



Ysgol Carreghofa C P School

Complaints procedure

1. Introduction

1.1 Ysgol Carreghofa School is committed to dealing effectively with complaints. We aim to clarify any issues about which you are not sure. If possible we will put right any mistakes we have made and we will apologise. We aim to learn from mistakes and use that experience to improve what we do.

1.2 Our definition of a complaint is 'an expression of dissatisfaction in relation to the school or a member of its staff that requires a response from the school.'

1.3 This complaints procedure supports our commitment and is a way of ensuring that anyone with an interest in the school can raise a concern, with confidence that it will be heard and, addressed in an appropriate and timely fashion.

2. When to use this procedure

2.1 When you have a concern or make a complaint we will usually respond in the way we explain below. Sometimes you might be concerned about matters that are not decided by the school, in which case we will tell you who to complain to. At other times you may be concerned about matters that are handled by other procedures, in which case we will explain to you how your concern will be dealt with.

2.2 If your concern or complaint is about another body as well as the school (for example the local authority) we will work with them to decide how to handle your concern and advise you accordingly.

3. Have you discussed this issue with us yet?

3.1 We would like to ensure that before a formal complaint is made that the school have the opportunity to discuss the issue with you first. We would request that firstly you speak to the class teacher as soon as possible (if appropriate) then speak to Mrs Pritchard (Head Teacher). If you are not happy with our response then you may make your complaint using the procedure we describe below. Most concerns can be settled quickly just by speaking to the relevant person in school, without the need to use a formal procedure.

4. What we expect from you

4.1 We believe that all complainants have a right to be heard, understood and respected and school staff and governors have the same right. We expect you to be polite and courteous. We will not tolerate aggressive, abusive or unreasonable behaviour. We will also not tolerate unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence or vexatious complaining.

5. Our approach to answering your concern or complaint

5.1 We will consider all your concerns and complaints in an open and fair way.

5.2 At all times the school will respect the rights and feelings of those involved and make every effort to protect confidential information.

5.3 Timescales for dealing with your concerns or complaints may need to be extended following discussion with you.

5.4 We may ask for advice from the local authority where appropriate.

5.5 A complaint is a formal expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of services, facilities or activities, or action or lack of action, by the school or its staff, affecting an individual or group. The following are not complaints – a request for a service, matters appropriate to be dealt with under another policy (Not exhaustive).

5.6 Some types of concern or complaint may raise issues that have to be dealt with in another way other than this complaints policy. These issues will be using a different policy. In which case we will explain why this is so, and will tell you what steps will be taken or if the matter is resolved.

5.7 The governing body will keep the records of documents used to investigate your concern or complaint for seven years after it has been dealt with. Records will be kept in school and reviewed by the governing body after seven years to decide if they need to be kept for longer.

5.8 Complaints that are made anonymously will be recorded but investigation will be at the discretion of the school depending on the nature of the complaint.

5.9 Where complaints are considered to have been made only to cause harm or offence to individuals or the school, the governing body will ensure that records are kept of the investigations that are made and what actions are taken, including the reasons for 'no action'.

6. Formal Complaint Procedure

6.1 The chart in Appendix A shows what may happen when you make a complaint or raise a concern. There are up to three Stages: Informal, A and B. Most complaints can be resolved at the informal stage. You can bring a relative or companion to support you at any time during the process but you will be expected to speak for yourself. However, we recognise that when the complainant is a pupil it is reasonable for the companion to speak on their behalf and/or to advise the pupil (See section concern complaints by pupils).

6.2 As far as possible, your concern or complaint will be dealt with on a confidential basis. However, there could be occasions when the person dealing with your concern or complaint will need to consider whether anyone else within the school needs to know about your concern or complaint, so as to address it appropriately.

6.3 If you are a pupil under 16 and wish to raise a concern or bring a complaint we will ask for your permission before we involve your parent(s) or carer(s). If you are a pupil under 16 and are involved in a complaint in any other way, we may ask your parent(s) or carer(s) to become involved and attend any discussion or interview with you (See section concern complaints by pupils).

Informal – see section 3

Stage A (Formal)

6.4 In most cases, we would expect that your concern is resolved informally. If you feel that your initial concern has not been dealt with appropriately, you should put your complaint in writing to the head teacher to the school address or to head@carreghofa.powys.sch.uk stating that you are making a formal complaint.

6.5 We would expect you to put this in writing **within five school days of receiving a response to your concern (informal complaint) as it is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as soon as possible**. There is also a form attached (**Appendix B**) that you may find useful. If you are a pupil we will explain the form to you, help you complete it and give you a copy.

6.6 If your complaint is about the headteacher, you should put your complaint in writing to the chair of governors, addressed to the school, to ask for your complaint to be investigated.

6.7 In all cases, a member of staff can help you to scribe your complaint in writing if necessary. Please contact the school to arrange this.

6.8 Mrs Pritchard will confirm receipt, in writing, of your formal complaint **within 5 school days**. If any further information is required then a meeting may be called. The school will carry out an investigation and will inform you of the outcome, in writing, **within 10 further school days**. If this is not possible, we will write to you to up-date you on the progress of the investigation.

Stage B

6.9 It is rare that a complaint will progress any further. However, if you still feel that your complaint has not been dealt with fairly, you should write, **through the school's address**, to the chair of governors setting out your reasons for asking the governing body's complaints committee to consider your complaint. You do not have to write down details of your whole complaint again.

6.10. The Governors will let you know how the complaint will be dealt with and will send a letter to confirm this. The complaints committee will normally have a meeting with you **within 15 school days** of receiving your letter.

6.11 The letter will also tell you when all the evidence and documentation to be considered by the complaints committee must be received. This will include evidence from the school's investigation. Everyone involved will see the evidence and documentation before the meeting, while ensuring that people's rights to privacy of information are protected. The letter will inform you when and where the meeting will take place and what will happen.

6.12 The timescale may need to be changed, to allow for the availability of people, the gathering of evidence or seeking advice. In this case, the governors will agree a new meeting date with you.

6.13 Normally, in order to deal with the complaint as quickly as possible, the complaints committee will not reschedule the meeting more than once. If you ask to reschedule the meeting more than once, the committee may think it reasonable to make a decision on the complaint in your absence to avoid unnecessary delays.

6.14 During the meeting, the chair of the complaints committee will summarise the complaint and may seek clarification on some points. You will be required to ensure the complaint has been clearly understood. Minutes will be taken. A minimum of 3 governors will attend and we will ensure a professional procedure is carried out.

6.15 The complaint's committee will write to you **within 10 school days** of the meeting explaining the outcome of the committee's consideration.

6.16 We will keep records of all conversations and discussions for the purpose of future reference and review by the full governing body. These records will be kept for a minimum of seven years.

6.17 The governing body's complaints committee is the final arbiter of complaints.

7. Special Circumstances

7.1 Where a complaint is made about any of the following the complaints procedure will be applied differently.

i. A governor or group of governors

The concern or complaint will be referred to the Chair of governors for investigation. The chair may alternatively delegate the matter to another governor for investigation. Stage A onwards of the complaints procedure will apply.

ii. The chair of governors or headteacher and chair of governors

The Vice Chair of governors will be informed and will investigate it or may delegate it to another governor. Stage A onwards of the complaints procedure will apply.

iii. Both the chair of governors and vice chair of governors

The complaint will be referred to the clerk to the governing body who will inform the chair of the complaints committee. Stage B of the complaints procedure will then apply.

iv. The whole governing body

The complaint will be referred to the clerk to the governing body who will inform the head teacher, chair of governors and local authority. The authorities will usually agree arrangements with the governing body for independent investigation of the complaint.

v. The headteacher

The concern or complaint will be referred to the chair of governors who will undertake the investigation or may delegate it to another governor. Stage A onwards of the complaints procedure will apply.

7.2 In all cases the school and governing body will ensure that complaints are dealt with in an unbiased, open, professional and fair way.

8. Our commitment to you

8.1 We will take your concerns and complaints seriously and will learn from them.

8.2 If you need help to make your concerns known we will try and assist you. If you are a young person and need extra assistance the Welsh Government has established MEIC which is a national advocacy and advice helpline for children and young people. Advice and support can also be accessed from the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

8.3 The governing body has consulted with staff and pupils on this policy and will consult further if any amendments are made in the future.

Procedures for handling complaints from or involving pupils

The text below is written for use in schools to give to pupils. It can be adapted for posters, leaflets, letters or school websites or intranets. Two leaflets, one for use in primary schools, the other for secondary schools, can be downloaded from the WG website

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/circulars/schoolcomplaints/?lang=en>

Have your say

Do you have a suggestion, concern or complaint?

By working together we can make a difference.

We want you to feel safe and happy at school, but sometimes you may feel worried, have a concern or want to make a suggestion. We also want to hear about areas of school life that you enjoy and value.

If you are worried about something please tell a member of staff straight away so that we can look into it. We will take your concerns and any issues that you raise very seriously.

If you don't want to raise the concern yourself, you can ask a member of the school council, a member of staff or someone else you trust to take the matter up on your behalf (the school may have a designated person for pupils to speak to).] Normally in this school Mrs Van Lill will do this.

When you raise a suggestion, concern or complaint:

- we will listen to everything you say
- we will ask you questions to help make things clear
- we will treat you fairly
- someone can help you, such as a parent/carer, friend, relative or someone else
- the person dealing with your concern will tell you what is happening.

Privacy

Usually, we will not tell anyone about what you say unless they are involved in dealing with your concern. Sometimes we will tell other people, for instance, if you or someone else is in danger of being hurt or upset. If this is the case we will explain it to you.

When you have a concern or complaint against another person, then that person will normally have a right to be made aware of the concern or complaint and be allowed to give their side of the story.

School council

If your concern or suggestion affects the whole school or a group of pupils, we might suggest that the school council considers it or you might want to ask the school council yourself.

We all want our school to be safe, caring and successful – the best it can be.

With your help we can make it so.

Signed by chair of governors on behalf of the governing body:

