

# Complaints Policy



## Introduction

At Bridgewater our policies are regularly reviewed. This reflects current practice within school and all related government guidance and statutory requirements.

1.1 We believe that our school provides a good education for all our children, and that the Headteacher and other staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents/carers. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents/carers. The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases.

1.2 If any parent/carer is unhappy with the education or care that their child is receiving, or has any concern relating to the school, we encourage that person to talk to the child's class teacher/ keyworker immediately.

1.3 We deal with all complaints in accordance with procedures set out by the LA. If the school cannot resolve any complaint itself, those concerned can ask the LA to intervene.

1.4 All parents/carers 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 and objectives

2.1 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 and, in all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

## 3 The complaints process

3.1 If a parent/carer is concerned about anything to do with the education or care that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher/keyworker. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All staff work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at Bridgewater, and is making good progress; they always want to know if there is a

problem, so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the child's progress.

3.2 Where a parent/carer feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher/keyworker, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Headteacher. The Headteacher considers any such complaint very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly. This can take up to 5 working days. Complaints are normally resolved at this stage.

3.3 Should a parent/carer have a complaint about the Headteacher, 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 must do all they can to resolve the issue through a dialogue with the school, but if a parent/carer is unhappy with the outcome, they can make a formal complaint, as outlined below.

3.4 Only if an informal complaint fails to resolve the matter should a formal complaint be made to the governing body. This complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far. The parent/carer should send this written complaint to the Chair of Governors. An Independent Advocate can assist with the writing of a formal complaint.

3.5 The governing body must consider all written complaints within three weeks of receipt. It arranges a meeting to discuss the complaint, and invites the person making it to attend the meeting, so that they can explain their complaint in more detail. The school must give the complainant at least three days' notice of the meeting.

3.6 After hearing all the evidence, the governors consider their decision and inform the parent/carer about it in writing. The governors do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint to everyone's satisfaction.

3.7 If the complaint is not resolved, a parent/carer may make representation to the LA. Further information about this process is available from the school or from the LA. A further meeting consisting of an independent Governor panel will be held to consider all the evidence and make a further judgement in an attempt to resolve the complaint.

3.8 If any parent/carer is still not content that the complaint has been dealt with properly, then they are entitled to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education.

3.9 Arrangements for handling complaints from parents of children with special educational needs (SEN) about the support the school provides will be dealt with in the following way: They will be looked in to by the Headteacher in the first instance. Following this or if the complaint relates to the Head teacher, the complaint will be dealt with by the Chair of

Governors and where necessary the LA complaints procedure will be applied. Advice on avenues for complaint can also be found in chapter 11 of the SEND Code of Practice (January 2015).

#### **4 Monitoring and review**

4.1 The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Headteacher files all complaints received by the school and how they were resolved. The Chair of Governors examines this log on an annual basis, but all Governors are informed of complaints in the next scheduled meeting following the complaint.

4.2 Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is made available to all parents/carers, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

**Approved:** January 2025

**Next date to be reviewed:** Spring 2027

**S.Robson**