

# COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE



## YSGOL GYNRADD GATHOLIG PADARN SANT

Date Adopted: September 2021

Date of Review: September 2023

David Greaney, Chair of the Governing Body

Signed: *David Greaney*

# *St Padarn's RC Primary School Complaints Policy and Procedure*

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 St. Padarn's RC Primary School is committed to dealing effectively with complaints. We aim to clarify any issues about which you are not sure. If possible we will put right any mistakes we have made and we will apologise. We aim to learn from mistakes and use that experience to improve what we do.
- 1.2 Our definition of a complaint is 'an expression of dissatisfaction in relation to the school or a member of its staff that requires a response from the school.'
- 1.3 This complaints procedure supports our commitment and is a way of ensuring that anyone with an interest in the school can raise a concern, with confidence that it will be heard and, if well-founded, addressed in an appropriate and timely fashion.

## **2. When to use this procedure**

- 2.1 When you have a concern or make a complaint we will usually respond in the way we explain below. Sometimes you might be concerned about matters that are not decided by the school, in which case we will tell you who to complain to. At other times you may be concerned about matters that are handled by other procedures, in which case we will explain to you how your concern will be dealt with.
- 2.2 If your concern or complaint is about another body as well as the school (for example the local authority) we will work with them to decide how to handle your concern.

## **3. Have you asked us yet?**

- 3.1 If you are approaching us for the first time you should give us a chance to respond. If you are not happy with our response then you may make your complaint using the procedure we describe below. Most concerns can be settled quickly just by speaking to the relevant person in school, without the need to use a formal procedure.

## **4. What we expect from you**

- 4.1 We believe that all complainants have a right to be heard, understood and respected. But school staff and governors have the same right. We expect you to be polite and courteous. We will not tolerate aggressive, abusive or unreasonable behaviour. We will also not tolerate unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence or vexatious complaining.

## **5. Our approach to answering your concern or complaint**

- 5.1 We will consider all your concerns and complaints in an open and fair way.
- 5.2 At all times the school will respect the rights and feelings of those involved and make every effort to protect confidential information.
- 5.3 Timescales for dealing with your concerns or complaints may need to be extended following discussion with you.
- 5.4 We may ask for advice from the local authority or diocesan authority where appropriate.
- 5.5 Some types of concern or complaint may raise issues that have to be dealt with in another way (other than this complaints policy), in which case we will explain why this is so, and will tell you what steps will be taken.
- 5.6 The governing body will keep the records of documents used to investigate your concern or complaint for seven years after it has been dealt with. Records will be kept in school and reviewed by the governing body after seven years to decide if they need to be kept for longer.
- 5.7 Complaints that are made anonymously will be recorded but an investigation will be at the discretion of the school depending on the nature of the complaint.
- 5.8 Where complaints are considered to have been made only to cause harm or offence to individuals or the school, the governing body will ensure that records are kept of the investigations that are made and what actions are taken, including the reasons for 'no action'.

## **Procedures for Dealing with Complaints to Governing Bodies**

The Governing Body of St Padarn's School support the principal that good communication, the provision of clear information and straightforward procedures are essential to an open and transparent relationship between a school and its key partners.

The Governing Body will treat concerns or complaints seriously and will respond to them quickly and effectively.

To achieve this objective the Governing Body has approved the following procedures to deal with concerns or complaints from parents, members of staff; governors, pupils, members of the local community and others to ensure that they are clear how they can express concerns and formal complaints, and how they will be responded to.

### **1. Stages for Handling Complaints from Parents and others**

#### Stage 1

1. Complaint to be made orally or in writing to class teacher or Head of Year etc. Complainant to be given opportunity to meet the member of staff with whom they have raised the matter or the Complaints Officer (where appointed). Having investigated the issue an indication of the decision reached will usually be conveyed to the complainant within 10 school days.

*(If the Headteacher is the first recipient of the complaint a decision will be made whether to delegate consideration to another member of staff under stage 1 or whether to proceed to stage 2)*

1. If the complaint cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complainant will be informed in writing that the matter has been referred to the Headteacher to investigate

#### Stage 2

2. If the complaint was initially made orally, the matter will have to be put in writing at this stage.
3. The Headteacher will acknowledge the complaint in writing and, provide a copy of the of the complaints procedure and give a target date for providing a response.

4. Arrangements will be made for the complainant to meet the Headteacher and will be allowed to be accompanied by a friend or relative who can speak on their behalf. The Headteacher may also wish to have another person present to witness the discussion.
5. The Headteacher will usually convey the decision in writing to the complainant within 10 school days. If this is not possible to deal with the matter within this time the complainant will be informed of the reason and given a date when consideration is expected to be concluded.

### Stage 3

6. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the above informal stages he/she is entitled to make a formal complaint to the Chairman of the Governing Body.
7. On receipt of the written complaint the Chairman will make arrangements for the clerk to the governing body to acknowledge receipt of the letter, usually within 5 school days and make arrangements for the Complaints Committee of the Governing Body to meet to hear the complaint, usually within 15 school days of receipt of the complaint. The complainant and the person(s) complained against will be invited to provide in advance any written documentation they wish the committee to consider.
8. The purpose of the hearing is to enable members of the Committee to clarify facts and ascertain whether there are grounds for upholding the complaint. All parties involved in the complaint are entitled to provide evidence. **This procedure is intended to gain all relevant information and should not become a confrontational process**
9. Once all the evidence has been presented the Committee will consider its decision in private.
10. The Committee's decision will usually be sent to the complainant within 5 school days of the hearing, with an explanation of the reasons for the decision.

## Withdrawal of Complaint

A complainant is able to withdraw a complaint at any time by giving notice in writing to the person dealing with the complaint. The letter will be acknowledged in writing.

## 2. Complaint about the Headteacher

1. If the complaint is about the Headteacher, it must be sent in writing to the Chairman of the Governors.
2. The Chairman may decide to investigate the complaint or delegate the matter to another Governor or a designated officer
3. The Chairman will acknowledge the complaint in writing and, provide a copy of the complaints procedure and give a target date for providing a response.
4. Arrangements will be made for the complainant to meet the person investigating the complaint and will be allowed, if required, to be accompanied by a friend or relative who can speak on their behalf. The person investigating the complaint may also wish to have another person present to witness the discussion. The person investigating the complaint may also wish to meet other persons referred to in the complaint or third parties who may be able to provide further information.
5. The decision will usually be conveyed in writing to the complainant within 10 school days. If it is not possible to deal with the matter within this time the complainant will be informed of the reason and given a date when consideration is expected to be concluded.
6. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the above informal stages he/she is entitled to make a formal complaint to the Chairman of the Governing Body.
7. On receipt of the written complaint, the Chairman will make arrangements for the clerk to the governing body to acknowledge receipt of the letter usually within 5 school days and make arrangements for the Complaints Committee of the Governing Body to meet to hear the complaint usually within 15 school days of receipt of the complaint. The complainant and the person(s) complained against will be invited to provide any written documentation they wish the committee to consider.
8. The purpose of the hearing is to enable members of the Committee to clarify facts and ascertain whether there are grounds for upholding the complaint. All parties involved in the complaint are entitled to provide evidence. **This procedure is intended to gain all**

**relevant information and should not become a confrontational process**

9. Once all the evidence has been presented the Committee will consider its decision in private.
10. The Committee's decision will be sent to the complainant within 5 school days of the hearing, with an explanation of the reasons for the decision.

**Withdrawal of Complaint**

A complainant is able to withdraw a complaint at any time by giving notice in writing to the person dealing with the complaint. The letter will be acknowledged in writing

**3. Complaint against Complaints Officer (if there is one)**

1. The complaint to be made in writing to the Headteacher.
2. The Headteacher will decide whether to investigate or refer the matter to a senior member of staff to investigate.
3. The Headteacher will acknowledge the complaint in writing, provide a copy of the complaints procedure and give a target date for providing a response.
4. Arrangements will be made for the complainant to meet the person investigating the complaint and will be allowed, if required, to be accompanied by a friend or relative who can speak on their behalf. The person investigating the complaint may also wish to have another person present to witness the discussion. The person investigating the complaint may also wish to meet other persons referred to in the complaint or third parties who may be able to provide further information.
5. The decision will usually be conveyed in writing to the complainant within 10 school days. If it is not possible to deal with the matter within this time the complainant will be informed and given a date when consideration is expected to be concluded.
6. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the above informal stages he/she is entitled to make a formal complaint to the Chairman of the Governing Body.

7. On receipt of the written complaint, the Chairman will make arrangements for the clerk to the governing body to acknowledge receipt of the letter usually within 5 school days and make arrangements for the Complaints Committee of the Governing Body to meet to hear the complaint usually within 15 school days of receipt of the complaint. The complainant and the person(s) complained against will be invited to provide any written documentation they wish the committee to consider.
8. The purpose of the hearing is to enable members of the Committee to clarify facts and ascertain whether there are grounds for upholding the complaint. All parties involved in the complaint are entitled to provide evidence. **This procedure is intended to gain all relevant information and should not become a confrontational process**
9. Once all the evidence has been presented the Committee will consider its decision in private.
10. The Committee's decision will be sent to the complainant within 5 school days of the hearing, with an explanation of the reasons for the decision.

### **Withdrawal of Complaint**

A complainant is able to withdraw a complaint at any time by giving notice in writing to the person dealing with the complaint. The letter will be acknowledged in writing

### **4. Complaint about the Chairman of the Governing Body and/or Chairman of the Governing Body and the Headteacher together**

1. Any complaint about the Chairman of the Governing Body or the Chairman and Headteacher together, must be sent to the Vice Chairman
2. The Vice Chairman may consider investigating the complaint or delegate this task to another designated governor
3. The Vice Chairman will acknowledge the complaint in writing and, provide a copy of the complaints procedure and give a target date for providing a response.
4. Arrangements will be made for the complainant to meet the person investigating the complaint and will be allowed, if required, to be accompanied by a friend or relative who can speak on their behalf. The person investigating the complaint may also wish to have



another person present to witness the discussion. The person investigating the complaint may also wish to meet other persons referred to in the complaint or third parties who may be able to provide further information.

5. The decision will usually be conveyed in writing to the complainant within 10 school days. If it is not possible to deal with the matter within this time the complainant will be informed of the reason and given a date when consideration is expected to be concluded.
6. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the above informal stages he/she is entitled to make a formal complaint to the Vice-Chairman of the Governing Body.
7. On receipt of the written complaint the Vice-Chairman will make arrangements for the clerk to the governing body to acknowledge receipt of the letter usually within 5 school days and make arrangements for the Complaints Committee of the Governing Body to meet to hear the complaint usually within 15 school days of receipt of the complaint. The complainant and the person(s) complained against will be invited to provide any written documentation they wish the committee to consider.
8. The purpose of the hearing is to enable members of the Committee to clarify facts and ascertain whether there are grounds for upholding the complaint. All parties involved in the complaint are entitled to provide evidence. **This procedure is intended to gain all relevant information and should not become a confrontational process**
9. Once all the evidence has been presented the Committee will consider its decision in private.
10. The Committee's decision will be sent to the complainant within 5 school days of the hearing, with an explanation of the reasons for the decision.

### **Withdrawal of Complaint**

A complainant is able to withdraw a complaint at any time by giving notice in writing to the person dealing with the complaint. The letter will be acknowledged in writing

### **5. Complaint about the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governors together**

1. Where the complaint is about the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Governing Body the complaint must be put in writing to the Clerk of the Governing Body who will refer the matter to the Chair of the Complaints Committee

*(If the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Governing Body are also members of the Complaints Committee then arrangements will be made for them to be substituted by other members of the Governing Body)*

2. On receipt of the written complaint the Chairman of the Complaints Committee will make arrangements for the Clerk to the governing body to acknowledge receipt of the letter, usually within 5 school days and make arrangements for the Complaints Committee of the Governing Body to meet to hear the complaint usually within 15 school days of receipt of the complaint. The complainant and the person(s) complained against will be invited to provide any written documentation they wish the committee to consider.
3. The purpose of the hearing is to enable members of the Committee to clarify facts and ascertain whether there are grounds for upholding the complaint. All parties involved in the complaint are entitled to provide evidence. **This procedure is intended to gain all relevant information and should not become a confrontational process**
4. Once all the evidence has been presented the Committee will consider its decision in private.
5. The Committee's decision will be sent to the complainant within 5 school days of the hearing, with an explanation of the reasons for the decision.

### **Withdrawal of Complaint**

A complainant is able to withdraw a complaint at any time by giving notice in writing to the person dealing with the complaint. The letter will be acknowledged in writing.

### **6. Complaint about a Governor (including Vice Chair) or Group of Governors**

1. If a complaint is made about the actions of a Governor or a group of Governors then the complaint must be put in writing and sent to the Chairman of the Governing Body.

*(If the Chairman of the Governing Body is one of the group of governors complained about then the complaint should be made to the Vice-Chairman who will then deal with the complaint.*

*If however the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are part of the group of Governors being complained about, the complaint should be*

*referred to the Clerk of the Governing Body who will refer the matter to the Chairman of the Complaints Committee)*

2. The Chairman may decide to investigate the complaint or delegate the matter to another Governor or another designated officer
3. The Chairman will acknowledge the complaint in writing and, provide a copy of the complaints procedure and give a target date for providing a response.
4. Arrangements will be made for the complainant to meet the person investigating the complaint and will be allowed, if required, to be accompanied by a friend or relative who can speak on their behalf. The person investigating the complaint may also wish to have another person present to witness the discussion. The person investigating the complaint may also wish to meet other persons referred to in the complaint or third parties who may be able to provide further information.
5. The decision will usually be conveyed in writing to the complainant within 10 school days. If it is not possible to deal with the matter within this time the complainant will be informed of the reason and given a date when consideration is expected to be concluded.
6. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the above informal stages he/she is entitled to make a formal complaint to the Chairman of the Governing Body.
7. On receipt of the written complaint the Chairman will make arrangements for the clerk to the governing body to acknowledge receipt of the letter usually within 5 school days and make arrangements for the Complaints Committee of the Governing Body to meet to hear the complaint usually within 15 school days of receipt of the complaint. The complainant and the person(s) complained against will be invited to provide any written documentation they wish the committee to consider.
8. The purpose of the hearing is to enable members of the Committee to clarify facts and ascertain whether there are grounds for upholding the complaint. All parties involved in the complaint are entitled to provide evidence. **This procedure is intended to gain all relevant information and should not become a confrontational process**
9. Once all the evidence has been presented the Committee will consider its decision in private.
10. The Committee's decision will be sent to the complainant within 5 school days of the hearing, with an explanation of the reasons for the decision.

## **Withdrawal of Complaint**

A complainant is able to withdraw a complaint at any time by giving notice in writing to the person dealing with the complaint. The letter will be acknowledged in writing

## **7. Complaint Concerning the Whole Governing Body**

Any complaints about the actions of the whole governing body should be sent to the Clerk of the Governing Body who will inform the Headteacher, Chairman of the Governing Body and the LEA and as appropriate the diocesan authority.

The LEA will then advise the complainant of the steps being taken to deal with the complaint.

## **8. Our commitment to you**

- 8.1 We will take your concerns and complaints seriously and, where we have made mistakes, will try to learn from them.
- 8.2 If you need help to make your concerns known we will try and assist you. If you are a young person and need extra assistance the Welsh Government has established MEIC which is a national advocacy and advice helpline for children and young people. Advice and support can also be accessed from the Children's Commissioner for Wales.
- 8.3 The governing body has consulted with staff and pupils on this policy and will consult further if any amendments are made in the future.

## **See cover sheet for signatures.**

MEIC may be contacted by freephone: 0808 802 3456, or text: 84001. This service is operated 24 hours a day. The Children's Commissioner for Wales can be contacted by freephone: 0808 801 1000 (Monday to Friday 9a.m. to 5p.m.), text: 80 800 (start your message with COM) or e-mail: [advice@childcomwales.org.uk](mailto:advice@childcomwales.org.uk)