



Complaints Procedure

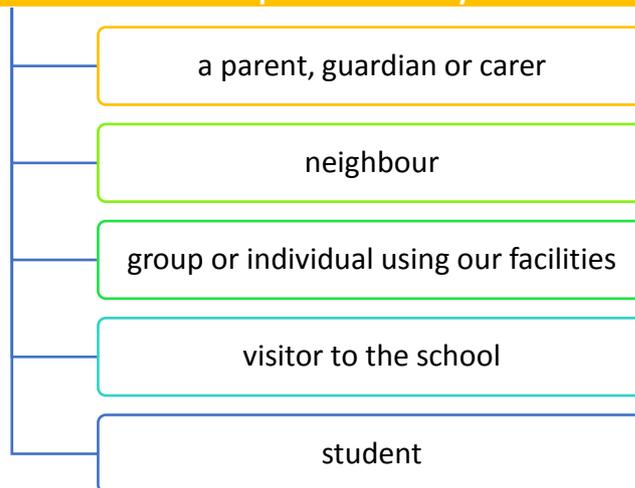
Policy approved and adopted: February 2019

Review date: February 2022

This policy states the processes and procedures of how Cove Junior School will deal with complaints. We want our community to feel able to express their views and or concerns with the full knowledge and confidence that they will be dealt with fairly.

However, we will not respond to rude, abusive, racist or homophobic behaviour.

You can use this process if you are a:



Questions and concerns we can help with:

- General matters or concerns
- National curriculum and matters relating to it
- Provision of collective worship and religious education
- School staff
- School policy

Questions and concerns this policy doesn't deal with:

- Admissions
- Exclusions
- Transfers
- Employment

Concerned about something?

We find that most problems at school can be resolved by talking about them. We are always happy to discuss the situation with you. If we can't see you straight away, we will make an appointment to talk to you as soon as possible.

How we would treat your concern or complaint? We will:

Talk to you about your concern as soon as possible.

Advise you of the correct procedure for your concerns.

Deal with any complaints within the recommended timescales, by an appropriate person, in a polite and professional manner.

Ensure that staff, governors and parents are aware of the process and procedures to be followed when dealing with a complaint.

Maintain appropriate levels confidentiality.

Ensure that solving the problem is the key focus rather than blaming anyone.

What do I do if I am worried about my child?

1. Talk to the class teacher. Tell them what the problem is, how it is affecting your child and what you hope might happen to resolve things.

2. If the same problem continues, and you don't feel that the class teacher is able to resolve it for you, talk to a member of the Leadership Team. These staff and their roles can be found on the school's website.

We will:

- Keep a record of your concern, giving a summary of what has been said.
- Investigate your concern and tell you what we have found out, and what we are doing to help resolve things.
- Tell the Headteacher about your concerns.
- Keep you informed about what is happening.

What do I do if the concern is about a member of staff?

In this case, please contact the Headteacher. You can do this in person, by telephone, by letter (please date) or email (headteacher@cove-jun.hants.sch.uk).

What do I do if the concern is about the Headteacher?

1. Talk to the Headteacher about your concern first.

2. If you feel that talking to the Headteacher is not appropriate, then contact Chair of Governors by email (Chair.Gov@cove-jun.hants.sch.uk) or by letter (please date) to the school.

Making a Formal Complaint to the Headteacher

At this stage we hope that your concerns have been resolved, and therefore no further action needs to be taken. However, if you have followed the step above and you are still not happy with the solution the next stage is to make a formal complaint to the headteacher.

Please provide us with as much detail as you can to help us investigate your complaint.

- Say what the problem is.
- Say what you would like to happen to help solve things.
- Include any relevant information (documents, previous emails, times and dates of events and conversations)

1

- You need to write (letter (please date) or email) to the Headteacher within **14 days** of your last conversation with a member of the Leadership Team.

2

- You will hear back within 5 school days (unless there is a holiday) to confirm we have received your letter.

3

- If an in-depth investigation needs to be carried out we will tell you and say when you should expect a full reply. This is usually within 20 school days and may involve interviewing witnesses or taking statements from those involved.

4

- We may need to meet with you to discuss your concerns in greater depth before the end of the investigation.

5

- At the end of the process you will be notified in writing about the result of the investigation. This will include an explanation of the decision that has been taken and information about actions the school is taking as part of the resolution.

Please Note

- **Records of all meetings, phone calls, witness statements, and actions the school has taken will be kept. However, we will not respond to rude, abusive, racist or homophobic behaviour.**

Making a Formal Complaint to the Chair of Governors

If, after your written reply from the Headteacher, you are still unsatisfied with the reply or how your complaint has been handled, you can then refer your complaint to the Chair of Governors.

1

- **Write to the Chair of Governors** giving the full details of your complaint within **28 days** and explain why you are not satisfied with the Headteacher's response. Please remember to date the letter.

2

- You will need to include any records or documents that you have relating to the complaint.

3

- You will hear back within 5 school days (unless there is a holiday) to confirm that the Chair has received your letter. If an in-depth investigation needs to be carried out we will tell you and say when you should expect a full reply. This is usually within 20 school days.

4

- The Chair will meet with the Headteacher to discuss possible solutions, and may need to meet with you to discuss your concerns in greater depth before the end of the investigation.

5

- At the end of the process the Chair will notify you in writing about the result of the investigation. This will include an explanation of the decision that has been taken and information about actions the school is taking as part of the resolution.

Please Note

- ***Records of all meetings, phone calls, witness statements, and actions the school has taken will be kept. However, we will not respond to rude, abusive, racist or homophobic behaviour.***

Decision Making by the Chair of Governors

1

- The Chair will need to decide if the responsibility lies with the Governing Body, if they are delegated to the Headteacher by the Governing Body or if they lie within the Headteachers terms & conditions and relate to the organisation, management and control of the school.

