



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Date of last review	June 2024	Review period	Two years
Date of next review	June 2026	Committee	School Improvement
Policy type	Statutory		

Jesus said, 'I am the Good Shepherd... I know my sheep and my sheep know me.' John 10.14

Our School Vision

We are inspired to be a vibrant, joyful community in which we know and love one another, leading together and growing together by:

- Appreciating everyone and everything around us
- Making one another feel safe
- Sharing, so no one feels left out
- Living well together in love
- Moving forward together in hope

Introduction

We strive to provide a good education for all our children. On the basis of our vision and values, the Head teacher and staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents or guardians. This policy sets out the procedures that the school follows in such cases.

If any parents are unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or have any concerns relating to the school, we encourage them to talk to the child's class teacher immediately.

We deal with all complaints in accordance with procedures laid down by the education authority. If the school itself cannot resolve a complaint, those concerned can refer the matter to the local education authority.

Parents have the right, as a last resort, to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education, if they still feel that their complaint has not been properly addressed.

2 Aims

On the basis of our vision and values, our school aims to be fair, open, and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints, and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding. In all cases we put the interests of the child above all else. We aim to provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

3 The complaints procedure

Stage 1

If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. In our experience most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way. All the teachers work

very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they naturally want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before it seriously affects the child's progress.

Where parents feel that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Head teacher. The Head teacher considers any such complaint very seriously, and investigates each case thoroughly. Complaints are normally resolved by this stage.

Stage 2

Only if a complaint fails to be resolved at Stage 1, a formal complaint can be made. This must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint, and how the school has handled it so far. The parent should send this written complaint to the Chair of Governors.

The Chair of Governors must consider all written complaints within three weeks of receipt and arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint, inviting the person making it to attend the meeting so that s/he can explain the complaint in more detail. The school aims to give the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting.

After hearing all the evidence, the Chair of Governors will make their decision and inform the parent about it in writing. The Chair of Governors will do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to the parent's satisfaction.

If the complainant is still not satisfied, a panel will be set up consisting of at least three non-parent governors and an independent clerk. This panel will hear the case of the parent and any others concerned (e.g. a teacher) and after the hearing is completed they will make a decision which will be conveyed to the complainant within five working days.

In Summary:

Stage 1

1. Parent/Carer should discuss their concerns with the class teacher.
2. If unresolved, the parent/carers should make an appointment to discuss their concerns with the Head teacher and the Head teacher will investigate the complaint.

Stage 2

3. If still unresolved, the complainant will write to the Chair of Governors outlining the complaint.
4. The complainant will be invited to discuss the complaint with the Chair of Governors.
5. If this still fails to resolve the complaint a complaints panel will be set up consisting of three non-parent governors and including an independent clerk.

6. If the complainant is unhappy with the outcome of the complaints panel they may, in the case of a pupil who is on the SEND register, appeal to the education authority, for other pupils an appeal can be made to the Secretary of State for Education.

Complaints against the Head teacher

Should any parent have a complaint about the Head teacher, they should first make an informal approach to one of the members of the governing body, who is obliged to investigate it. The governor in question will do all s/he can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if the parents are unhappy with the outcome, they can make a formal complaint, as outlined below.

If the complaint is not resolved, a parent may make representation to the education authority. Further information about this process is available from the school or from the education authority. A meeting will be arranged and chaired by an independent person, who considers all the evidence and makes a further judgement in an attempt to resolve the complaint.

If the parent is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then s/he is entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education.

Special Educational Needs provision complaints

If your complaint is about the way the School has been delivering the provision set out in Section F of your child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), you may complain further to the Local Authority that maintains your child's EHCP.

If the EHCP is maintained by Hertfordshire County Council, you may complain further by setting out the detail of your complaint and sending it to:

Customer Service Team – Complaints
Postal Point: CHO118
Resources Department
County Hall
Hertford
SG13 8DF
Email: cs.complaints@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Once in receipt of your complaint, the Complaints Manager for Children's Services will ensure that the Local Authority completes a Section F Provision Checklist. This process entails a Provision Checklist being drawn up directly from Section F of the EHCP. A Senior SEND Officer will then visit the School in order to work through the checklist point by point and complete it. The Senior SEND Officer will seek the comments of the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team, SENCo and Governors as appropriate, as well as any other information or advice that they deem necessary.

Once the Provision Checklist has been completed, the Local Authority will notify the complainant of the outcome in writing, enclosing a copy of the checklist. A copy of the outcome letter and Checklist will also be sent to the School for its information and record keeping. This process will take up to 25 working days (of the Local Authority) to conclude.

Complainants who remain dissatisfied following further investigation of their Special Educational Needs provision complaint by the Local Authority may complain to the Secretary of State who may decide to conduct an additional investigation. The contact details for the Secretary of State are set out below.

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

Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

4 Timescales

All complaints must be raised within three months of an incident or event. Where a series of associated incidents have occurred, the complaint must be raised within three months of the last of these incidents. Bayford School will consider exercising the discretion to consider matters raised outside of this timeframe, only if the School deems that exceptional circumstances apply. To enable the School to make this decision, the complainant will be asked to explain their reasons as to why they have taken longer than three months to raise their complaint. If the complainant does not provide any explanation or the School deems that the explanation given is not compelling or exceptional enough to warrant the issue(s) being investigated as a late complaint, the School will confirm this in writing and take no further action.

5 Resolving complaints

At each stage of this process, Bayford School will aim to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld, in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following if it is deemed appropriate and necessary:

- An explanation.
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better.
- An assurance that we will try to ensure the event(s) complained of will not recur.
- An explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made.
- An undertaking to review relevant School policies in light of the complaint.
- An apology.

6 Monitoring and review

The governors regularly monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Head teacher logs all complaints received by the school, and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis.

Governors will take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy.