

The Bishop Willaim Ward School

Complaints Policy Statement

Compliments

These are always welcome and very encouraging to teachers and staff. The school encourages feedback or opinions from pupils and parents. In practice this dialogue is continuous, sometimes directly and also indirectly, for example, through the Parents' Association. It may not always be possible to act immediately but pupils and the school always benefit so please don't hold back.

Concerns

It is natural that parents may, occasionally, be concerned about an aspect of their child's education or welfare at school. This could include issues concerning the school's approach to aspects of the curriculum, homework, behavioural problems or any other issue.

The school welcomes enquiries from parents about any matter. Teachers and staff will explain the school practices, policies, and how they affect the pupils. The vast majority of concerns will be handled by the class teacher or by the subject co-ordinator if this is more helpful. If in doubt, keep asking until you are completely satisfied as all staff are eager to help.

The usual format is to speak to the child's class teacher in the first instance, or to contact the school office to arrange an appointment to discuss your concern with whoever you wish. At all times the staff will help to resolve a problem. If occasionally parents feel they must state their concern formally, this too is not a problem. The school has defined procedures for handling complaints so don't be embarrassed if you feel an issue warrants more attention.

Complaints

The procedure is again to speak to the child's class teacher in the first instance, or contact the school office to arrange an appointment to discuss your complaint with whoever you wish.

The school's policy is to follow the Local Authority (Essex County Council) guidelines when handling concerns and complaints. Just ask if you would like advice or a copy. It would be unusual to deviate from these procedures but the school always retains discretion in these matters.

In summary, the nationally accepted procedure is divided into three stages:

Stage 1 aims to resolve the concern through informal contact at the appropriate level in school.

Stage 2 is the first formal stage where written complaints are considered by the headteacher or a designated governor, who has responsibility for dealing with complaints.

Stage 3 is the next step once Stage 2 is complete. It involves a complaints review panel of governors. Such a panel may be offered at the discretion of the Chair of Governors.

If you are unhappy with the outcome or your complaint, or the way it has been handled at school level, you can contact the Secretary of State at the following address:

The Secretary of State
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
LONDON
SW1P 3BT

You should enclose a copy of any correspondence with the school or governing body so that the Department for Education (DfE) can see how they have responded.

If you should need to refer to the full procedures, please ask at the school office. All staff are familiar with the guidelines and have a duty to help parents needing advice. Please don't feel you are making a fuss. These procedures have been carefully compiled and their reference, however rare, is routine to help pupils, parents and the school.