2

- If it is appropriate the Chair may re-interview staff and/ or pupils and take statements. When a pupil is interviewed a parent/carer will be present unless the child does not wish this. In which case a member of staff with whom the child feels comfortable will be present.

3

- Where the responsibility lies with the Governing Body, the Chair can reconsider the matter. This may include new information that the Headteacher had not been aware of. The Chair can ask the Headteacher to reconsider their response in the light of this new information.

4

- Where the responsibility lies with the Headteacher, the Chair can only review the decision. In this case, the Chair will consider whether the Headteacher acted and replied reasonably, given the information available.

5

- If it is the Headteacher's conduct that is being investigated, the Chair of Governors will decide whether this is dealt with through the complaints procedure or via the Staff Disciplinary Procedure.

Please Note

- ***Records of all meetings, phone calls, witness statements, and actions the school has taken will be kept.***

What can I do if I am still not happy?

If you are still not satisfied at this stage you may contact the **Governor's Appeals Panel**. **This will need to be done in writing with 28 days of the Chair's response**. You will need to explain why you are not happy with the Headteacher's and Chair of Governors' responses and how you hope the situation might be resolved. **Letters should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governors and sent to the school, marked URGENT AND CONFIDENTIAL**

1

- The Governing Body will respond within 5 days explaining what will happen next and by when.

2

- The Appeals Panel, which will be made up of 3 Governors with no prior involvement, and the Clerk will arrange a formal meeting.

3

- You will be invited to the meeting and can be accompanied by a friend. The Headteacher, relevant members of staff and the Chair, along with the Clerk and the Appeals Panel will also be there.

4

- As before the Panel will need to decide if they have the authority to reconsider the decision or simply review it. If new evidence comes to light during the review the Panel can refer it back to the Headteacher.

5

- If the Headteacher's conduct is being investigated the Panel needs to decide whether this is dealt with through the complaints procedure or via the staff disciplinary procedure.

6

- The Panel will write to you within 2 days of the meeting, unless the Headteacher needs to consider recommendations. This letter will have a summary of the issues, the points discussed, the reasons for the decision, any actions or the outcome.

What happens with the Appeal Panel?

1

- The Chair of the Appeal Panel will explain how the meeting will take place, check that everyone has relevant documents and information, and explain the authority of the panel. The clerk will take notes of the meeting

2

- . You will talk about your complaint first but the Headteacher will be allowed to ask questions.

3

- Then the Headteacher will talk about your complaint, explaining their response. This time you will be allowed to ask questions.

4

- After this the Panel members can ask any questions of either yourself or the Headteacher.

5

- You will then be allowed to sum up your reasons for continuing with your complaint. The Headteacher will then make their summary.

6

- The Panel will make sure that everyone has put across their case in full and then close the meeting.

You have now reached the end of our complaints procedure. If you want to take your complaint further, you now must raise it with Hampshire County Council Education Services by sending an email to childrens.services@hants.gov.uk; by telephoning 01962 847484; or by using the online complaints form which can be found at:

https://forms.hants.gov.uk/en/AchieveForms/?form_uri=sandbox-publish://AF-Process-57ee0d15-0e72-42ac-a6cc-561d0e04f457/AF-Stage-ad447409-37f9-473c-9576-2cac5b7166ba/definition.json&redirectlink=/en&cancelRedirectLink=/en

You can also contact the same advisor about complaints involving the National Curriculum or Religious Education or complain directly to the Department for Education at www.gov.uk/complain-about-school.

Other Forms of Complaint

Vexatious Complaints

- This is where someone continually, repeatedly or obsessively pursues a concern. It could also include someone seeking unrealistic outcomes, or when someone behaves in an unreasonable way.
- If the complaints procedure has been followed through each stage, and a conclusion has already been reached, but the person continues to complain, the school may then send out a letter explaining:
 - Briefly what the final response was, making reference to previous letters that responded to their complaint.
 - The matter is now considered closed and there will be no more correspondence from school.
 - Any further complaints about the same matter will be put on file but not responded to.

Abusive Complaints (This includes letters, telephone calls, e-mails, or in person)

- We believe that **everyone** has the right to be treated courteously and with respect.
- If the abusive complaint is in person, the member of staff will seek a member of the Leadership Team and end the meeting unless the behaviour improves.
- If the abusive complaint is on the telephone, the member of staff receiving the call will explain that they will end the call unless the caller's behaviour improves.
- If there is a complaint made about abusive behaviour the Headteacher will;
 - Complete a violent incident form and forward it to the Local Authority.
 - Write to the complainant requesting that this type of behaviour stops immediately.
 - Refuse contact with all staff.
 - Report the incident to the Police- particularly if the abuse is physical or if it is persistent as a form of harassment. - Seek further advice from the Legal Service in the Chief Executives Department.

Anonymous Complaints

- The Headteacher and the Chair of Governors need to consider whether, in the light of anonymous complaints, any action needs to be taken.

Useful Contacts

School

- Cove Junior School, Fernhill Road, Cove, Farnborough, Hants, GU14 9SA
- 01252 542941
- headteacher@cove-jun.hants.sch.uk

Chair of the Governors

- Cove Junior School, Fernhill Road, Cove, Farnborough, Hants, GU14 9SA
- Chair.Gov@cove-jun.hants.sch.uk

Governors Appeals Panel

- Cove Junior School, Fernhill Road, Cove, Farnborough, Hants, GU14 9SA ***(Please mark Urgent and Confidential and address to The Clerk of the Governors)***

Local Authority Complaints Advisor

- 01962 847484

Department for Education

- www.gov.uk/complain-about-school