



“CREATIVITY, RESPONSIBILITY, RESPECT, AND HAPPINESS”

BLUE COAT CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Complaints Policy

Committee responsible for this policy	Full Governing Body
Policy initially approved by FGB	2010
Policy reviewed/amended	November 2012, July 2014, 26 th June 2017, 3 rd October 2017, 14 th July 2020
Policy review term	Triennial
Policy due for review	April 2023



Statement of Intent / Scope of the Policy

We believe that our school provides a good education for all of our children, and that the Headteacher and other staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents and the wider community. However, we recognise that in some cases a concern or a complaint needs to be addressed and the following policy sets out the procedure the school will follow in such cases.

This policy is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school, or the services that it provides. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that the school provides. This policy is not limited to the parents or carers of children registered at the school.

An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances. To enable a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, any matter raised more than 3 months after the event being complained of, will not be considered. However, exceptions to this timeframe can be applied at the school's discretion.

A 'concern' may be defined as '*an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought*'. A complaint may be generally defined as '*an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action*'.

Any complaint should not be discussed or distributed on any social media platforms; inflammatory comments or online abuse against the school or staff members is not acceptable. Please refer to the Social Media Appendix of the E-Safety Policy, located on the school website.

Blue Coat CEVA Primary school encourages positive working relationships between staff members and visitors to the site. Members of staff have the right to work without the fear of violence - any abusive, aggressive or violent behaviour towards a member of staff on the school grounds will not be tolerated. Unacceptable behaviour may result in the Local Authority and the Police being informed; future access to the school property may also be restricted.

In some instances, the application of this policy is not appropriate and other separate statutory procedures are in place. The exceptions to this policy are: admissions to schools, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), school re-organisation proposals, safeguarding matters, exclusion of children from school, whistleblowing, staff grievances and disciplinary procedures and complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities.



Aims

Our school is committed to dealing with complaints fairly and impartially, and to be open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We will give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint at an informal stage through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

Raising a concern or a complaint

Informal Stage

It is normally appropriate to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned. This may be by letter, by telephone or in person by appointment, requested via the school office. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information and it is anticipated that most issues can be resolved by this informal stage.

If you are uncertain about who to contact, please seek advice from the school office or the Clerk to the Governing Body.

In the case of serious concerns, it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Headteacher (or to the Chair of the Governing Body, if the complaint is about the Headteacher). The Headteacher will be able to advise you of the most appropriate individual to handle your concern.

If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education or welfare that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the child's progress.

Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Assistant Headteacher. Should a parent have a complaint about the Assistant Headteacher, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Headteacher.

All staff members consider any such concerns or complaints very seriously and will investigate each case thoroughly. Most issues are normally resolved at this informal stage.

Should a parent have a complaint about the Headteacher, s/he should first make an informal approach to the Chair of the Governing Body, who is obliged to investigate it. The Governor in question will do all s/he can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if a parent is unhappy with the outcome, s/he can make a formal complaint, as outlined below.



Formal Stage

If your concern or complaint is not resolved at the informal stage you may choose to escalate to the formal stage. At this formal stage, the complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far. A complaint form is provided to assist you. See Appendix A. Should you have any difficulties in putting your complaint in writing, please speak to the school office and assistance can be provided.

You should include details which might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents. It is very important that you include a clear statement of the actions that you would like the school to take to resolve your concern. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed.

Please pass the completed form, in a sealed envelope to the school office. The envelope should be addressed to the Headteacher, or if the complaint is about the Headteacher, to the Clerk to the Governing Body for the attention of the Chair of the Governing Body

It is possible that your complaint will be resolved through a meeting with the Headteacher (or Chair). If not, arrangements will be made for the matter to be fully investigated, using the appropriate procedure. In any case you should learn in writing, usually within 10 school days of the school receiving your formal complaint, of how the school intends to proceed. This notification should include an indication of the anticipated timescale.

The Headteacher (or Chair) may invite you to a meeting to clarify your concerns and to explore the possibility of an informal resolution. If you accept that invitation, you may be accompanied by a friend, if you wish, to assist you in explaining the nature of your concerns. A record of the discussion at this meeting and actions to be taken will be documented and a copy made available to all parties.

Any investigation will begin as soon as possible and when it has been concluded, you will be informed in writing of its conclusion.

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, you may request that the Governing Body reviews the process followed by the school, in handling the complaint. Any such request must be made in writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body, within 10 school days of receiving notice of the outcome, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure. The review process described below will be followed.



Review Process

Any review of the complaints process followed by the school will be conducted by a panel of three members of the Governing Body. This will usually take place within 10 school days of receipt of your request. Complainants have the right to request an independent panel, if they believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings. We will consider this request but ultimately, the decision will be made by the Governors.

The review will normally be conducted through a consideration of written submissions, but reasonable requests to make oral representations will be considered sympathetically.

After hearing all of the evidence, the Governors consider their decision and inform the complainant about it in writing. The Governors will do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the complainant's satisfaction.

If a complainant is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then s/he is entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education. The Secretary of State's powers are delegated to the School Complaints Unit (SCU). The SCU will only consider cases in which the Governing Body has acted unlawfully or unreasonably. It will only overturn a decision in extreme circumstances. If it decides the Governing Body has not followed the published procedures it can request the Governing Body review the complaint again.

Should the complainant continue to make contact on the same issue, the Chair of the Governing Body has the power to inform them that the process is complete and the matter is therefore closed.

Monitoring and Review

The Governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Headteacher logs all formal written complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. Governors will receive regular reports on complaints through the medium of the Headteacher's report to Governors.

Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available on the school website, so that stakeholders can be properly informed about the complaints process.

Cross Referenced:

Cc: Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, Attendance Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, E-Safety & Acceptable Use Policy

