



Our moral obligation is to help our children become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens, and we believe that this policy for school compliments and complaints will help us achieve this goal.

Compliments and Complaints Policy

Section 1: Context

It is always good to receive positive feedback. This will be shared with staff and pupils in a timely way via briefings, emails, in person and in assemblies. Compliments can be given in any format the parent/ carer chooses – email, letter/card, telephone or verbally.

We also recognise though that when running a school, sometimes things can go wrong and we believe that our parents and carers deserve the opportunity to raise a concern or make a complaint, openly, fairly and without prejudice. All concerns or complaints made will be handled by the school sensitively and in confidence. This policy sets out for all parties the process and procedures if this happens.

The majority of issues raised may be concerns rather than complaints, and can be resolved swiftly and effectively with open and honest dialogue, with the focus being on solutions and moving forward with clarity for all. There may not always be agreement, but all parties must endeavour to find a satisfactory resolution, with the decisions made having the child's need being placed at the centre. However, due to the nature of the complaint a more formal procedure may need to be followed, and the stages for this procedure are set out below.

Section 2: Complaints we may not/ will not consider

We may not consider complaints in the following circumstances:

- We receive the complaint more than three months after the incident occurred or for ongoing issues more than six months from the last instance causing complaint
- We receive unreasonable or persistent complaints
- Matters that are subject of legal action

We will not consider complaints in the following circumstances:

- Where the complaint has been made previously to us about the same or similar issue which has been fully investigated and / or resolved under this policy
- Anonymous complaints
- Complaints made by a third party on behalf of another person without prior authority
- If the complaint is about a third party provider – complaints of this nature should be directed to the service provider
- Matters relating to exclusions and admissions that have their own processes

If we decide that we are unable to consider your complaint, we will write to you within three school weeks following the receipt of your complaint and explain why. In some circumstances, we may decide that your concern(s) should be considered using another policy or procedure.





Section 3: The Stages

Stage 1 – A concern is raised informally with a member of staff. Concerns can be raised with any member of the staff team and would normally result in an immediate response which should resolve the concern. Sometimes the school will need to explore the concern raised and gather further information as required, this may result in a slower response, and the school will ensure that the all parties are updated throughout the process.

Stage 2 – A formal complaint is raised. The complaint should be raised with the Headteacher – James Everett, Deputy Headteacher – Martin Draper, Inclusion Coordinator – Katie Scott or School Business Manager – Nicky Schofield. The complainant would normally expect to receive an immediate response or where that is not possible to hear from the school within 5 working days acknowledging receipt of the complaint, the next steps which will be taken to explore the complaint and the mechanisms for communication between the school and the complainant.

Stage 3 – If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome after Stage 2 then a formal complaint in writing is made to the Chair of Trustees. The complainant would normally expect to receive an immediate response from the Chair of Trustees or where this is not possible, to hear from the Chair within 5 working days acknowledging receipt of the complaint, the next steps which will be taken to explore the complaint and the mechanisms for communication between the Chair and the complainant.

Stage 4 – If Stage 3 doesn't resolve the complaint The Chair of Trustees will then convene a complaint Appeal Panel. The aim of the Panel is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. The panel will consist of 3 members, one of which will be independent of the management and running of the school.

The panel can:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- Recommend changes to systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur

The complainant will be able to attend the panel and be accompanied if they so wish but legal representation will not be allowed. The complaints panel will proceed irrespective of whether or not the complainant attends.

All parties will be notified of the findings and recommendations of the Appeals Panel in writing. A written record will be kept of all formal complaints received, these will remain confidential.

This decision of the Appeals Panel is final.

The end of Stage 4 concludes the complaints procedure. If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision made at this point, then a complaint may be made to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) via -

- <https://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/schoolperformance/school-complaints-form>
- or by post to Department for Education, Castle View House, East Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2GJ

The ESFA cannot review or overturn an academy's decisions about complaints but will look at whether the academy considered the complaint appropriately.





Section 4: Further Information – Complaint against Head Teacher

Should a complaint regarding the Head Teacher be raised the following process will apply:

Stage 1 – the complaint should be raised in writing to either the Chair of the School Improvement Committee or of the Finance, Audit and Compliance Committee. The complainant would normally expect to receive an immediate response or where that is not possible to hear from the school within 5 working days acknowledging receipt of the complaint, the next steps which will be taken to explore the complaint and the mechanisms for communication between the school and the complainant.

Stage 2 - If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome after Stage 1 then this should be raised in writing to the Chair of Trustees. The complainant would normally expect to receive an immediate response from the Chair of Trustees or where this is not possible, to hear from the Chair within 5 working days acknowledging receipt of the complaint, the next steps which will be taken to explore the complaint and the mechanisms for communication between the Chair and the complainant.

Stage 3 - If Stage 2 doesn't resolve the complaint a Committee Chair who has not been involved in the complaint will then convene a complaint Appeal Panel. The aim of the Panel is to impartially resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. The panel will consist of 3 members, one of which will be independent of the management and running of the school.

Appeal Outcomes and the Stage Four are the same as Section 3 above.

Any complaints concerning the behaviour of school staff will be handled in accordance with the school's internal disciplinary procedures and such an investigation may remain confidential.

Contact details for Trustees can be obtained from the Clerk to the Trustees:
TrusteesClerk@barnhamprimaryschool.co.uk

Section 5: Unreasonable and persistent complaints

In a minority of cases, people pursue their complaints in a way which can impede the investigation of their complaint or can have significant resource issues for the school. This can happen either while their complaint is being investigated, or once the investigation has been concluded.

We define unreasonable persistent and vexatious complainants as those complainants who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts, hinder our consideration of their complaints. We regard harassment as the unreasonable pursuit of issues or complaints, particularly if the matter appears to be pursued in a way intended to cause personal distress rather than seek a resolution.

We will not tolerate any form of unacceptable behaviour. In cases of vexatious / unreasonably persistent complaints or harassing / abusive behaviour, we may take some or all of the following steps, as appropriate:

- Inform the complainant informally or formally that their behaviour is now considered to be unreasonable or unacceptable, and request a changed approach
- Require any personal contact to take place in the presence of an appropriate witness
- Restrict contact to certain methods, such as writing or through a third party
- Not reply to or acknowledge any further contact from them on the specific topic of that complaint
- Ban the individual from entering the premises of the school
- Report the matter to the police or take legal action





Any restriction that is imposed on the complainant's contact with us will be appropriate and proportionate and the complainant will be advised of the period of time the restriction will be in place for.

Legitimate new complaints will always be considered and treated on their merits.

Section 6: Recordings

The school does not permit electronic recordings (audio or video) of meetings or telephone calls by parents or staff without the explicit prior permission of all involved, and in agreement with senior management.

Section 7: Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or when changes happen due to government legislation.

