

Complaints Procedure

Aims

Balcarras School always aims to deal with complaints fairly and consistently and help any complainant to find a satisfactory resolution to their concern.

Whenever possible, the school will try to resolve concerns before there is a need for a complaint to be made, by being open, reasonable and prepared to take the action necessary to meet the concern.

Non-Pupil Complaints

This policy only applies to complaints from parents/carers of pupils currently on roll at the school, regarding their child.

Complaints that are not directly related to a pupil currently on roll at the school, and made by a parent/carer for that pupil, are outside the scope of this procedure.

Complaints from local neighbours

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Stage 1 – Informal

Parental concerns are often addressed to teachers, tutors and house heads. These are normally resolved informally to the full satisfaction of the parent.

Wherever possible, complaints will be responded to within a maximum of 30 school days of receiving the complaint. If for any reason we are unable to provide an outcome to the complaint within this timescale we will notify the parent of the delay and give an indication of a timescale for response.

Stage 2 – Formal

However, there may be occasions when concerns cannot be resolved by the informal stage. When this is the case, the 'complaint' should be put in writing and directed to the Complaints Co-ordinator, Deputy Head i/c Complaints, or to the Headteacher if the

complaint is about the Deputy Head. (If the complaint is about the Headteacher, the

Chair of Governors will be charged with commissioning an investigation into the matter and responding accordingly.) The parent should set the complaint out in detail. Parents will be asked to complete the form in appendix 1, to enable the school to understand exactly what the desired outcome is. The form should be completed and returned to the school within two weeks (14 calendar days) of the request being received from the school. The Complaints Coordinator (or Headteacher or Chair of Governors) will investigate the matter and try to resolve the matter, or nominate another member of staff or a governor to do so. Appropriate records will be maintained and a letter sent at the end of the process to confirm the outcome. Wherever possible, complaints will be responded to within a maximum of 30 school days (although usually a much shorter time) of receiving the written complaint. If for any reason we are unable to provide an outcome to the complaint within this timescale we will notify the parent of the delay and give an indication of a timescale for response.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, then the complainant will have the right to a panel hearing. The complainant must register with the school a formal request for escalating the matter further within two weeks of receiving the letter from stage 2 of the procedure. At this point a panel of at least three people will be appointed, one of whom will be independent of the school management and the running of the school. The other panel members will be people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. There will be a panel hearing of the complaint, where the complainant will be invited to attend, should he/she wish to do so. The complainant may be accompanied by one supporting friend if required. The panel hearing will be minuted by the clerk to the governors and all parties present will be given a copy of the minutes.

The panel will make written recommendations of its findings, a copy of which will be sent to the complainant (and, where relevant, the person complained about). A copy will be kept in the school records for future reference and available for inspection by the Headteacher and the Chair of Trustees. Wherever possible, this process will be completed within a maximum of 30 school days (although usually a much shorter time) of when the written complaint is received by the headteacher. If for any reason we are unable to provide an outcome to the complaint within this timescale we will notify the parent of the delay and give an indication of a timescale for response.

Any parent who is not satisfied with the handling of a complaint should refer the matter to the Department for Education (DfE).

Cut off and Timescales

The purpose of a complaint is to enable the school to put into place actions and remedies to assist and support the pupil in the future. Once pupils have left the school, these remedies will no longer be possible. Complaints will only normally be considered if they are received within three calendar months of the event taking place, provided the pupil is still on roll.

If the complaint is about a pupil who has left the school, then complaints will only normally be considered if it concerns matters arising while they were a pupil and the complaint was formally raised when they were still on roll. All complaints must be received by the school within a maximum of two weeks (14 calendar days) of the pupil's last day (for pupils in years 11, 12 and 13 who leave at the end of their examinations, the complaint must be received within 2 weeks (14 calendar days) of their final formal examination). The only exception to this is if the complaint is directly about examination results, in which case the complaint must be received by the school within one week (7 calendar days) of the examination results day.

This policy does not apply to concerns raised by parents regarding the exclusion of their child from the school. Any concerns regarding an exclusion will be dealt with under the Behaviour Policy (Appendix 5: Exclusions).

Record Keeping and Confidentiality

We will keep records of all complaints that are made under Stage 2 and Stage 3. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State requires access to them.

Covert Recordings

Covert recording of conversations or videos of teachers, without express permission from the school, before the recording has begun, is forbidden. Any such recording may not be used as part of the complaint procedure.

Complaints from local neighbours

Initial expressions of concern may be from neighbours living in the immediate vicinity around the school and these should be directed to Deputy Head i/c Complaints. These are nearly always dealt with promptly and to the satisfaction of the neighbour. In the event of a persistent problem, the head teacher is sometimes involved and again we aim for a sensitive, sensible agreed conclusion.

This policy only applies to complaints from parents/carers of pupils currently on roll at the school, regarding their child. Complaints that are not directly related to a pupil currently on roll at the school, and made by a parent/carer for that pupil, are outside the scope of this procedure.

When this policy was reviewed, an equality impact assessment was conducted to ensure any changes did not have an adverse effect under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. Should you have any comments regarding this policy, please contact the school.

Complaints Procedure

Appendix 1

Complaint Form

Complainants should use this complaint form when formally complaining to the school:

Your name

Surname:

Forename:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the
pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone
number:

Evening telephone
number:

Please give details of your complaint.

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<p>What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak to and what was the response)?</p>
<p>Desired Outcome: What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?</p>
<p>Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.</p>

Signature:

Date: