

Tasker Milward VC School

**GENERAL COMPLAINTS
PROCEDURE**

Date of Last Review: November 2012

General Complaints Procedures - Draft School Policy / Sept 2004

This school has a clear policy for dealing with General Complaints. Our procedures ensure that anyone with an interest in the school can raise a concern which will be heard and if well founded, will be addressed in an appropriate, fair and timely fashion.

A General Complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made about the conduct, actions or omissions of services provided by members of teaching or non-teaching staff employed at this school; those working on a voluntary basis for whom the school is responsible; or the conduct or actions of pupils or of the governing body.

A General Complaint is not a concern relating to the curriculum, sex education, Special Educational Needs, religious worship, admissions or exclusions for which there are other separate procedures. Staff grievance, disciplinary and capability concerns and Child Protection issues are also outside the scope of the General Complaints process, as are complaints from pupils.

General Complaints Procedure

It is our policy to respond to concerns and complaints raised in a fair and consistent manner. We will always, therefore, clarify the nature of the complaint; establish what has happened to give rise to the complaint; contact and if necessary meet with the parties involved; seek a fair and acceptable solution which is made known to all parties concerned; complete the process within a reasonable timescale depending on the nature of the complaint; keep a record of the complaint, our response and its outcome.

Complaints vary. In many cases it will be possible to respond to your concerns quickly and informally. In such cases, a verbal response will be made and a written reply would not be necessary. In the case of more serious complaints, our formal procedures will be followed. In some cases, depending on the nature of the complaint, an adviser from the authority may be involved.

To address the different types of complaints, we have a three stage complaints process. This is in line with current guidance & procedures from the Welsh Assembly Government (Circular No: 03/2004).

STAGE 1 Informal

Many concerns can be quickly resolved by the first member of staff you choose to speak to. This may be a class, subject or form teacher, Head of Year or senior member of staff. You should follow our normal school procedures for contacting the member of staff.

STAGE 1 Informal

Concern raised with member of staff, Head of Year, other staff member. This may be verbal or written.



Concern is investigated and quickly resolved, if possible.

Meeting/s held if necessary between staff member and those involved.



The person raising the concern is informed of the decision and outcomes, verbally or by letter, usually within 10 school days.

A brief written record is kept by the person at the school investigating the concern.

STAGE 2 Formal Complaint to Headteacher

At this stage, the complaint is made to the Headteacher for consideration, for example if the informal procedures in Stage 1 have failed to resolve a difficulty, or if the complaint is of a more serious nature. If no informal approach has been made and the Headteacher receives a complaint which could be dealt with informally, it will be referred to an appropriate member of staff.

STAGE 2 Formal complaint to Headteacher

Complaint made to Headteacher, preferably in writing. The Headteacher will acknowledge receipt of this in writing and give a target date for providing a response. The response / decision will usually be within 10 school days.



The Headteacher will investigate the complaint. This may include meeting with those involved who may wish to be accompanied by a relative, friend, advocate who may speak for them, or other person. The Head may choose to have a witness present at all such meetings.



A factual, written record will be kept of all discussions and outcomes.



The Headteacher will convey the outcome in writing to the person making the complaint.

STAGE 3 Formal Complaint to Governing Body

A Formal Complaint for consideration by the Governing Body should only be made when Stages 1 and 2 have been tried and failed, unless there are special reasons, such as a serious complaint against the Headteacher.

Stage 3 complaints must be made in writing to the Chair of Governors who will ensure the appropriate procedure for dealing with the concern is initiated. This may include passing the complaint back to the Headteacher for investigation if appropriate. In cases where this is not appropriate, the procedure will usually involve the process outlined here. In special circumstances, for example if the

complaint is against particular members of the Governing Body, other procedures may be followed. The Chair of Governors may seek advice from an authority adviser or officer.

STAGE 3 Formal Complaint to the Governing Body

Formal complaint made in writing to the Chair of Governors.
Receipt of complaint acknowledged in writing within 5 school days and timetable for investigation outlined as far as possible. The complaint will be passed to the Complaints Committee for consideration.

Note : It is important that all parties involved should have sufficient time to consider evidence and take appropriate advice before responding to the complaint.

If a hearing is to be held, it is essential that all parties concerned should have at least 5 school days notice of the event with details of time and venue.



The Complaints Committee meets, usually within 15 school days of receipt of the complaint, to consider the issues. If a hearing is held, those entitled to be present may choose to be accompanied by a relative, friend, advocate or adviser. Any hearing will be non-confrontational with factual information being presented and addressed. Witnesses may be called and heard.



The Complaints Committee considers the information and reaches a decision.
In difficult cases, the committee may choose to take advice from the authority, the Diocesan Authority, or other relevant bodies.



The parties involved in the complaint will receive the decision in writing, usually within 5 school days after the hearing, or meeting to consider the complaint, if no hearing has been held. The letter will set out the reasons for the decision and details of any action to be taken.

A full record of all proceedings, including evidence presented and all other relevant documentation will be kept for 3 years.

Following Stage 3, there is no statutory requirement for any appeals process and the Governing Body and Headteacher will not re-open the matter should those involved be unhappy with the outcome. This school does not have an Appeal process.

The local authority, Diocesan authority or Welsh Assembly Government can be asked to review procedures used by the Governing Body, but are not able to

overturn **their decision** if all appropriate procedures as set out in this policy document, have been followed.

Although Pembrokeshire County Council has its own published complaints policy and procedures, in most cases, complaints made directly to the County Council will be referred back to the school.

CE / Sept 2004

