



The Brook on Broadwaters Vision

Our vision for The Brook is a simple one. In a state of the art building, with an innovative and visionary inclusive approach and a huge continuum of need, pupils live together in an aspirational learning environment, where every one of those needs is met.

To achieve this, we have created a school and inclusive learning community where; I would do in capital letters at the beginning of each sentence here.

- outstanding teaching and learning is central to everything we do and is challenging, rewarding and fun.
- the school is full of laughter, light, excitement and enthusiasm
- the curriculum is continuously reinvented by a learning community which is committed to meeting the needs of our pupils
- communication is central - every pupil will leave the school with an individualised system of communication which can be non-verbal, signed or verbal.
- creativity is placed at the centre of teaching and learning, breaking down the barriers between subjects
- staff are skilled, reflective practitioners who are themselves continually learning – professionals committed to achieving extraordinary results for their pupils
- a wide-ranging and highly skilled multidisciplinary team works collaboratively with the school to provide access to the curriculum across the range of pupils
- the environment and curriculum provides every pupil with the opportunity to grow personally, socially and academically to be the best they can be and to develop an overwhelming sense of self confidence and high self esteem within a stimulating and caring environment.
- there are clear boundaries and structures set for the pupils, which are well communicated and consistently reinforced.
- every child is entitled to enjoy their childhood and is kept safe
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Complaints Policy



Last Review:	February 2021
Next Review date:	February 2023

Introduction

At The Brook Special Primary School we work very hard to build positive relationships with members of the public and local community. Our aim is to deal with issues and problems before they become a 'complaint'. There is a clear protocol to follow and the steps with their outcomes are outlined in this document.

If anyone is unhappy with their child's education, they are encouraged to talk to the child's class teacher as soon as possible. We are confident that when a concern is shared, the class teacher can give reassurance or work with the family to devise what steps need to be taken to address the concern. We will always work with families to ensure any situation is resolved.

If there are any general concerns relating to the school, Felicia Rock, the Family Support Officer should be contacted.

As a school, we promise we will always aim to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint and to deal with them as swiftly as possible. Our focus will always be on the child and what is best for them. If, however, it is not possible to resolve matters informally, then the procedures to be followed are outlined below.

The Complaints procedure

A summary of the timescale for the complaint process is given in Appendix 1

STAGE ONE - Informal sharing of your concern with the school.

Speak to a class teacher or to our Family Support Officer- Ms Felicia Rock

In the first instance, the matter should be discussed with the child's class teacher or the Family Support Officer. In our experience most matters of concern can be resolved positively in this way. Members of the school's senior leadership can be involved at this stage if appropriate. This can be done in a number of ways – via email, a phone-call, in person, or in writing.

STAGE TWO - Arrange to speak to a member of Senior Management

Ms Sukina Campos, Mr Edward Putman

We expect most complaints to be resolved before reaching this stage. However, if the matter has not been resolved and needs further investigation you can make an appointment to see one of the senior management team. We will try to resolve most matters within 7 days (1 week during term time) and will always report our findings and actions to the complainant.

STAGE THREE - Contact the Headteacher Mrs Maureen Duncan.

Complaints should rarely reach this formal level. Complaints should only reach this stage once the two procedures outlined above have been tried. You can write a letter, call in, email, or arrange a meeting with the Headteacher through her PA, Lowri Banfield. In the initial contact you should explain why you remain unhappy and what you wish to see happen. The Headteacher will let you know when your complaint is to be considered. If a meeting with you and others involved is considered necessary you will be given adequate notice to prepare. You will be informed of the outcome/decision following the Headteacher's investigation and what further action will be taken within 10 school days.

STAGE FOUR – A letter to the Chair of Governors after following all the steps outlined above (or if the complaint is about the Headteacher)

You may take your complaint to the Chair of Governors within 6 months of the Headteacher's response. If the complaint is not resolved, and all previous stages have been explored, you may make representation to the Governors. A letter addressed to the Chair of Governors marked "private and confidential" can be left at the school office. If the Governors then decide that the complaint warrants further investigation, they may ask you to explain your case in person before a specially appointed governor panel. However, it is also possible that, following investigation, they may make a decision without needing you to appear. A decision will be provided within 15 school days where possible.

If you have a complaint about the Head Teacher, you should first contact the Chair of the Governors. The Chair will do all they can to resolve any issues through a dialogue with the school, but if you are still unhappy with the outcome, you can make a formal complaint, as outlined below.

Please note: *If an anonymous complaint is received it will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances such as child protection/safeguarding issues or bullying allegations, where the school might consider it appropriate to contact outside agencies.*

STAGE FIVE - Further representation (or complaint against the Chair of Governors)

If you remain dissatisfied you may make further representations. You may approach the Secretary of State for Education or the *Ombudsman if you are unhappy with the process or outcome. This would normally only be appropriate if you believe that the school or the Governing body have acted illegally or arbitrarily.

*** Please note the Ombudsman does not investigate internal school management**

If you have a complaint about the Chair of Governors, you should write to the Clerk of the Governing Body and give this to the school marking it 'private and confidential'.

Investigating complaints

- The person investigating the complaint will:
 - ❖ Establish what has happened so far and who has been involved.
 - ❖ Clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved.
 - ❖ Meet with the complainant or contact them if further information is required
 - ❖ Clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.
 - ❖ Conduct any interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning.
 - ❖ Complete all necessary notes.

Unreasonable complaints

The Brook Special Primary School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

The Brook Special Primary School defines unreasonable complainants as 'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or

other people's complaints'.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:-

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process whilst still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:-

- maliciously;
- aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowing it to be false;
- using falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school whilst a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before designating it 'unreasonable'.

If the behaviour continues the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact The Brook Special Primary School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from the school premises.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the complaint, both the school and the complainant will want to keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- An apology
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better.*
- Assurance that the event (that was the basis of the complaint) will not recur.
- Explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure it does not happen again.
- An undertaking to review school policy or procedure in light of the complaint.
- An explanation that there is insufficient evidence and thus the complaint cannot be upheld.
- An explanation that, following investigation, the evidence does not substantiate the concern.

*An admission that the school could have handled things better is not the same as an admission of negligence

Please note: *If, despite all stages of this policy being followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied, they are not entitled to reopen the same issue. In such cases the Chair of Governors is able to inform them in writing that the process has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.*

Monitoring and review

- The Governors will monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The head teacher will log all stage 2, 3 and 4 complaints received by the school, and record how they were resolved. These will be reported as part of the Headteacher's report to Governors.
- The Governors of The Brook Special Primary School review this policy as necessary every two years.

Appendix 1

Summary of Time Scale for the complaint process

STAGE	STATUS OF COMPLAINT	PERSON/S INVOLVED	TIME SCALE
ONE	Informal	Class Teacher or Family Support Worker	As quickly as possible
TWO	Informal	Deputy Head or Assistant Head	7 days or 1 week in term time
THREE	Formal	Headteacher	10 days
FOUR	Formal	Chair of Governors	15 days 6 months from HT response
FIVE	Formal	Secretary of State or Ombudsman	As and when those bodies are able to respond