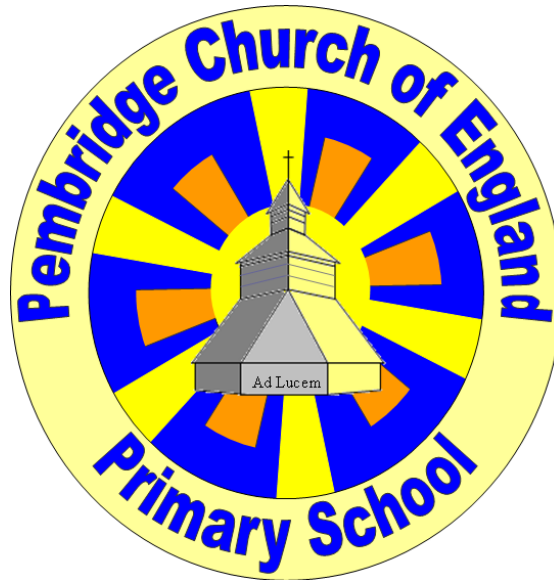


COMPLAINTS POLICY

2022



INSPIRING LEARNING THROUGH FAITH AND VALUES

Pembridge is a school where we encourage everyone to be inspired through faith in God and to live by Christian values so that our teaching and learning is of the highest quality, our whole community flourishes and we reflect all that is worthy of praise.

Signed: 
(Headteacher)

Signed: 
(Chair of Governors)

Introduction

This procedure does not apply to issues concerning the curriculum, collective worship, admissions, exclusion appeals, decisions about your child's special educational needs or grievances by school staff. These are the subject of separate procedures, mostly under the duties of the Local Authority.

We aim to work in partnership with parents in the best interests of the children, and any complaint will be given careful consideration and dealt with fairly and honestly. We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and aim to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding.

Most complaints are best dealt with informally. If you have any concerns about the school, the education provided or your child's progress and welfare, please discuss the matter with your child's teacher at the earliest opportunity.

If you feel that a concern has not been addressed through discussion with the class teacher, or that the concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, please make an appointment to discuss it with the Headteacher. The Headteacher considers any such concerns very seriously, and most concerns can be resolved at this stage.

The Procedures

Stage 1 – Formal - Headteacher

If you are dissatisfied with the response of the Headteacher then you may wish to put your concerns in writing to the Headteacher as a complaint. You should make it clear if you wish the matter to be dealt with as a complaint. The Headteacher will investigate the complaint and provide a written response. This will normally be within 10 school days of your letter, but you will be kept informed if, for example, more time is needed to complete the investigation.

If your original concern was about an action by the Headteacher personally, and you have already discussed it at the informal stage, then you should put your complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors (stage 2).

Stage 2 – Formal – Chair of Governors

If the matter cannot be resolved, or your complaint is about the Headteacher, then it may be appropriate for you to write to the Chair of Governors to make a formal complaint. Please state the nature of the complaint, the steps taken to resolve it and the action you would like to see taken to remedy your concerns. The Chair of Governors will review the way in which the complaint has been handled by the school and ensure that the issues have been dealt with properly and fairly. He/she will normally write to you with the outcome of this process within 14 days of receiving the complaint.

Stage 3 – Formal – Governing Body Panel

If you are not satisfied with the result, you may ask to refer your complaint to Stage 3 of the procedure in which a panel of governors will meet to consider the complaint and make a final decision about it on behalf of the governing body. The panel will consist of governors

who have no detailed prior knowledge of the complaint, or connection with the complainant. The meeting will normally take place within 14 days of your request.

You will have the opportunity to submit written evidence on the complaint prior to the meeting of the panel and also to attend part of the meeting, accompanied by a friend/partner if wished, to put your case. The Headteacher will be given the same opportunities. The panel will write to you with its conclusion within ten working days of the meeting.

The decision of the panel is final. If you are still not satisfied, you may wish to put your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education.

Serial and Persistent Complaints

Pembridge School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

Pembridge School defines unreasonable complainants as 'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints'.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:-

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome;

- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:-

- maliciously;
- aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowing it to be false;
- using falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media, websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from our school.

Monitoring and review

The governing body monitors the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all formal complaints are handled properly. The Headteacher logs all formal complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis and consider the need for any changes to the procedure.

A copy of this procedure is available to all parents on request.

Adopted by the governors on 21st June 2004.

Reviewed March 2006 Curriculum committee. No changes

Reviewed March 2007 Curriculum committee No changes

Reviewed March 2009 – Curriculum committee – No changes.

Reviewed annually Teaching & Standards committee – No changes.

Reviewed November 2021: no changes

Reviewed November 2022: no changes

