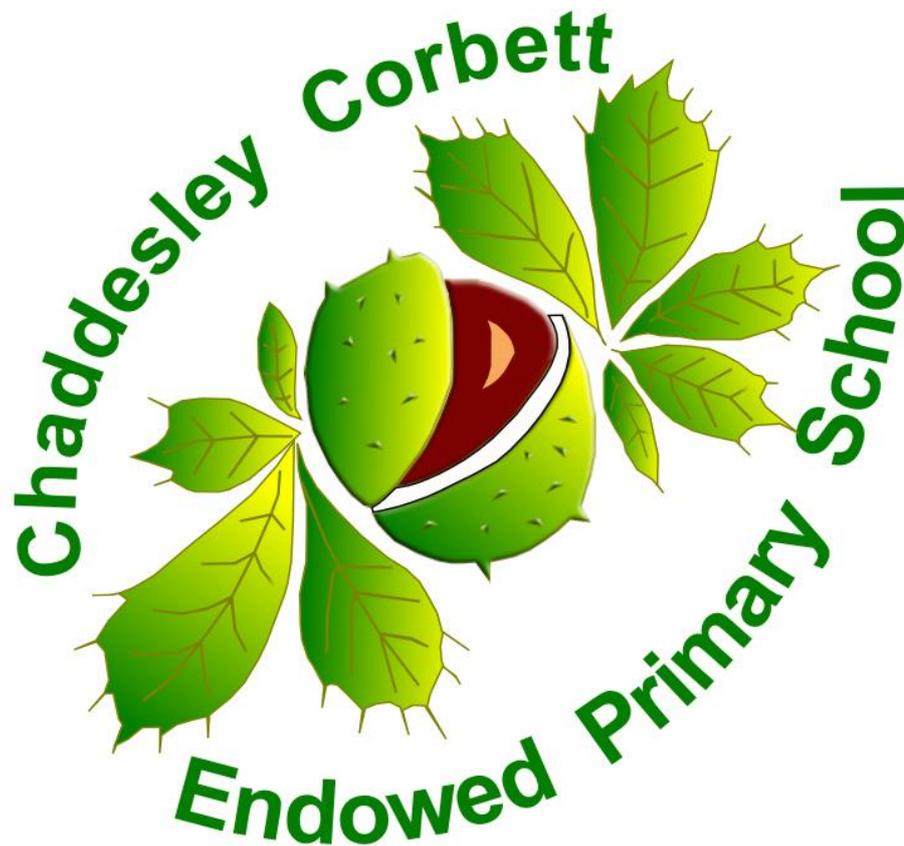


CHADDESLEY CORBETT ENDOWED PRIMARY SCHOOL



Complaints Procedure

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Introduction

1. We recognise that it is important that any concerns are addressed at the earliest opportunity. We need to know as soon as possible when parents/carers or children are concerned or worried so that we can work together to find a solution. It is hoped that the majority of concerns and complaints can be resolved informally. However, we recognise that in some cases parents/carers may wish to have their concern dealt with more formally. This process begins when a parent/carer decides to make a formal “complaint”
2. This “Complaints Procedure” is a process that is designed to be fair and consistent. It is designed so that all concerned have a fair opportunity to have their say and to be treated similarly.

Stages

3. Informal Stages: These stages are designed so that the parent/carer is listened to by the most relevant member of staff, and the complaint dealt with as quickly as possible. However, if the complaint concerns a particular member of staff it is possible to move onto the following stage immediately. This is particularly true if the complaint concerns the head teacher. In this case the chair of governors may be contacted in the first instance.
 - Stage 1. A parent/carer discusses their concern with a member of staff (often the class teacher). If the concern is not resolved then proceed to stage 2.
 - Stage 2. (up to 3 school days) A parent/carer refers the matter to the Phase Manager. The Phase Manager discusses the matter with the relevant member of staff, arranges to meet with the parent/carer and records the outcome of the meeting. If the concern is not resolved then proceed to stage 3.
 - Stage 3. (up to 3 school days) A parent/carer refers the matter to the Deputy Headteacher. The Deputy Headteacher discusses the matter with the relevant

member of staff, arranges to meet with the parent/carer and records the outcome of the meeting. If the concern is not resolved then proceed to stage 4.

- Stage 4. (up to 3 school days) A parent carer refers the matter to the Headteacher, who having consulted with relevant staff will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer and record the actions taken and the outcome of the meeting. If the concern is not resolved then proceed to stage 5.
- Stage 5. (up to 7 school days) The parent/carer contacts the Chair of Governors, who will discuss the matter with the Headteacher, collect information and arrange a meeting with them to discuss their concerns. The outcome of the meeting is recorded in a letter. If the concern is not resolved then the matter will become a formal complaint.

Formal Stages:

Stage 6. The parent/carer writes to the Chairman of Governors, outlining their complaint, asking for the formal stage of the complaints procedure to be initiated. A panel is convened to hear the complaint (up to 15 school days). The Chairman of the Complaints Panel writes to the complainant with the result (up to 5 school days).

- Stage 7. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, then a formal complaint is made to the Director of Children's Services at Worcestershire County Council. The Governing Body will forward all relevant paperwork to the LA.

Complaints Panel Hearings

4. Following receipt of a formal complaint the Chairman of Governors will convene a Complaints Panel of 3 (or exceptionally 5) governors, to meet within 15 school days of the written complaint. The whole Governing Body will not hear individual complaints at any stage.
5. All governors sitting on a complaints panel will remember that:
 - It is important that the hearing is independent and impartial and that it is seen to be so. No governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
 - The aim of the hearing, which will be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. However, it has to be recognised the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to

establish the facts and make recommendations, which will satisfy the complainant that his or her complaint has been taken seriously.

- An effective panel will acknowledge that many complainants feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. Parents often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child. The Chair of the Panel will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible. The layout of the room will set the tone and care is needed to ensure the setting is informal and not adversarial.
 - Extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child. Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings will ensure that the child does not feel intimidated. The panel needs to give any views expressed by a child the same consideration as those of an adult. Where the child's parent is the complainant, the parent should be given the opportunity to say which parts of the hearing, if any, the child needs to attend.
 - The governors sitting on the panel must be aware of the complaints procedure as described in this document.
 - If the complaint concerns a member of staff, they will be entitled to have full union representation at the hearing.
6. The Clerk to the Governors will act as Clerk to the Complaints Panel. The Clerk will be the contact point for the complainant and is required to:
- Send the complainant the Complaints Form at Appendix 1.
 - Set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates and venue are convenient to all parties;
 - Obtain names of any witnesses attending;
 - Collate any written material and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing;
 - Meet and welcome the parties as they arrive at the hearing;
 - Make a written record of the proceedings;
 - Notify all parties of the panel's decision, within 5 school days of the panel's hearing.
7. The Chairman of the Complaints Panel will ensure that:
- No member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure;
 - The remit of the panel is explained to the parties;
 - The hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy;

- Parents and others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease;
- Each party has the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption and is allowed to ask questions;
- The issues are addressed;
- Key findings of fact are made;
- All parties see written material. If a new issue arises the chairman of the Complaints panel will decide if it is relevant to the matter and if so all parties will be given the opportunity to consider and comment on it;
- The panel is open-minded and acts independently.

Conduct of the Hearing

8. The procedure to be followed at the hearing is a matter for the discretion of the Panel. However, it should broadly follow the example at Appendix 2.

The Remit of The Complaints Panel

9. The Panel can:
 - dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
 - uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
 - decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
 - recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

Notification of the Panel's Decision

10. The Chairman of the Panel will record the Panels decision and reasons for it in writing.
11. Within 5 school days of the Panel hearing the Clerk must send to the complainant:
 - a copy of the panel's decision and reasons
 - if the appeal is dismissed in whole or in part, then the Clerk will include details of the further rights of appeal to the Director of Education.

Appendix 1

CHADDESLEY CORBETT ENDOWED PRIMARY SCHOOL

COMPLAINT FORM

Please complete and return to The Clerk to the Governors, c/o The School Office, who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time 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.

(Whom did you speak to and what was the response?)

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

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

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 2

Panel Hearing Procedure

- The hearing will be as informal as possible.
- Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.
- After introductions, the complainant will be invited to explain their complaint, and will be followed by any witnesses.
- The Headteacher may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The Headteacher will then be invited to explain the school's actions and will be followed by any school's witnesses.
- The complainant may question both the headteacher and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The panel may ask questions at any point.
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
- The Headteacher will then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
- The Chairman explains that both parties will hear from the panel within 7 days.
- Both parties will leave to allow the panel to reach its decision.