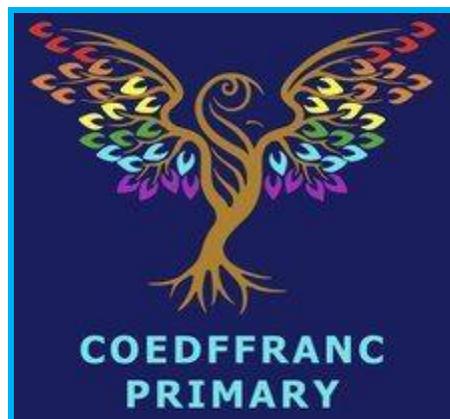


# Ysgol Gynradd Coedffranc Primary School



## Complaints Policy

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **What is a complaint?**

Complaints are not always easy to define. It is therefore important to keep in mind a distinction between concerns, problems and complaints. Many parents have concerns from time to time regarding their child and school. These are usually brought to the attention of the class teacher and the Headteacher, and dealt with immediately. Similarly, when a problem is brought to the attention of the school staff, ways are explored to solve the problem and agreement usually reached. If a parent or other party has approached the school regarding an issue and is not satisfied with the action taken, then representation can be made to the Governing Body in the form of a complaint. A complaint can be defined as a communication received, expressing dissatisfaction by a person with a legitimate interest in the school, about standards, actions, omissions or procedures. A complaint may be made in person, by telephone or in writing.

### **Complaints Procedure**

There are three stages to the Complaints Procedure. The main aim at all stages in the procedure will be to ensure that the complaint is fully considered and is resolved, in so far as it is possible to do so, to the satisfaction of the complainant. It is not intended that these guidelines should replace the normal discussion which takes place in schools on day-to-day problems and concerns as they arise. It is only when the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of discussions that further steps may need to be taken.

#### **Stage 1: Headteacher/School Staff**

The first stage is informal. Parents are encouraged to settle a matter with the Headteacher, class teacher or other designated member of staff as appropriate. Most are straightforward complaints and are likely to be resolved at this stage. The Headteacher might arrange a discussion involving other members of staff or might seek advice from Pupil, Parent & Governor Support. A response should be made, unless there is a good reason not to do so, within 15 working days from the receipt of the complaint, and should offer the complainant a full explanation or set out the steps proposed to resolve the matter.

#### **Stage 2: Chair of Governing Body**

If it is not possible to resolve the matter at the first stage, the complainant will be referred to the Chair of Governors and the complaint put in writing. The Chair of Governors may request the services of the Local Authority as investigator or mediator and will inform the complainant of this. If the Chair of Governors undertakes the investigation, he will be excluded from any involvement at Stage 3. The Chair of Governors/LA representative will meet with the complainant and respond within 20 working days, unless there is good reason not to do so. The complainant will be informed of the next stage of action if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome. All parties named in the complaint must be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

### **Stage 3: The Governing Body**

If the complainant is still not satisfied, he or she will be asked to put the complaint in writing formally to the Governing Body. At this stage the complaint may well be different from the original complaint lodged as it would include dissatisfaction with the action taken by the school management to resolve the original complaint. A committee of three governors will be delegated the power to make a final decision on the complaint on behalf of the whole Governing Body. Members of the committee would have no previous involvement in the complaint. Although the committee's primary function is to decide on the merits or otherwise of the complaints, the committee will also play an important role in attempting a resolution of the complaint even at this stage. The committee would receive written evidence from the complainant on the complaint and from the headteacher on what action has been taken to resolve the complaint. Any written evidence will be circulated to all parties before the hearing. It may well be that the outcome of any investigation by the Local Authority will be submitted as part of the evidence either by the headteacher or by the complainant. The committee will hear evidence from witnesses from both sides relating specifically to the complaint and the action taken. The committee will be able to question the complainant, the headteacher (both of whom would be entitled to be accompanied by a 'friend/colleague/representative' who can speak on their behalf if necessary) and the witnesses; the headteacher and complainant can also question each other and the witnesses.

The procedure will be as follows:

- \* Introduction by Chair of committee
- \* Complainant makes statement of complaint and outcome sought
- \* Questions to complainant by committee and headteacher
- \* All parties hear and question witnesses called by complainant
- \* Headteacher makes statement
- \* Questions to headteacher by committee and complainant
- \* All parties hear and question witnesses called by headteacher
- \* Headteacher makes final statement
- \* Complainant makes final statement
- \* Committee considers case and reaches decision on whether the complaint is upheld or rejected and may call for certain action to be taken by the school or the parent. Once this decision is reached it is final. It will be neither possible nor practicable to allow for an appeal to a second committee of the governing body. Similar to all other types of parental grievance, where a parent remains dissatisfied with a decision of the governing body, it would then be considered by an independent body.

### **Anonymous complaints**

By definition, people who send in such complaints do not wish to be accountable for what they have written. In terms of this complaints procedure, there is no duty for headteachers or governors to pursue anonymous complaints because there is no named complainant to receive a response. However, it is important to realise that such complaints may either directly allege or indirectly imply a serious matter which may be to the detriment of the school. It is therefore recommended, that it is left to the headteacher's discretion as to whether or not an anonymous complaint justifies investigation. The headteacher may seek the advice of the LEA.

### **Monitoring complaints**

It is proposed that records are kept of all stage 2 and stage 3 complaints, i.e. formal complaints and that governors would decide whether to include the number of complaints and types of complaint in their annual report to parents.