



# **COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY**

Discussed and adopted at full Partnership Governors meeting held on: 11 December 2012

Review due: September 2020

School Compliments, Comments and Complaints Officer:

**Cann Bridge School:**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>E-mail</u>	<u>Tel:</u>
Mr M Loveman	Headteacher	<a href="mailto:cannbridgereception@torbridge.net">cannbridgereception@torbridge.net</a>	01752 207909

Contact Address:  
Cann Bridge School  
Miller Way  
Estover  
Plymouth  
PL6 8UN

**Introduction**

- 1.1.1. We aim to provide the best possible service in everything we do. This Policy outlines how you can tell us when we have delivered a good service as well as providing a way for you to contact us with any compliments, concerns or complaints. Your feedback will help us to continuously improve the way we do things so we can continue to build excellent relationships with all our parents/carers.
- 1.1.2. In addition you are also invited to access the 'Parent View' option on the Ofsted website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).
- 1.1.3. We are committed to encouraging feedback from everyone and will respect and cater for differences in age, gender, race, culture, religion, language, literacy, disability or sexual orientation. We will treat everyone fairly
- 1.1.4. Compliments, comments and complaints can be made through a variety of channels:
- Via our website (school policies section contains this policy with the relevant forms to start the process)
  - Call us on the contact number given above for the relevant school
  - E-mail us on the contact e-mail given above for the relevant school
  - Write to us, again via the contact for the relevant school

If making a complaint, please provide us with the following information so that we can deal with it effectively for you:

- What the problem is
  - How and when it occurred
  - How it has affected you
  - What you consider we should do to put it right
- 1.1.5. Various forms are contained within this policy to use as appropriate.
- 1.1.6. Timescales are included within the policy and you should refer to this document for clarification. We will not provide a written response if you have given a compliment, comment or complaint in person and the issue has been resolved satisfactorily at the point of notification.
- 1.1.5. If you contact us to give us your feedback, we will send you a very brief form asking you for comments about how well this procedure worked for you. We would be very grateful if you would take the time to reply. We will use your responses to ensure we make it as easy as possible for everyone to give us feedback.

- 1.1.6. Equality and diversity monitoring/data protection. Please complete the relevant form at the rear of this policy re Equality and Diversity monitoring.
- 1.1.7. We are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially. We do not expect our staff to tolerate behaviour which is unacceptable - for example, abusive, offensive or threatening and we will take action to protect our staff from such behaviour; including reporting the matter to the police or taking legal action.
- 1.1.8. With regard to any complaint you may have the school have legal responsibilities to deal with such concerns and this policy outlines how such complaints will be dealt with by the school. The Children Service Authority (CSA) can only get involved with general complaints after all the school stages have been tried (see Stage 4 below).
- 1.1.9. Learners as well as parents/carers have legitimate rights to express concerns or to make complaints, but maturity and understanding will vary from child to child. Therefore, the school will consider a complaint on its merits. Please note that a person does not have to be a parent/carer or a learner of the school to make a complaint. Please also note that anonymous complaints cannot be examined under a complaints procedure.
- 1.1.10. Governors have an important role to play in considering complaints. However, it is important for parents/carers to understand that individual governors must not investigate complaints outside this procedure. All complaints should be addressed to the school complaints officers in the first instance whose details are recorded above.
- 1.1.11. Please note that should a complaint, informal or formal; reveal an issue for which other procedures exist (for example, child protection) then it will be dealt with under those procedures rather than as a complaint.

#### **Stage 1 - Informal Resolution**

- 2.1. Many enquiries and concerns can be dealt with satisfactorily by an individual teacher, the Headteacher/Principal or other members of staff without the need to resort to a formal procedure. The school values informal meetings and discussions; ***it is important that all concerned in an informal resolution abide by the usual courtesies of appropriate notification to the school in order to request a meeting and appropriate conduct at all times during a meeting.***
- 2.2. There is no suggested time-scale for resolution at this stage given the importance of dialogue through informal discussion although it would be expected that most issues would be resolved within 10 school days. Should this informal stage require more time then the school will inform the complainant of this in writing as soon as this is known.
- 2.3. Please note that 'in writing' means a letter or an email although formal complaints should be started by completing the complaints form in Appendix 1. The final report of any formal investigation will also be sent in paper form.
- 2.4. Should the face to face discussions appear unlikely to resolve matters, either party may initiate a move to the next stage (Stage 2 below) of the procedure. A copy of the Partnership's complaints policy will be forwarded to the complainant at this stage; if not provided as part of Stage 1.

#### **Stage 2 - Formal Written Complaints**

- 3.1. The complainant should set out the precise nature of the complaint on the form provided and return this to the complaints officer. The complainant should keep a copy of this form and all other relevant correspondence.
- 3.2. Should a complaint be about a general matter, the complaints officer may be able to respond immediately, e.g. if it only requires an explanation of Partnership's policy. For complaints that relate to specific actions or events, there is likely to be a need for further investigation in order to clarify the facts. The Complaints Officer or their nominee will normally undertake this investigation.
- 3.3. However, if in the early stages of the investigation, the complaints officer considers that the complaint is best dealt with at Stage 3, it will be passed to the Chair of Governors of the relevant school/academy (or to the Clerk to the Governing Body for the Chair's attention) and the complainant informed of this action without delay.

- 3.4. Should the Complaints Officer, the Headteacher/Principal or a governor be the subject of a complaint, these will be dealt with under Stage 3 below. The complainant should send the form directly to the chair of governors (or to the clerk to the governing body for the chair's attention) c/o the school marking the envelope 'private and confidential'.
- 3.5. Should the Chair of Governors be the subject of a complaint, the complainant should send the form directly to the Vice-Chair of Governors (or to the Clerk to the Governing Body for the Vice-Chair's attention) c/o the school concerned marking the envelope 'private and confidential'.
- 3.6. All formal complaints will be acknowledged within 5 school days of receipt.
- 3.7. Investigations at this stage should normally be completed within 20 school days of receipt of the complaint, unless there are circumstances that require a longer investigatory period. The complainant will be informed in writing should more time be required.
- 3.8. The school will aim to send a formal written response within 5 school days of the completion of the investigation. This gives a target of 5 school weeks for the completion of this stage of the procedure.
- 3.9. Following the stage 2 investigation, the Complaints Officer will decide on one of two outcomes: -
  1. Recommend that appropriate remedial action necessary to resolve the complaint be undertaken, or
  2. Confirm that all internal investigative measures have been exhausted and uphold the original informal response if this had occurred.
- 3.10. The decision is confidential to the complainant and to the Governing Body.
- 3.11. The complainant may take the complaint further if they are unhappy with the Stage 2 outcome by giving notice of their intention within 10 school days of their receipt of the formal outcome. This notice should be made in writing to the Chair of Governors (or to the Clerk to the Governing Body for the chair's attention) c/o the school marking the envelope 'private and confidential'.

### **Stage 3 - The Governing Body**

- 4.1. Where the Complaints Officer is unable to resolve a complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant or where there is a complaint against the Complaints Officer, the Headteacher/Principal or a governor, the complainant should write to the Chair of Governors (or to the Clerk to the Governing Body for the chair's attention) c/o the school concerned marking the envelope 'private and confidential' including copies of all relevant documents.
- 4.2. Should the Chair of Governors be the subject of a complaint, the complainant should send the form directly to the Vice-Chair of Governors (or to the Clerk to the Governing Body for the Vice-Chair's attention) c/o the school marking the envelope 'private and confidential'.
- 4.3. A panel of three Governors must be convened by the Chair (or Vice-Chair) of Governors to investigate the complaint.
- 4.4. All formal complaints will be acknowledged within 5 school days of receipt.
- 4.5. Investigations at this stage should normally be completed within 20 school days of receipt of the complaint, unless there are circumstances that require a longer investigatory period. The complainant will be informed in writing should more time be required.
- 4.6. The school will aim to send a formal written response within 5 school days of the completion of the investigation.
- 4.7. This gives a target of 5 school weeks for the completion of this stage of the procedure.
- 4.8. Following the Stage 3 investigation, the panel will decide on one of two outcomes: -

1. Recommend that appropriate remedial action necessary to resolve the complaint be undertaken, or
  2. Confirm that all internal investigative measures have been exhausted and uphold the original response.
- 4.9. The decision is confidential to the complainant and to the Governing Body.
- 4.10 Complainants who have exhausted all school-based stages and consider that the school has not investigated the complaint in a fair and reasonable matter, may request, in writing, that the CSA reviews how the school handled the complaint. Please note that this review will not investigate the original complaint.

#### **Stage 4 - Referral to the Children Service Authority (CSA)**

**Please note that this Stage is omitted in the case of Tor Bridge High as an Academy Trust**

- 5.1. The CSA monitors those school complaints that they receive. Whilst they do not investigate individual complaints, notes are kept of these and the information is shared with senior leaders. As part of this Partnership's Complaints Policy, they will review how the school handled the complaint after all the above stages have been completed but only if the complainant requests this in writing.
- 5.2. The CSA will acknowledge this request within five school days and will normally complete the review within 20 school days. The address for correspondence is:

Department for Children's Services  
Plymouth City Council  
Civic Centre  
Plymouth, PL1 2AA

#### **Stage 5 - Appeals to the Secretary of State or the Ombudsman**

- 6.1. Finally, complainants have a right of appeal to the Secretary of State for Education. In such cases, the Department for Education (DfE), will examine the complaint and adjudicate. The DfE has the power to require the CSA to take certain actions, including the issuing of instructions to the school governing body. It should be pointed out that the members of staff also have the same right of appeal.
- 6.2. Should a complainant feel that there has been maladministration in the manner in which a complaint has been dealt with, this can be referred to the Local Government Ombudsman
- 6.3. Please note that the Ombudsman can look into complaints about how something has been done, but she/he cannot question what has been done simply because the complainant does not agree with it. The relevant addresses are:

The Secretary of State for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
Westminster  
London, SW1P 3BT

Tel: 0171 925 5000  
Local Government Ombudsman  
The Oaks  
Westwood Way  
Coventry, CV4 8JB

Tel: 01203 695999

**N.B. Where there is an issue concerning a member of staff employed in one of the Partnership Schools and this is raised as a complaint against another Partner School it is important that this Policy is adhered to and that staff members recognise that the issue must be treated in the same way all others are treated. There is no ability to bypass proper process due to working in one of the Partnership Schools.**

**Where a member of staff does not follow the appropriate procedure or acts in a way which could bring their school into disrepute they could be liable to disciplinary procedures as set out in their school policies.**



Annex 1

TOR BRIDGE COMPLIMENT/COMMENT FORM (TELL US WHAT YOU THINK)

Please feel free to use this form to give us feedback to ensure we provide an ongoing excellent service to the young people who attend our schools. The form should be returned to Compliments/Comments/Complaints designated person given at the beginning of this Policy. We will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure (if applicable).

Your name .....

Is this? (Please tick one or more boxes)

A compliment     Suggestion     General comment

Relationship with school (e.g. parent of a pupil on the school's roll):

.....

Pupil's name (if relevant):

.....

Your Address:

Daytime telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

E-Mail address:

Please use this space to explain the details (include dates, names of staff and any other relevant information). (You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional paperwork, if you wish).

Have you told us about this before?      Yes       No

If yes, please tell us who you told and when

What do you think we should do?

How would you like us to respond?

Phone call     E-mail     Letter     No response needed

Signature :

Date :

**School use:**

**Date form received:**

**Received by:**

**Date acknowledgement sent:**

**Acknowledgement sent by:**

**Matter referred to:**

**Date:**



Annex 2

TOR BRIDGE COMPLAINT FORM

The form should be returned to Compliments/Comments/Complaints designated person given at the beginning of this Policy. We will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name .....

Relationship with school (e.g. parent of a pupil on the school's roll):

.....

Pupil's name (if relevant to your complaint):

.....

Your Address:

Daytime telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

E-mail address:

Please give concise details of your complaint, (including dates, names of witnesses etc.) to allow the matter to be fully investigated:

(You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional paperwork, if you wish).

What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint?  
(i.e. who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?)

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Signature :

Date :

**School use:**

**Date form received:**

**Received by:**

**Date acknowledgement sent:**

**Acknowledgement sent by:**

**Complaint referred to:**

**Date:**