



‘Soar on wings like eagles, run and not grow weary, walk and not be faint’ Isaiah 40:31

Concerns & Complaints Procedure

At Coombe Bissett CE VA Primary School we all work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. Our aim is to deal with concerns before they become a ‘complaint’. To support this aim we have a clear procedure outlined below.

Any concern or complaint which becomes an allegation of abuse against a member of staff will be dealt with according to the school’s procedure for Allegations of Abuse Against Staff. Any such allegations are reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer who considers the facts and decides on the course of action.

To allow for a proper investigation to take place, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible.

The Complaints Policy should be read in conjunction with the Methodology for Dealing with Complaints attached as Annex 1.

In the interests of fairness to all, and to ensure that any outcome is not prejudiced in any way, or that data protection issues are not compromised, it is important that the subject matter of any complaint should remain confidential to the parties concerned.

1. Raising a concern – Informal Stage

- I. It is normally appropriate to first of all raise any issue or concern directly with a member of teaching staff. Teachers appreciate being made aware of any problems so that they may take any appropriate action before a problem worsens. This can be done by letter/contact book, telephone, or in person. Most concerns are resolved this way by simply by providing further information, reasons or clarification.
- II. If the concern is serious, it is awkward to approach the teacher or if the concern has not been resolved by the teacher, then it may be appropriate to address this directly with the Headteacher, either informally (conversation) or more formally (in writing), [or to the Chair of the Governing Body, if your concern is about the Headteacher].
- III. If you are uncertain about who to contact then please seek advice either from the Headteacher, or from the Clerk to the Governing Body (c/o the school office)

2 Formal Stage

- I. If your concern is not resolved by the informal stage then you should notify the Headteacher in writing. The matter is now treated as a complaint. Alternatively, if your complaint is about the Headteacher, then

you should address your letter to the Chair of the Governing Body (this letter can be handed in at the school office).

- II. You will find a complaint form attached as Annex 2 for you to use. Only completed forms can be considered during the formal stage. All investigations resulting from this, and all communications, will be documented.
- III. In completing the complaint form you should include details which might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of any relevant documentation. Please be as specific as possible about the nature of your complaint to avoid any confusion.
- IV. It is very important that you include a clear statement of the actions that you would like the school to take, in order to resolve your complaint. Without a clear statement it often becomes much more difficult to proceed, and for the complaint to be dealt with.
- V. Once you have completed the complaint form, this, together with your letter, should be placed in a sealed envelope and sent off, as set out above.
- VI. The school will acknowledge receipt of your completed complaint form within 2 school days prior to any investigations, meetings or outcomes.
- VII. The Headteacher [or Chair] may invite you to attend a meeting in order to clarify your complaint. Hopefully an informal resolution will then be achieved at this point. If you accept such an invitation then you may be accompanied by a friend (if you so wish) to assist you in putting across your complaint.
- VIII. If a meeting with the Headteacher [or Chair] is not appropriate or necessary, then further arrangements will be made for the matter to be investigated. Investigations are usually conducted by the Headteacher, in the first instance. If the complaint relates to the Headteacher, the Headteacher's handling of the informal complaint or if the parent is dissatisfied with the outcome of a written complaint to the Headteacher, the complaint should be referred to the Chair of the Governing Body. The chair will consider whether the Headteacher's actions or decisions were reasonable in the light of information available. You will be notified in writing, usually within 5 school days of the school receiving notice of your complaint, of how the school intends to proceed. This notification will include an indication of the anticipated timescale.
- IX. Any investigation will begin as soon as possible. Once such an investigation has been concluded, you will be informed of its conclusion, in writing.
- X. If you are not satisfied with the manner in which your complaint has been dealt with, then you may request that the Governing Body reviews the procedures that the school has followed. You must make any such request in writing, to the Clerk to the Governing Body, within 10 school days of you receiving notice of the outcome. You should make it clear as to why you consider the school has failed in carrying out the correct procedures. The review process, described below, will then be followed. A Complaints Review Request Form is attached as Annex 3 for you to use. 3

3 Review Process

- I. The review process will be carried out by a panel of 3 members of the Governing Body (known as the Complaints Panel). This panel will not have been intentionally aware of any details of the complaint until it has been convened. This will usually take place within 10 school days of the complainant's request being received.
- II. The review process will normally be carried out by the Complaints Panel, considering written evidence provided to them. However, reasonable requests to hear the evidence orally will be considered.

- III. The Complaints Panel will first consider the written evidence provided by the complainant.
- IV. The Panel will then invite representatives of the school [usually the Headteacher, or the Chair of the Panel of the Governing Body], as appropriate, to make a response to the complaint.
- V. In making their decision the panel will have access to all the records kept in relation to the procedures followed to date.
- VI. The complainant and the school representative[s] will be informed in writing of the decision made by the Complaints Panel, usually within 5 school days of the Panel meeting to address the issue. Decisions or outcomes are not made during any face to face meeting with complainants or respondents.
- VII. Once the Complaints Panel has delivered its conclusion the matter will then be considered closed, as far as the school is concerned. Governor decisions are final.
- VIII. If the complainant believes that the Governing Body has acted illegally, unreasonably, or arbitrarily in handling the complaint, then the complainant's only recourse is to then make representations to the Secretary of State for Education. A review is not available simply because the complainant is unhappy with the outcome - only if the procedure has not been followed fully can a complainant pursue the matter.

Vexatious Correspondence and Complaints

In the event of vexatious correspondence and complaints the procedure set out in Annex 6 will be followed.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governing body to monitor the effectiveness of this Complaints Procedure.

Drafted:	Summer 2014
Adopted by FGB:	May 2014
Reviewed:	Summer 2018
To be Reviewed:	May 2021