



BELMONT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Complaints Policy

Date of Approval by Governors:

Signed by Chair of Governors:

Due for Review: November 2018

Introduction:

This policy has been developed in relation to Section 29 of the Education act 2002 alongside DfE 'Departmental Advice: best Practice for School Complaints Procedures. September 2016'.

The majority of issues raised by parents, the community or pupils, are concerns rather than complaints:

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 generally be defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or lack of actions'*.

Belmont School is committed to taking concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish or be asked to follow the school's formal complaints procedure. For the school to be able to investigate a complaint, it needs to be made within one year of the incident occurring. If a complaint is older than a year it is unlikely to be investigated. However, exceptions to this may be made if it is deemed appropriate to do so.

The prime aim of Belmont School's policy is to resolve the complaint as fairly and speedily as possible. Formal complaints will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. Malicious complaints may incur appropriate action by the school.

Who Can make A Complaint

Any person, including members of the general public, may make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that a school provides, unless separate statutory procedures apply eg exclusions or admissions. Schools must not limit complaints to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school.

Areas of Complaint Not Covered by This Policy

The following areas have separate procedures and are therefore not covered in the scope of this policy:

- School admissions;
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs;
- School reorganisation proposals;
- Matters likely to require a Child Protection investigation;

- Exclusion of children from school;
- Whistleblowing;
- Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures;
- Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use the school premises or facilities

The following details outline the stages that can be used to resolve complaints.

The Belmont School Policy has five main stages.

In summary they are as follows:-

- Stage 1 – A concern is raised informally with a staff member.
- Stage 2 – Formal complaint is heard by the complaints co-ordinator or an appropriate member of staff.
- Stage 3 – Complaint is heard by Head teacher
- Stage 4 – Complaint is heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel.
- Stage 5: Referral to the Local Authority if the outcome is deemed to be unsatisfactory

Stage 1 – Raising a Concern

Concerns can be raised with the school at any time and will often generate an immediate response, which will resolve the concern. The school requests that parents make their first contact the child's teacher. On some occasions the concern raised may require investigation, or discussion with others, in which case you will receive an informal but informed response within a day or two. The vast majority of concerns will be satisfactorily dealt with in this way. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 1, please write to, or call the school within 10 school working days and state what you would like the school to do. The school will then look at your complaint at the next stage.

Where the complainant indicates that he/she would have difficulty discussing the complaint with the class teacher, the complaints co-ordinator should be contacted. An alternative staff member may be suggested.

Stage 2 - Complaint heard by the complaints co-ordinator or by an appropriate staff member.

Formal complaints shall be put in writing and addressed to the Business Manager (Mrs Allen). The complaint will be logged, including the date it was received. The school will normally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 2 school working days of receiving it. In many cases this response will also report on the action the school has taken to resolve the issue. Alternatively, a meeting may be convened to discuss the matter further. This meeting will normally take place within 10 working school days. The aim will be to resolve the matter as speedily as possible. However, if you are not satisfied with the result at stage 2 please write to or call the school within 10 school working days of getting out response. You will need to tell the school why you are still not satisfied and what you would like the school to do.

Stage 3 – Complaint heard by Headteacher.

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage 2, the Headteacher will arrange for a further investigation. Following the investigation, the Headteacher will normally give a written response within 10 school working days. If you are dissatisfied with the result at Stage 3, you will need to let the school know within 10 school working days of getting the response.

Stage 4 – Complaint heard by the Governing Body’s Complaints Appeal Panel.

If the matter has still not been resolved at Stage 3, then you will need to write to the Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint. The Chair or a nominated Governor will convene a complaints panel. The hearing will normally take place within 10 school working days of the receipt of the written request for Stage 4 investigation.

The aim of the Appeal Panel hearing is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. All parties will be notified of the Panel’s decision in writing within three school working days after the date of the hearing. The letter will also contain what you need to do if you wish to take the matter further.

***N.B.** In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of the Headteacher, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors will be informed of the complaint. The Chair of Governors will arrange for the matter to be investigated. In cases where the matter concerns the conduct of a member of the Governing Body the member will be informed of the complaint.

The governors appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process.

Stage 5 – Referral to Local Authority

If the complainant believes that the Governing Body has acted unreasonably - the complaint can be referred to the Local Authority.

How Complaints Can be Made and Are Recorded

- A complaint may be made in writing (see appendix 1), by telephone or in writing;
- All notes of meetings and conversations are kept as an accurate record of conversations / communications;
- The progress of the complaint and the final outcome are also recorded.

Appendix 1
Belmont Primary School
COMPLAINT FORM

Please complete and return to Mrs Allen (complaints co-ordinator) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Daytime telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give details of your complaint.

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.

**Belmont Primary School
COMPLAINT FORM**

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official Use.

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complainant referred to:

Date: