Ensuring every child THRIVES

Broughton Community Schools

Complaints Procedure Policy

March 2026

Introduction
Broughton Infant and Junior School endeavors to provide the best possible education for all of its pupils in an open and transparent environment. We welcome any feedback that we receive from parents, pupils and third parties, and we accept that not all of this will be positive. Where concerns are raised the school intends for these to be dealt with:

- Fairly
- Openly
- Promptly
- Without Prejudice

In order to do so, the governing board of Broughton Community Schools has approved the following procedure which explains what you should do if you wish to make a complaint about the school. All members of staff will be familiar with the procedure and will be able to assist you.

Complaints that fall outside of this procedure
Complaints relating to the following issues are covered by a separate/specific policy.

- Pupil admissions; please see the school's admissions policy or contact Buckinghamshire Local Authority
- Pupil exclusions; please see the school's *Behaviour and Relationships Policy* .
- Staff grievance, capability or disciplinary; these are covered by the school's *grievance/disciplinary/capability* procedure.
- Where the complaint concerns a third party used by the school; please complain directly to the third party themselves.
- Subject Access Requests and Freedom of Information Requests – please see the school's Data Protection and Freedom of Information policy

These policies are available on the school website or on request from the school.

Resolving concerns informally
For the purpose of this procedure concerns are defined as having a worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought. The majority of concerns can be dealt with without resorting to the formal stages of the formal complaints procedure (see below). The governing board of Broughton Community Schools encourages those that have concerns to raise them with the appropriate person at the school (e.g. your child's class teacher) and to work constructively with that person towards resolving them. The extent to which this was both attempted and followed may be taken into consideration when assessing the reasonableness of a complaint during the formal stages of the procedure.

The formal stages of the procedure should be followed when attempts to resolve concerns informally have proved unsuccessful, and in cases where individuals wish to raise their concern formally.

Complaints about the headteacher or the governors
Where a complaint is about the headteacher, the complainant should notify the clerk to the governors (see contact details at the end of the document). The stage one process (see the formal stages below) will then commence, but with the chair of governors as the individual responsible for the investigation, rather than the headteacher.

Where a complaint concerns a governor the complainant should contact the clerk to the governing board. The clerk will then determine the most appropriate course of action, seeking advice as appropriate. This will depend upon the nature of the complaint.

The timescale for making a complaint
Notification of a complaint should be given as soon as possible after the issue that led to the complaint has occurred and after informal attempts to seek resolution have proved unsuccessful. Complaints that are submitted three months after the issue that led to the complaint occurred will not be considered under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances. These may include (but are not limited to) subsequent information about the complaint coming to light and a valid explanation of why it was not possible to give notification of the complaint sooner. In such cases the headteacher/chair of the governing board/clerk to the governing board (as appropriate) will review the circumstances, seek advice and determine whether the complaint should be considered under the formal procedure.

Maintaining records
A confidential written record of all complaints that are made in accordance with this procedure will be kept by the school. The written record will include whether the complaint has been resolved following a formal procedure and whether it proceeded to a panel review meeting. It will also refer to any action taken by the school as a result of the complaint regardless of whether it has been upheld.

Maintaining confidentiality
Informal concerns and complaints will be dealt with confidentially at all stages and at the conclusion of the procedure. Confidentiality should be maintained all times by everyone involved. The governing board of Broughton Community Schools requests that complaints are not discussed publically, including via social media.

Actions taken in relation to school staff that arise as a result of the complaint will remain confidential to the school and the member of staff concerned.

Written records taken and used throughout the complaints process, including correspondence, notes of meetings, telephone calls etc., will be kept securely and in accordance with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018.

Safeguarding
Wherever a concern indicates that a child's wellbeing or safety is at risk, the school is duty bound to report this immediately to the local authority. Any action taken will be in accordance with the school's safeguarding and child protection policy which is located on Broughton Community Schools Website or available on request.

The formal stages of the complaints procedure
The majority of concerns can be dealt with without resorting to the formal stages of the procedure. If you need to raise a concern then please do so with the relevant member of staff who will be happy to talk to you and seek to resolve it.

There are two formal stages of the complaints procedure.

Stage 1 – formal investigation by headteacher
A request for a formal investigation of a complaint by the headteacher (or chair of the governing board as appropriate) should be made in writing C/O the school, or by completing the formal complaints form that is included as Appendix 1 of this procedure.

The headteacher (or chair of the governing board as appropriate) will acknowledge the request in writing no later than 10 working days (excluding those that fall in the school holidays) of receiving it. The written acknowledgment will, as far as possible, explain how the complaint will be investigated and the timescale for completing the investigation.

A log of all correspondence in relation to the complaint will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Principles.

The headteacher will consider all relevant evidence. This may include, but is not limited to:

- obtaining statements from the complainant and those involved with the complaint
- meeting with the complainant and those involved in the complaint
- reviewing correspondence and other document relating to the complaint

After considering the available evidence, the headteacher can decide to:

- uphold the complaint and direct that certain action be taken to resolve it
- uphold the complaint in part (in other words find an aspect or aspects of the complaint to be valid, but not the whole complaint) direct for certain action to be taken, or
- dismiss the complaint entirely

The headteacher will inform the complainant of their decision in writing, the grounds on which it was made and any actions taken as a result of the complaint. This will be within 20 working days (excluding those that fall in the school holidays) of having issued written acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint (see 2 above). The written notification shall also advise the complainant of their right to escalate the complaint to stage 2 of the formal complaints procedure if they are not satisfied with the outcome at stage 1, including the contact details of the clerk to the governing board (clerk@broughton.bucks.sch.uk).

Stage 2 – Review by a panel of the Governing Body of Broughton Community Schools

The complainant is entitled to request a review of the decision taken at stage 1 and the actions taken. The review is carried out by a panel of the governing board at a meeting convened by the clerk to the governing board.

Requests for a review of the decision taken at stage 1 should be made in writing to the clerk (see contact details below) no later than 4 weeks after written notification of the decision taken has been received. The request should include a brief summary of the complaint, why the complainant it dissatisfied with the outcome of stage 1 and the outcome they are seeking.

The clerk will fulfil the role of organising the time and date of the review meeting, inviting all the attendees, collating all the relevant documentation and distributing this 5 days in advance of the meeting. Minutes of the review meeting will be taken by the clerk and provided with the written notification of the decision taken at stage 2 (see 9 below).

The following steps are taken at stage 2:

1. The clerk will acknowledge the written request for the complaint to be reviewed no later than ten working days (not including the school holidays) after receiving it.
2. The clerk will convene a panel of three school governors to review the complaint. All three panel members will have no prior knowledge of the content of the complaint.
3. The review meeting will take place within 20 working days (excluding those which fall in the school holidays) of receipt of the written acknowledgement from the clerk (see 1 above).

4. The panel may decide to invite the following to attend the review meeting:

- the complainant
- the headteacher (or chair of the governing board as appropriate) who investigated the complaint and made the decision at stage 1
- relevant persons involved the complaint
- persons whom, in the view of the panel, can provide relevant advice and information relating to the subject of the complaint and the review process at stage 2

5. Where the complainant, headteacher and/or relevant person involved in the complaint have been invited to attend the review meeting, they are entitled to be accompanied by a family member/friend/representative as appropriate. However, legal representatives are not permitted to attend the review meeting.

6. Where the relevant persons involved in the complaint include pupils at the school, and their attendance at the review meeting has been requested by the panel, parental permission must be sought if they are under the age of 18. Extra care will be taken to consider the vulnerability of children where they are present at a complaints hearing.

7. Where the complaint is about a governor/trustee/governing board the complainant may request that the review meeting is held by an independent panel. This is at the discretion of the governing body who will notify the clerk of their decision. Where an entirely independent panel is required, timescales may be affected while the school source appropriate individuals for the review.

8. After considering the complaint afresh and reviewing the available evidence, the panel reviewing the complaint can decide to:
    - uphold the complaint and direct that certain action be taken to resolve it;
    - uphold the complaint in part (in other words find an aspect or aspects of the complaint to be valid, but not the whole complaint) and direct for certain action to be taken, or
    - dismiss the complaint entirely.

    Irrespective of the decision taken, the panel may also recommend steps that the complainant and the school should take to move forward from the presenting issues in the best interests of all concerned. The panel may also recommend steps to be taken that reduce the likelihood of a similar complaint being made in the future.

9. The complainant, the headteacher (or chair of the governing board as appropriate) who investigated the complaint and made the decision at stage 1, and, where relevant, the person complained about will be informed in writing of the outcome of the review meeting no later than 10 working days (excluding those which fall in the school holidays) after the review meeting has taken place.

This is the **final stage** at which the school will consider the complaint. If the complainant remains dissatisfied and wishes to escalate the complaint further they should refer to the following:

- If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaints procedure they may contact the local authority – Buckinghamshire Council Aylesbury Bucks .

- If the complainant feels that the governing board acted 'unreasonably' in the handling of the complaint, they can complain to the Department for Education after the complaints procedure has been exhausted. Please note that 'unreasonable' is used in a legal sense and means acting in a way in which no reasonable school or authority would act in the same circumstances. https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school

Agreed March 2026
Next review: March 2027

Signed:  ....
Headteacher Chair of Governors