensure it remains a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of their community.

If an individual's behaviour is a cause for concern, a school can ask him/her to leave school premises. In serious cases, the headteacher or the local authority can notify them in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to an appeal hearing. If this decision is taken, schools are advised to always put it in writing and explain how the decision can be appealed. Schools should also give the individual the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to ban in writing.

The decision should then be reviewed and either confirmed or lifted. If the decision is confirmed the individual should be notified in writing, explaining how long the ban will be in place.

Anyone wishing to complain about being banned can do so, by letter or email, to the headteacher or Chair of Governors. However complaints about banning cannot be escalated to the Department for Education.

Once the school procedure has been completed, the only remaining avenue of appeal is through the Courts; independent legal advice must therefore be sought.

This policy was agreed on September 2016

It was reviewed September 2021



COMPLAINT FORM

Please complete and return to Mrs Abdulla who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Daytime telephone Number:

Evening telephone Number:

If applicable name of child(ren) at school:

Please give details of the complaint:

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? Who did you speak to and what was the response?

Your relationship to the school, e.g. parent, carer, neighbour, member of the public:

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

Are you attaching any paperwork or additional notes? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use:

Date of acknowledgement sent:

By Whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date:
