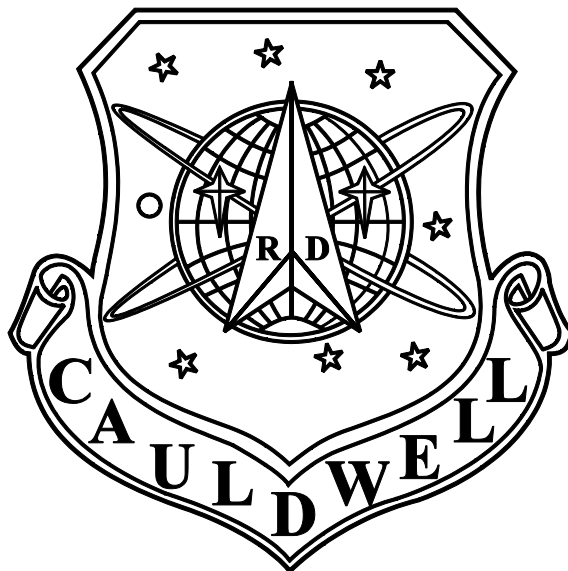


# Cauldwell School



<b>SH012</b>	<b>Version 2</b>	<b>Complaints Policy</b>	
<b>Co-ordinator:</b>	Judith Apps		
<b>Link Governor:</b>	Jane Knapp		
<b>Approval:</b>	Full Governing Body		
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# Complaints Policy

## Introduction

At Cauldwell School we believe we provide a good education for all our children, and that all staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all children and parents. One of the ways we can accomplish this is to have open and clear channels of communication and to take seriously any concerns or complaints by any of our parents or members of the general public.

The following policy sets out the procedure that Cauldwell School follows on receiving any concerns or complaints.

## Aims and Objectives

Cauldwell 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 interest of the child above all other issues (further information is available in our **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**). We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

Some complaints fall outside the school's complaints procedures, these are shown in Appendix 1.

## The Complaints Process

- a) If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's Class Teacher or the relevant Assistant Head Teacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way.
  - a. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy in school, and is making progress; they always want to know if there is a problem so they can take action before it seriously effects the child's progress and wellbeing.
  - b. A record of the conversation and subsequent actions and evaluations will be made with the parents for future discussion and consideration, should it be required.
  
- b) Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the Class Teacher or the relevant Assistant Head Teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should make an appointment to discuss it with the Head Teacher. (Appointments can be made through the school office.)
  - a. The Head Teacher considers any such concerns very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly.
  - b. Most concerns are normally resolved at this stage.

- c) If the parent feels that their complaint has not been resolved or has a complaint about the Head Teacher, they should make a formal written complaint to the Chair of the Local Governing Body (LGB) at Cauldwell School, outlining the nature of the complaint.
  - a. Complaints should be raised as soon as possible and within three months after the incident has occurred, wherever possible and unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- d) The Chair will convene a complaints panel, none of whose members have been involved in any of the previous stages of the complaint. One of the members must be independent to the management and running of the Academy. The panel will consist of at least 3 people.
- e) The complainant, and if relevant the subject of the complaint, may attend the meeting in order to present their case; either may be accompanied.
- f) The outcomes of the complaints panel are as follows:
  - g) Dismiss the complaint in whole or part;
  - h) Uphold the complaint in whole or part;
  - i) Decide upon appropriate action to resolve the complaint;
  - j) Recommend changes to the Academy's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not reoccur.
- k) The panel will inform the complainant of the outcome of the appeal hearing in writing either electronic mail or otherwise.
- l) The complainant may escalate the complaint to the Trust if they feel it has not been resolved. Further information regarding this procedure is available direct from Heart Academies Trust.
- m) All panel hearings will be clerked.
- n) If the complainant is not satisfied with the handling of their complaint, they may refer the matter to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) via their Schools Complaint Form. Link to this form:

[https://form.education.gov.uk/submitform.php?self=1&form\\_id=cCCNJ1xSfBE&type=form&ShowMsg=1&form\\_name=Contact+the+Department+for+Education&noRegister=false&ret=%2Fmodule%2Fservices&noLoginPrompt=1](https://form.education.gov.uk/submitform.php?self=1&form_id=cCCNJ1xSfBE&type=form&ShowMsg=1&form_name=Contact+the+Department+for+Education&noRegister=false&ret=%2Fmodule%2Fservices&noLoginPrompt=1)

At no stage of this process will aggressive or abusive actions, including verbal, be tolerated on school premises or to any member of staff. If such an incident should occur the Head Teacher will seek further advice and may involve the Police.

## **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

Our arrangements for handling complaints from parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities about the support of the school provides follow the same procedures as outlined above. Our SENDCo will be made aware.

The Department of Education (DfE) published the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice in July 2014 and was updated in January 2015. The code reflects the changes introduced by the Children and Families Act 2017. Our school has regard to what the code of practice says whenever decisions are taken relating to children with special educational needs or disabilities.

Support for parents can be found as follows:

- Bedford Borough's SEN & Disability Guide – Bedford Borough's local offer for children, young people and families (0-25)  
<https://sendguide.bedford.gov.uk/info.aspx>
- SEND Advice (formerly Parent Partnership) – SEND Advice offers FREE confidential support for parents and carers of children with special education needs.

## **Persistent Complaints**

Every reasonable effort will be made to address the complainant's needs. However, the Chair of the LGB will close a complaint if it is deemed to be persistent. This will happen if it is clear there is insufficient evidence to pursue the case, but a complainant is persistently raising the same issue. Equally this may happen if a complaint has been investigated and no justification for the complaint found.

It will be acceptable for the Chair of Governors to close a complaint if the complainant refuses to co-operate with the school's relevant procedures, places excessive demands on the time of staff and Governors and if the complainant acts in an abusive or offensive manner.

## **Use of Social Media**

Cauldwell School's Online Policy, including the Acceptable User Policy, explains the responsibility of parents to set standards on selecting, sharing and exploring media. The use of social media sites to discuss educational concerns should consider the credibility, accuracy, fairness and transparency of information posted. The use of school, staff and children's names will be seen as a Safeguarding breach and the parent may be requested to meet with the Head Teacher to discuss this further. If this continues it is considered an offence of harassment and Police may be called.

In order for complaints to be resolved as quickly and fairly as possible we request that the complainants do not discuss complaints publically via social media such as Facebook

and twitter. Complaints will be dealt with confidentially for those involved and we expect complainants to observe confidentiality also.

### **Data Protection Principals**

Personal information and a log of all correspondence in relation to the complaint will be kept in accordance with Data Protection Principles.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The Local Governing Body of Cauldwell School will monitor this Policy and will ensure that all concerns and complaints are handled properly.

All complaints will be logged and details of how they were resolved will be recorded. These records will be reviewed annually by the Governors.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, but the Governors will take into account any local and national decisions that affect the complaints process and make any modifications that are deemed necessary.

This policy is available on the school website and will be available to any parent, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

## Appendix 1: Complaints not in scope of a procedure

The Complaints procedure should cover all complaints about any provision of facilities or services that a school provides with the **exceptions** listed below, for which there are separate (statutory) procedures.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admissions to schools</li> <li>• Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)</li> <li>• School re-organisation proposals</li> <li>• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation</li> </ul>	<p>Concerns should be raised direct with local authorities.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion of children from school</li> </ul>	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions">www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions</a>.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whistleblowing</li> </ul>	<p>Schools have an internal whistleblowing procedure for their employees and voluntary staff. Other concerns can be raised direct with Ofsted by telephone on: 0300 123 3155, via email at: <a href="mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk">whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk</a> or by writing to:            WBHL, Ofsted            Piccadilly Gate            Store Street            Manchester M1 2WD.            The Department for Education is also a prescribed body for whistleblowing in education.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures</li> </ul>	<p>These matters will invoke the school's internal grievance procedures. Complainants will not be informed of the outcome of any investigation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities.</li> </ul>	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. They should be contacted direct.</p>