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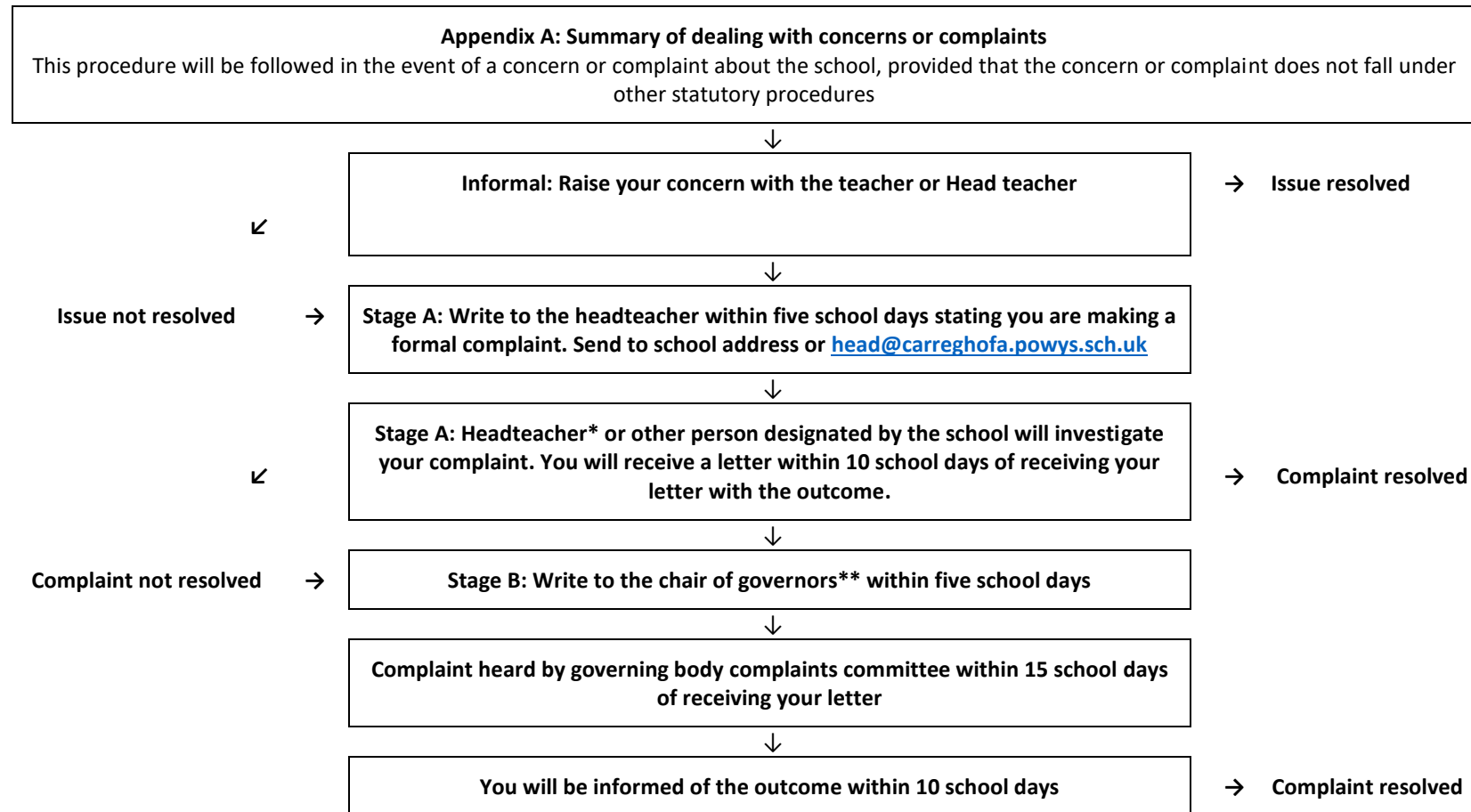
Date approved:
(by full governing body)

Date of review:

Date sent to the local authority:

MEIC may be contacted by freephone: 0808 802 3456, or text: 84001. This service is operated 24 hours a day.

Appendix A: Summary of dealing with concerns or complaints



* If the complaint is about the headteacher you should write to the chair of governors.

** If the complaint is about the chair of governors you should write to the vice chair.

All timescales shown are targets and are flexible; however it is in everyone's best interest to resolve a complaint as soon as possible.

The school will work with you to ensure that the time allowed to deal with your concern or complaint is reasonable and helps to achieve an answer to the problem.

Appendix B: Complaint form

The person who experienced the problem should normally fill in this form. If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else please fill in Section B also. Please note that before taking forward the complaint we will need to be satisfied that you have the authority to act on behalf of the person concerned. If you are a pupil the school will help you complete this form, will explain it to you and will give you a copy of it when it is completed.

A. Your details

Surname	
Forename(s)	
Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Other	
Address and postcode	
Daytime phone number	
Mobile phone number	
E-mail address	

How would you prefer us to contact you?

B. If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else, what are their details?

Their name in full	
Address and postcode	
What is your relationship to them?	
Why are you making a complaint on their behalf?	

C. About your complaint (continue your answers on separate sheets of paper if necessary)

C.1 Name of the school you are complaining about.

C.2 What do you think they did wrong or did not do?

C.3 Describe how you have been affected.

C.4 When did you first become aware of the problem?

C.5 If it is more than three months since you first became aware of the problem, please give the reason why you have not complained before.

C.6 What do you think should be done to put matters right?

C.7 Have you already put your complaint to a member of staff? If so, please give brief details about how and when you did so.

Signature of complainant:

Date:

Signature if you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else

Signature:

Date:

Please send this form and any documents to support your complaint to: Carreghofa C P School,
Llanymynech, Powys, SY22 6PA

Official Use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date: