



Compliments and Complaints Policy

Copley Junior School

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COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

This policy statement sets out our approach to dealing with parental compliments, concerns and complaints.

We always aim to maintain positive relationships with parents and carers and do our best to address any concerns as soon as they arise. However we are aware that in some instances a parent/carer may wish to make a complaint.

1. We value the strong partnership between home and school and will, therefore, do everything we can to foster and maintain this. This includes seeking to resolve any concerns or complaints promptly, and to the satisfaction of all concerned.
2. We welcome feedback on what parents feel we do well, or not so well, as a school. We will consider carefully all feedback, whether positive or negative, and will review our policies and practices accordingly.
3. We will treat all concerns and complaints seriously and courteously and will advise parents and others of the school's procedures for dealing with their concerns. In return, we expect parents and other complainants to behave respectfully towards all members of the school community. In particular, any disagreement with the school should not be expressed inappropriately or in front of pupils.
4. All school staff and members of the governing body's Curriculum and Standards sub committee will receive a copy of this policy statement and will be familiar with the school's procedures for dealing with parental concerns and complaints, to which they will have access. The policy is available to parents via the school website.
5. The school's procedures will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary.
6. Staff and governors will receive training in handling parental concerns and complaints as appropriate. This may be on an individual basis, or as a group activity for all staff, or for specific groups, such as the office staff or members of the governing body.
7. Whilst we will seek to resolve concerns and complaints to the satisfaction of all parties, it may not be possible to achieve this in every case. We will, therefore, use our option to close a complaint before all the stages of the school's procedures have been exhausted, if this appears to be appropriate.
8. The government and Doncaster Local Authority advocate resolution of parental concerns and complaints at school level wherever possible, in the interests of maintaining good home/school relations.

Complaints Procedure

Copley Junior School Procedures for Dealing with Complaints

The majority of concerns from parents, carers and others are handled under the following general procedures.

The procedure is divided into three stages:

The Informal Stage aims to resolve the concern through informal contact at the appropriate level in school.

Stage 1 is the first formal stage at which written complaints are considered by the Head teacher or Chair of Governors, who has special responsibility for dealing with complaints.

Stage 2 is the next stage once Stage 1 has been worked through. It involves a complaints appeal panel of governors.

By their very nature, anonymous complaints cannot be dealt with under these procedures.

Complaints should be brought to the school's attention as quickly as possible in order to enable a proper investigation to take place. A complaint raised more than three months after the alleged incident will not be considered, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

How each of these stages operates is explained below:

Informal Stage - Your Initial Contact with the School

1. Many concerns will be dealt with informally when you make them known to us. The first point of contact should be your child's class teacher or the Head teacher.
2. Once your concern is made known to us, we will see you, or contact you by telephone or in writing, as soon as possible. If it is necessary, all members of staff know how to refer to the appropriate person with responsibility for your particular issues. They will make a clear note of the details and will check later to make sure that the matter has been followed up.
3. Any actions or monitoring of the situation that has been agreed will be communicated clearly.
4. If necessary we will contact appropriate people who may be able to assist us with our enquiries into your concern.
5. If you are still dissatisfied following this informal approach, your concern will become a formal complaint and we will deal with it at the next stage.

Stage 1 - Formal Consideration of your Complaint

This stage in our procedures deals with written complaints. It applies where you are not happy with the informal approach to dealing with your concern, as outlined above.

1. Normally, your written complaint should be addressed to the Head teacher. If, however, your complaint concerns the Head teacher personally, it should be sent to the school marked "For the attention of the Chair of Governors".
2. We will acknowledge your complaint in writing as soon as possible after receiving it. This will be within three working (school) days.
3. We will enclose a copy of these procedures with the acknowledgement.
4. As part of our consideration of your complaint, we may invite you to a meeting to discuss the complaint and fill in any details required. If you wish, you can ask someone to accompany you to help you explain the reasons for your complaint.
5. The Head teacher, or Chair of Governors, may also be accompanied by a suitable person if they wish.
6. The Head teacher, investigating officer or Chair of Governors will, where necessary, talk to witnesses and take statements from others involved. If the complaint centres on a pupil, we will talk to the pupil concerned and, where appropriate, others present at the time of the incident in question.
7. In cases where the parental complaint centres on the behaviour of another parent's child, we may talk to the accused pupil with their parent or carer present, if this is considered to be appropriate for the particular situation in hand.
8. If the complaint is against a member of staff, it will be dealt with under the school's internal confidential procedures, as required by law.
9. The Head teacher or Chair of Governors will keep written/typed, signed and dated records of all meetings and telephone conversations, and other related documentation.
10. We aim to resolve complaints at this stage within four working weeks in order to allow time for a proper investigation. Once we have established all the relevant facts, we will send you a written response to your complaint. This will give an explanation of the Head teacher's or Chair of Governors' decision and the reasons for it. If follow-up action is needed, we will indicate what we are proposing to do.
11. The person investigating your complaint may decide that we have done all we can to resolve the complaint, in which case we may use our discretion to close the complaint at this point.
12. If you are unhappy with the way in which we reached our conclusions, you may wish to proceed to Stage 2, as described below.

Stage 2 - Consideration by a Governors' Appeal Panel

If the complaint has already been through Stage 1 and you are not happy with the outcome as a result of the way in which the complaint has been handled, you can take it further to a governors' appeal panel. This is a formal process, and the ultimate recourse at school level.

The purpose of this arrangement is to give you the chance to present your arguments in front of a panel of governors who have no prior knowledge of the details of the case and who can, therefore, consider it without prejudice. However, **the aim of a panel is not to rehear the complaint**. It is there to review how the complaint has been investigated and to determine whether this has been conducted fairly. It is there to establish facts and make recommendations which will reassure you that we have taken the complaint seriously.

The governors' appeal panel operates according to the following formal procedures:

1. The governing body will convene a panel of three governors and will aim to arrange for the panel meeting to take place within **20 working (school) days**.
2. You will be asked whether you wish to provide any further written documentation in support of your appeal.
3. The Head teacher or complaint investigator will be asked to prepare a written report for the panel. The panel can request additional information from other sources if necessary.
4. You will be informed, at least **five working (school) days** in advance, of the date, time and place of the meeting. We hope you will feel comfortable with the meeting taking place in the school but we will do what we can to make alternative arrangements if you prefer.
5. With the letter, you will receive any relevant correspondence regarding Stage 1 and you will be asked whether you wish to submit further written evidence to the panel.
6. The letter will explain what will happen at the panel meeting and that you are entitled to be accompanied to the meeting. The choice of person to accompany you is your own, but it is usually best to involve someone in whom you have confidence but who is not directly connected with the school. They are there to give you support but also to witness the proceedings and to speak on your behalf if you wish.
7. If it is necessary in the interests of ratifying the investigative process, the complaint investigator may, with the agreement of the chair of the panel, invite relevant witnesses directly involved in matters raised by you to attend the meeting.
8. The chair of the panel will bear in mind that the formal nature of the meeting can be intimidating for you and will do his or her best to put you at your ease.
9. As a general rule, no evidence or witnesses previously undisclosed should be

introduced into the meeting by any of the participants. If either party wishes to do so, the meeting will be adjourned so that the other party has a fair opportunity to consider and respond to the new evidence.

10. The chair of the panel will ensure that the meeting is properly minuted. Please understand that the complainant is not entitled to access any details of the investigation except for any statements that may have been provided by their own child.

11. Normally, the written outcome of the panel meeting, which will be sent to you, should give you all the information you require. Any information relating to the potential application of disciplinary procedures is strictly confidential.

12. During the meeting, you can expect there to be opportunities for:

- The panel to hear you explain your case and your argument for why it should be heard at Stage 2;
- The panel to hear the complaint investigator's case in response;
- You to raise questions via the chair;
- You to be questioned by the complaint investigator through the chair;
- The panel members to be able to question you and the complaint investigator;
- You to make a final statement;
- The Head teacher/complaint investigator to make a final statement.

13. In closing the meeting, the chair will explain that the panel will now consider its decision and that written notice of the decision will be sent to you and the Head teacher **within three working (school) days**. All participants other than the panel and the clerk will then leave.

14. The panel will then consider the complaint and all the evidence presented in order to:

- reach a unanimous, or at least a majority, decision on the case;
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken, if necessary;
- recommend, where appropriate, to the governing body changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that similar problems do not happen again.

15. The clerk will send you and the Head teacher a letter outlining the decision of the panel. The letter will also explain that you are entitled to have the handling of the complaint reviewed by Doncaster LA. That process is not strictly an appeal, as the local authority cannot direct the governing body in most general complaints cases. It is, however, an opportunity to seek the view of an official third party and the outcome, including any recommendations, may be helpful to you in seeking resolution of the complaint, through the Secretary of State for Education if necessary.

16. If you feel that the governing body or the local authority has acted illegally or unreasonably about your concerns, you can write to the Secretary of State for Education. You will need to list the steps you have already taken and the responses you have received.

Write to:

The Secretary of State
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
London SW1

17. We will keep a copy of all correspondence and notes on file in the school's records but separate from pupils' personal records.

Closure of Complaints

Very occasionally, a school will feel that it needs, regretfully, to close a complaint where the complainant is still dissatisfied.

We, and the local authority where appropriate, will do all we can to help to resolve a complaint against the school but sometimes it is simply not possible to meet all of the complainant's wishes. Sometimes it is simply a case of "agreeing to disagree". If a complainant persists in making representations to the school - to the Head teacher, designated governor, chair of governors or anyone else - or to the local authority, this can be extremely time-consuming and can detract from our responsibility to look after the interests of all the children in our care.

For this reason, we are entitled to close correspondence (including personal approaches, as well as letters and telephone calls) on a complaint where we feel that we have taken all reasonable action to resolve the complaint and that the complaint has exhausted our official process. The local authority will support us in this position, and especially where the complainant's action is causing distress to staff and/or pupils. In exceptional circumstances, closure may occur before a complaint has reached Stage 2 of the procedures described in this document. This is because a complaints panel takes considerable time and effort to set up and we must be sure that it is likely to assist the process of investigating the complaint.

The chair of governors may decide, therefore, that every reasonable action has been undertaken to resolve the complaint and that a complaints review panel would not help to move things forward.

Policy agreed by all staff and members of the Curriculum and Standards committee of the Governing Body: January 2017

**Copley Junior School
Compliments Feedback form**

Personal Details

Name

Address

.....

Postcode

Daytime telephone number

Evening telephone number

If applicable, name of child (ren) and year at school

.....

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

.....

Please give details of your compliment: