



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

POLICY STATEMENT

At Colston Bassett School, we believe that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the school. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints and records will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6(2)(j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where other legal obligation prevails. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns.

We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our school to a swift and satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved. To achieve this, we operate the following complaints procedure, and this is available to parents on request as well as to school inspectors.

INFORMAL RESOLUTION

- It is the policy of the school to take all reported concerns seriously and to act upon them as quickly as is practically and reasonably possible.
- Parents and others may raise issues and concerns either over the telephone, in writing or in person. The latter is normally dealt with immediately by a member of staff. Most expressions of dissatisfaction are not formal complaints.
- All reported concerns must be treated seriously and recorded using a 'Record of Concerns' Form and appropriate action taken relative to the reported concern. The action(s) should then be documented. A copy of the form should be given to the Headteacher and then filed in the school office.
- A telephone reply may be the most effective way of dealing with a concern. However, full and clear notes of the conversation must be made. Alternatively the dissatisfied person should be invited into school to informally discuss the issues and to try and agree a resolution. It is advisable to have a senior member of staff present to assist or mediate.
- It is important to be prepared for the meeting or telephone conversation and to demonstrate good knowledge of the family, the pupil and the circumstances leading to the person raising the concern.
- Staff must be polite and courteous at all times ensuring that the good reputation of the school and the high standards of care are maintained.
- The dissatisfied person should be informed of the way in which the matter is being dealt with. Any written communications must be printed on headed paper and approved by the Headteacher or nominated person.
- Any promises made should always be fulfilled. Commitments should not be made on behalf of another person, without first checking that they are able to meet that commitment.

- Once a concern has been fully addressed this should be communicated to the person raising the concern.

FORMAL RESOLUTION

- If a concern/complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, we have a template form for recording concerns/complaints; the form may be completed with the Headteacher and signed by the parent.
- In most cases the Headteacher will meet/speak to the parents concerned, normally within seven working days (term time) of receiving the complaint to discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage. It may be necessary for the Headteacher to carry out further investigations.
- The Headteacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint and they will also be recorded on ScholarPack.
- Once the Headteacher is satisfied that, so far as practicable, all relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The Headteacher will also give reasons for his/her decision. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

PANEL HEARING

- If parents seek to invoke a panel hearing (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the School Directors who call hearings of the Complaints Panel.
- The matter will be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matter detailed in the complaint – usually the School Directors, and a further person who shall be independent of the management and running of the school (a mediator). A mediator has no legal powers but can help define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it may be resolved. The panel will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and usually within ten working days (term time).
- The mediator and the Directors will keep all discussion confidential. They may hold separate meetings with the school personnel and the parent, if this is decided to be helpful. The mediator and the Directors will keep an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice that is given.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties no later than seven working days prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations which it shall complete within ten working days (term time) of the Hearing.
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it (the decision of the Panel will be final). The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Headteacher and where relevant, the person complained of.

RECORDS

A record of complaints against the school and/or the children and/or the adults working in our school is kept, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed. The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the Complaints Summary Record which is available for parents and any school inspectors on request.

For complaints made by parents who have children in our Reception Class, in line with the statutory requirements linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage Welfare standard, the following is applicable: **The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Early Years Directorate (OFSTED) and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.**

If a parent believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with our complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Colston Bassett School. They will consider whether the school has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

Parents can refer their complaint to the Department for Education by telephone on **0370 000 2288**, online at www.education.gov.uk/contactus, or by writing to:

**Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2W**

**POLICY LAST REVIEWED:
OCTOBER 2019**