



Ysgol Uwchradd Crughywel
Crickhowell High School

Complaints Procedure 2020-2021

Reviewed by LT (name and date):	
Date of Issue:	
Reviewed / adopted by Governor Committee:	
Ratified by the full Governing Body:	September 2020

MRS J. PARKER	HEADTEACHER		DATE:	September 2020
MR A. FRYER	CHAIR OF GOVERNORS		DATE:	September 2020

Complaints Procedure

1.0 Introduction

Crickhowell High School is committed to dealing effectively with complaints. We aim to clarify any issues about which you are not sure. If possible we will put right any mistakes we have made and we will apologise. We aim to learn from mistakes and use that experience to improve what we do.

Our definition of a complaint is 'an expression of dissatisfaction in relation to the school or a member of its staff that requires a response from the school.'

This complaints procedure supports our commitment and is a way of ensuring that anyone with an interest in the school can raise a concern, with confidence that it will be heard and, if well-founded, addressed in an appropriate and timely fashion.

2.0 When to Use This Procedure

When you have a concern or make a complaint we will usually respond in the way we explain below. Sometimes you might be concerned about matters that are not decided by the school, in which case we will tell you who to complain to. At other times you may be concerned about matters that are handled by other procedures, in which case we will explain to you how your concern will be dealt with.

If your concern or complaint is about another body as well as the school (for example the local authority) we will work with them to decide how to handle your concern. At all stages, we will ensure that you have a copy of the Complaints Procedure and advice that you may be accompanied by a friend or representative to any meeting to discuss the complaint.

3.0 Have You Asked Us Yet?

If you are approaching us for the first time regarding an issue you should give us a chance to respond. If you are not happy with our response then you may make your complaint using the procedure we describe below. Most concerns can be settled quickly just by speaking to the relevant person in school, without the need to use a formal procedure.

4.0 What We Expect From You

We believe that all complainants have a right to be heard, understood and respected. But school staff and governors have the same right. We expect you to be polite and courteous. We will not tolerate aggressive, abusive or unreasonable behaviour. We will also not tolerate unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence or vexatious complaining.

5.0 Our Approach to Answering Your Concern or Complaint

- We will consider all your concerns and complaints in an open and fair way.
 - At all times the school will respect the rights and feelings of those involved and make every effort to protect confidential information.
 - Timescales for dealing with your concerns or complaints may need to be extended following discussion with you.
 - We will ask for advice from the local authority where appropriate.
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- Some types of concern or complaint may raise issues that have to be dealt with in another way (other than this complaints policy), in which case we will explain why this is so, and will tell you what steps will be taken.
- The governing body will keep the records of documents used to investigate your concern or complaint for seven years after it has been dealt with. Records will be kept in school and reviewed by the governing body after seven years to decide if they need to be kept for longer.
- Complaints that are made anonymously will be recorded but investigation will be at the discretion of the school depending on the nature of the complaint
- Where complaints are considered to have been made only to cause harm or offence to individuals or the school, the governing body will ensure that records are kept of the investigations that are made and what actions are taken, including the reasons for 'no action'.

6.0 Answering Your Concern or Complaint

The chart in Appendix A shows what may happen when you make a complaint or raise a concern. There are up to three Stages: 1, 2 and 3. Most complaints can be resolved at Stages 1 or 2.

You can bring a relative or companion to support you at any time during the process but you will be expected to speak for yourself. However, we recognise that when the complainant is a student it is reasonable for the companion to speak on their behalf and/or to advise the student.

As far as possible, your concern or complaint will be dealt with on a confidential basis.

However, there could be occasions when the person dealing with your concern or complaint will need to consider whether anyone else within the school needs to know about your concern or complaint, so as to address it appropriately.

If you are a student under 16 and wish to raise a concern or bring a complaint we will ask for your permission before we involve your parent(s) or carer(s). If you are a student under 16 and are involved in a complaint in any other way, we may ask your parent(s) or carer(s) to become involved and attend any discussion or interview with you.

Ms Claire Jones is the school's designated complaints officer and will keep you informed of the progress being made. She will also keep a log of the concern for future reference.

6.1 Stage 1

If you have a concern, you can often resolve it quickly by talking to a teacher, your child's Progress Leader or the school's designated person – Ms Claire Jones.

You should raise your concern as soon as you can; normally we would expect you to raise your issue within 10 school days of any incident. The longer you leave it the harder it might be for those involved to deal with it effectively.

If you are a student, you can raise your concerns with your school council representative, your Progress Leader or Ms Claire Jones. This will not stop you, at a later date, from raising a complaint if you feel that the issue(s) you have raised have not been dealt with properly.

We will try to let you know what we have done or are doing about your concern normally within 10 school days, but if this is not possible, we will talk to you and agree a revised timescale with you. Ms Claire Jones will keep you informed of the progress being made. She will also keep a log of the concern for future reference.

Formal Complaint Raised With and Resolved By the First Recipient Within the School

Complaint should be raised with Ms Claire Jones in the first instance. She will record the complaint, acknowledge it in writing, and pass it to the appropriate person within the school to deal with.

The complaint may be made orally or in writing.

- Ms Claire Jones will provide you with a copy of this procedure if you do not already have one
- Ms Claire Jones will, where appropriate, speak to you to obtain full details of the complaint; and will make every effort to resolve the complaint as soon as possible and within no longer than 10 school days, undertaking any other investigation required.
- Notes of discussions, meetings or interviews will be recorded in writing, agreed and signed by all parties involved in the discussion.
- You will be advised of the outcome of their complaint and a copy will be returned to Ms Claire Jones for recording.
- The Headteacher will be advised of the outcome of the complaint.
- All documentation will be returned to the Ms Claire Jones for confidential file and will be kept on record as set out in the policy
- If Ms Claire Jones is unable to resolve the complaint then you will be advised that you may raise the issue with the Headteacher.

6.2 Stage 2

In most cases, we would expect that your concern is resolved informally.

If you feel that your initial concern has not been dealt with appropriately you should put your complaint in writing to the Headteacher. We would expect you to aim to do this within five school days of receiving a response to your concern as it is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as soon as possible.

There is also a form attached (Appendix B) that you may find useful. If you are a student we will explain the form to you, help you complete it and give you a copy.

If your complaint is about the Headteacher, you should put your complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors, addressed to the school, to ask for your complaint to be investigated.

In all cases, Ms Claire Jones can help you to put your complaint in writing if necessary.

If you are involved in any way with a complaint, Ms Claire Jones will explain what will happen and the sort of help that is available to you.

Ms Claire Jones will invite you to discuss your complaint at a meeting.

Timescales for dealing with your complaint will be agreed with you. We will aim to have a meeting with you and to explain what will happen, normally within 10 school days of receiving your letter.

Ms Claire Jones will complete the investigation and will let you know the outcome in writing within 10 school days of completion.

Formal Complaint Referred to Headteacher for Investigation / Decision / Resolution

This may be a complaint referred from Stage 1, or a complaint against the Complaints Officer (Ms Claire Jones), or complaints against Governors as listed below.

- The complaint must be in writing
- The Headteacher will acknowledge the complaint, enclosing a copy of the complaints procedure if you do not already have one, and advising of a target date for a response (usually within 10 school days).
- The Headteacher will usually meet with you to obtain full details of the complaint; and will make every effort to resolve the complaint within 10 school days, undertaking any other investigation required.
- In the case of a complaint against the Complaints Officer, the Headteacher may decide to delegate the investigation to another senior member of staff under Stage 1 of the procedure.
- Any discussions or interviews will be recorded
- You will be advised of the outcome of the complaint in writing (with a copy being returned to the Ms Claire Jones for recording) and of your right to write to the Chair of the Governing Body Complaints Committee if you are not satisfied with the outcome.
- All documentation will be returned to Ms Claire Jones for confidential file.
- Ms Claire Jones will ensure that the complaint is recorded as set out in the policy
- In the event of the Headteacher deciding that it is not appropriate for Ms Claire Jones to file and record the complaint, the Headteacher will make alternative arrangements.

In the case of a complaint about the Headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body will undertake this stage, or may delegate to the Vice-Chair or a designated Governor.

In the case of a complaint about a Governor or group of Governors (including the Vice-Chair), the Chair of the Governing Body will undertake this stage. Unless the complaint is about the Vice-Chair the Chair may delegate the investigation to the Vice-Chair (or other appropriate Governor.)

In the case of a complaint about the Chair of the Governing Body, or about both the Headteacher and the Chair, the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body will undertake this stage. The Vice-Chair may delegate the investigation to another appropriate Governor.

In each of these cases the investigating Governor:

- Must advise the LA of the complaint and obtain advice on dealing with the complaint. In particular, the Governor must ensure that the complaint is not one which should be dealt with under other procedures as set out in the policy
 - Must not be a member of the Complaints Committee
 - Must declare any potential conflicts of interest
 - Must not deal with a case in which they are personally involved.
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6.3 Stage 3

It is rare that a complaint will progress any further. However, if you still feel that your complaint has not been dealt with fairly, you should write, through the school's address, to the Chair of Governors setting out your reasons for asking the governing body's complaints committee to consider your complaint. You do not have to write down details of your whole complaint again.

If you prefer, instead of sending a letter or e-mail, you can talk to the Chair of Governors or

Ms Claire Jones who will write down what is discussed and what, in your own words, will resolve the problem.

We would normally expect you to do this within **five school days** of receiving the school's response.

You will be asked to read the notes or will have the notes read back to you and then be asked to sign them as a true record of what was said.

We will let you know how the complaint will be dealt with and will send a letter to confirm this. The complaints committee will normally have a meeting with you within 15 school days of receiving your letter.

The letter will also tell you when all the evidence and documentation to be considered by the complaints committee must be received. Everyone involved will see the evidence and documentation before the meeting, while ensuring that people's rights to privacy of information are protected. The letter will also record what we have agreed with you about when and where the meeting will take place and what will happen. The timescale may need to be changed, to allow for the availability of people, the gathering of evidence or seeking advice. In this case, we will agree a new meeting date with you.

Normally, in order to deal with the complaint as quickly as possible, the complaints committee will not reschedule the meeting more than once. If you ask to reschedule the meeting more than once, the committee may think it reasonable to make a decision on the complaint in your absence to avoid unnecessary delays.

We will write to you within 10 school days of the meeting explaining the outcome of the governing body's complaints committee's consideration. We will keep records of all conversations and discussions for the purpose of future reference and review by the full governing body.

These records will be kept for a minimum of seven years.

The governing body's complaints committee is the final arbiter of complaints

6.4 Special Circumstances

Where a complaint is made about any one of the following the complaints procedure will be applied differently. In each of these cases the investigating Governor:

- Must advise the LA of the complaint and obtain advice on dealing with the complaint.

- In particular, the Governor must ensure that the complaint is not one which should be dealt with under other procedures, as set out in the policy
- Must not be a member of the Complaints Committee
- Must declare any potential conflicts of interest
- Must not deal with a case in which they are personally involved

i) A Governor or Group of Governors

The concern or complaint will be referred to the Chair of Governors for investigation. The Chair may alternatively delegate the matter to another governor for investigation. Stage 2 onwards of the complaints procedure will apply

ii) The Chair Of Governors or Headteacher and Chair Of Governors

The Vice Chair of Governors will be informed and will investigate it or may delegate it to another governor. Stage 2 onwards of the complaints procedure will apply.

iii) Both the Chair of Governors and Vice Chair of Governors

The complaint will be referred to the Clerk to the Governing body who will inform the Chair of the Complaints Committee. Stage 3 of the complaints procedure will then apply.

iv) The Whole Governing Body

The complaint will be referred to the Clerk to the Governing Body who will inform the Headteacher, chair of governors, local authority. The authority will usually agree arrangements with the governing body for independent investigation of the complaint.

v) The Headteacher

The concern or complaint will be referred to the Chair of Governors who will undertake the investigation or may delegate it to another governor. Stage 2 onwards of the complaints procedure will apply.

In all cases the school and governing body will ensure that complaints are dealt with in an unbiased, open and fair way.

Formal Complaint Referred to Governing Body Complaints Committee for Decision / Resolution

This may be a complaint referred from Stage 2, or complaints against Governors as listed below.

- The Complaints Committee will comprise three Governors, none of whom will have had prior involvement with the complaint in order that the proceedings may be seen to be fair and unbiased.
- The purpose of the hearing is to enable members of the Governing Body to clarify facts and ascertain whether there are grounds for upholding the complaint
- You and any person against whom a complaint is made should be present at the hearing to present their own evidence

- The Clerk to the Governors will acknowledge the complaint, enclosing a copy of the complaints procedure if you do not already have one. The Clerk will agree a date for a hearing (to be convened usually within 15 school days of receipt of the complaint), advise you of time and venue, advise you that you may be accompanied by a friend or representative, and ensure any particular needs, e.g. disabled access, Welsh medium or other specialist communication needs are met.
- Any person against whom a complaint is made must be advised as soon as possible of the complaint and no less than 10 school days before the hearing. They should be provided as soon as possible with any other evidence (arising from the investigation) which is to be considered at the hearing, and advised that they may be accompanied by a friend or representative.
- You will be advised that you should provide any evidence/written documentation that you wish the Committee to consider by no less than 10 days before the hearing and that you will be provided with any other evidence (arising from the investigation) which is to be considered at the hearing again by no less than 5 days before the hearing.
- Any person against whom a complaint is made must be advised that they should provide any evidence/written documentation that they wish the Committee to consider by no less than 5 days before the hearing.
- Witnesses may be requested to attend and it is the responsibility of the party wishing to call the witness to ensure that they are invited.
- The Complaints Committee must receive at least 5 days notice of the hearing, advised of the substance of the complaint and of their role
- If a good reason is provided for the absence of one of the parties the Committee may wish to agree an adjournment. However, the Committee may proceed with the hearing in the absence of either you or the person against whom the complaint is made unless a good reason has been provided for their absence.
- The decision of the Committee should be conveyed to you in writing within 10 school days of the hearing. It may be provided earlier and verbally if appropriate, but must be confirmed in writing. The letter should provide you with information on any appeal rights, including the opportunity for LA and Welsh Assembly Government to review the procedures used by the Governing Body
- All documentation will be returned to Ms Claire Jones for confidential file
- Ms Claire Jones will ensure that the complaint is recorded as set out in the policy
- You will be advised of your right to contact the LEA for a review of the process if you are dissatisfied.

7.0 Finalisation of Complaint

The final letter following the Governing Body hearing will advise you of the decision, that the matter has been fully investigated, that the matter is now closed and will not be reopened.

Any new issues raised will be treated as a new complaint and previous cases will not be reopened.

8.0 Our Commitment to You

We will take your concerns and complaints seriously and, where we have made mistakes, will try to learn from them. If you need help to make your concerns known we will try and assist you. If you are a young person and need extra assistance the Welsh Government has established MEIC which is a national advocacy and advice helpline for children and young people. Advice and support can also be accessed from the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

The governing body has consulted with staff and students on this policy and will consult further if any amendments are made in the future.

MEIC may be contacted by freephone: 0808 802 3456, or text: 84001. This service is operated 24 hours a day.

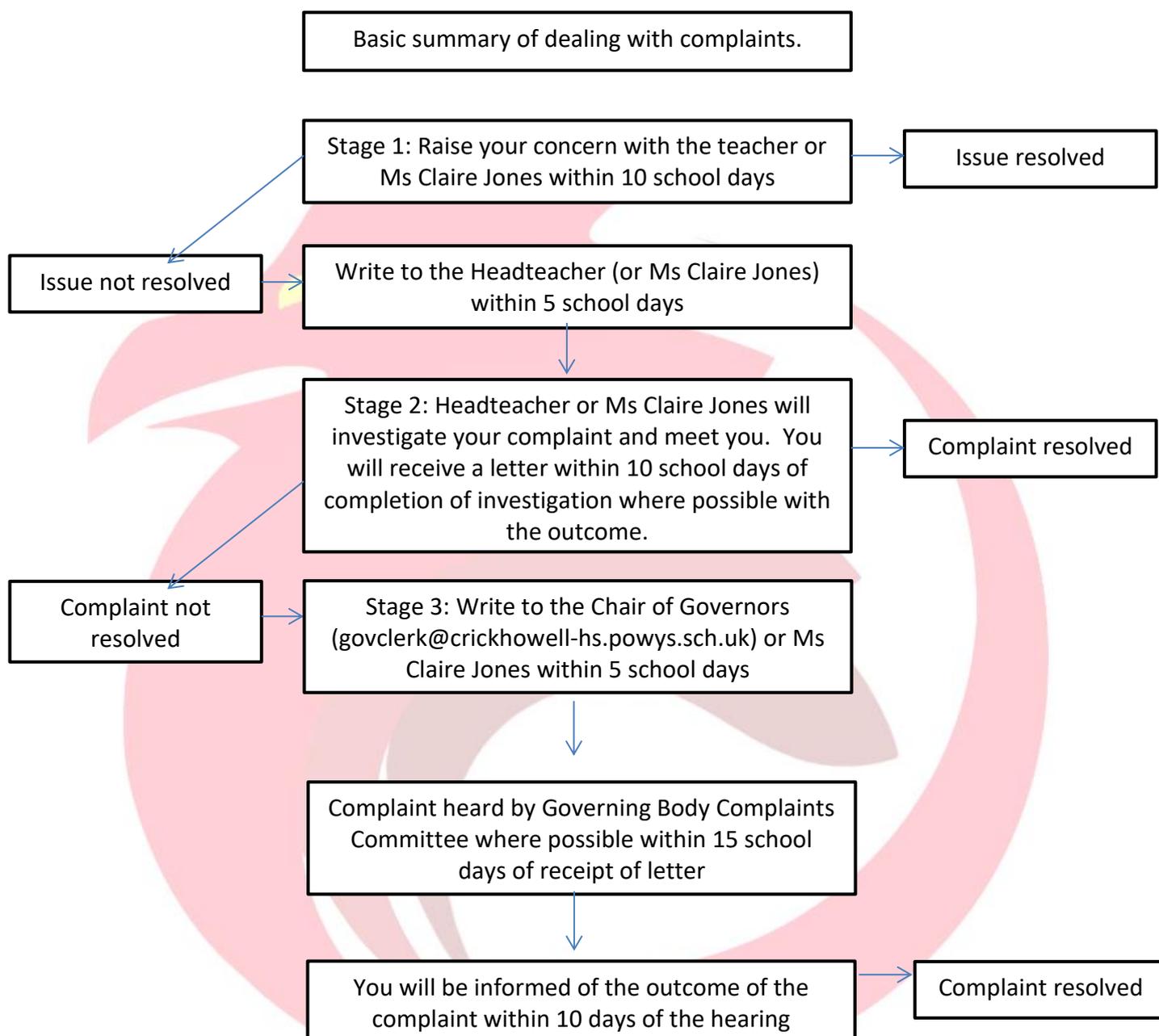
The Children's Commissioner for Wales can be contacted by freephone: 0808 801 1000 (Monday to Friday 9a.m. to 5p.m.), text: 80 800 (start your message with COM) or email:

advice@childcomwales.org.uk



Appendix A

Procedures Flow



Appendix B

Complaints Form

The person who experienced the problem should normally fill in this form. If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else please fill in Section B also. Please note that before taking forward the complaint we will need to be satisfied that you have the authority to act on behalf of the person concerned. If you are a student the school will help you complete this form, will explain it to you and will give you a copy of it when it has been completed.

A- YOUR DETAILS	
Surname / Forename (s):	
Title (Mr / Mrs / Ms / Miss / Other):	
Address and Postcode:	
Daytime Phono No:	
Mobile No:	
Email Address:	
How would you prefer us to contact you?	
B – IF YOU ARE MAKING A COMPLAINT ON BEHALF OF SOMEONE, WHAT ARE THEIR DETAILS?	
Their name in full:	
Address and Postcode:	
What is your relationship to them?	
Why are you making a complaint on their behalf?	
C – ABOUT YOUR COMPLAINT (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)	
What do you think the school did wrong or did not do?	
How you have been affected? Describe.	
When did you first become aware of the problem?	

If it is more than 3 months since you first became aware of the problem, please give the reason why you have not complained before?	
What do you think should be done to put matters right?	
Have you already put your complaint to a member of staff? If so, please give brief details about how and when you did so.	

SIGNATURE OF COMPLAINANT:		DATE:	
SIGNATURE: (if you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else)		DATE:	

Please send the form above and any documents to support your complaint to Ms Claire Jones, Complaints Officer, Crickhowell High School, New Road, Crickhowell, POWYS NP8 1AW
Email: clairej@crickhowell-hs.powys.sch.uk

For school use only

Date complaint received:	
Date acknowledgement sent:	
Complaint referred to:	
Date:	