Compliments, Comments, Concerns and Complaints Policy

College Road
Primary School

Approved by the Board of Governors July 2026

Review Date: Summer 2028

Summer 2026

Guidance notes for parents/carers and the community

This leaflet can be provided in alternative formats – please ask the school office for details

If you have a compliment, comment, concern or complaint…..

…..we would like you to let us know. You are requested to raise directly with the school any issues regarding the school or its staff before posting any comments or pictures/videos on social media that have implications for the school or its staff. All members of staff are familiar with the procedure and are able to assist you.

Compliment – We like to hear when we have done a good job so that we can share what we do well with the staff and children to ensure we continually improve.

Comment – We welcome suggestions for improving our work.

Concern – A concern is an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought. Please tell us of any concern you have as soon as possible so that we can try to resolve it.

If you are a parent/carer be assured that no matter what you want to talk to us about, our support for you and your child will not be affected in any way.

Complaint – A complaint is a concern which has not been satisfactorily resolved. If you feel we have not dealt satisfactorily with your concern, please tell us as soon as possible that you wish to make a formal complaint, as it is difficult for us to investigate properly an incident or problem that happened some time ago.

If at any formal stage of the complaint it is determined that staff disciplinary or capability proceedings are necessary in order to resolve the issue, the details of this action will remain confidential to the headteacher. As the complainant you are entitled to be informed that action is being taken, but you are not entitled to participate in the proceedings or receive any detail.

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We will not usually investigate complaints about issues and incidents that are more than three months old.

We aim to keep to the timeframes outlined for stages 2 and 3 in the attached flowchart but sometimes more complex complaints take longer to investigate. If this is the case we will keep you informed of progress.

If you seek to remain anonymous it may not be possible to take action. However, if an anonymous complaint is received which may need to be treated as a child protection matter it will be dealt with under the appropriate statutory procedure.

This policy does not cover the following types of complaints for which there are statutory or formalised procedures in place:

Procedure dealing with:	**Further information available from:**
Appeals with respect to admissions	See school's Admissions policy or contact the local authority's School Admissions Team Telephone: 01752 307481
Appeals with respect to exclusion of pupils	See school's Behaviour/Exclusions policy or contact the local authority's Inclusion and Attendance Manager Telephone: 01752 307471
Special Educational Needs Statements/Education Health and Care Plans	Local authority's 0-25 SEND Statutory Assessment Team Telephone: 01752 307409
National Curriculum and Religious Education	Local authority's Education and Learning team Telephone: 01752 307485
Child Protection Issues	Local authority's Advice and Assessment team, Children's Social Care Telephone: 01752 308600

Child Protection Investigations against staff	Local Authority Designated Officer Telephone: 01752 307144
Whistleblowing	The school has an internal whistleblowing procedure for employees and voluntary staff which is available from the school office. Other concerns can be raised direct with Ofsted on 0300 123 3155 or via email at whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk
Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures	The school has internal grievance and disciplinary procedures for employees which are available from the school office.
Subject Access Requests and Freedom of Information requests	See the school's Freedom of Information and Data Protection policies
Services provided by other external organisations who use the school/academy premises or facilities	External providers should have their own complaints procedures and should be contacted direct.
Services provided by Plymouth City Council	Local authority's Customer Services team Telephone: 01752 668000

What to do first if you have any concerns

Most concerns can be sorted out quickly by speaking with your child's class teacher, or another member of staff.

If you have a concern that you feel should be looked at by the headteacher you can contact him first. It is usually best to discuss your concerns face to face. You may need to make an appointment to do this, and can make one by phoning or going to the reception.

You can take a friend or relation to the appointment with you if you want to.

All staff will make every effort to respond to your concerns informally. They will make sure that they understand what you feel went wrong, and they will explain their own actions to you. They will ask what you would like the school or academy to do to put things right. Of course, this does not mean that in every case they will come round to your point of view but it will help both you and the school to understand both sides of the issue. It may also help to prevent a similar problem arising again.

What to do next

If you are dissatisfied with the response to your concern you can make a formal complaint to the complaints co-ordinator. This can be done verbally or by completing the attached complaint form. Please contact the school office if you need assistance with this.

The complaints co-ordinator will investigate the complaint and may interview any members of staff or pupils involved. The complaints co-ordinator will ask to meet you for a discussion of your complaint and the outcome of the investigation. Again you may take a friend or relation with you if you wish. You will receive a written response to your complaint.

If your complaint is about an action of the headteacher or a member of the Board of Governors, then you should refer it to the clerk to the Board of Governors instead of the complaints co-ordinator. (see 'If you are still unhappy' section below).

If you are still unhappy

The complaint will normally be resolved by this stage. However, if you are dissatisfied with the response you may wish to contact the clerk to the Board of Governors to ask for your complaint to be referred to the Board of Governors' Complaints Appeal Panel. You can contact the clerk at the school address.

The clerk will arrange a panel meeting at a mutually convenient time. Your complaint will then be heard by a panel of three governors who have no previous knowledge of the issue and so will be able to give it a fresh assessment. You, and the headteacher, will be invited to attend and speak to the panel at a meeting. Again you may take a friend or relation with you if you wish. Please remember that a complaints appeal panel

meeting is designed to find a formal resolution and it is therefore not appropriate to bring legal representation with you.

The panel will be as informal as possible and at the start of the meeting the governor chairing the panel will explain what will happen during the meeting. Both you and the school/academy will be given an opportunity to put your case to the panel members. Notes will be taken of the meeting.

The panel can make the following decisions:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- Recommend changes to the school's/academy's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur

Following the meeting the clerk will issue a letter confirming the panel's decision.

Further action

Complaints about school problems are almost always settled within schools but, if you are dissatisfied with the school's internal procedure you can refer your complaint to the Secretary of State. The School Complaints Unit of the Department for Education considers complaints on behalf of the Secretary of State by looking at whether the school has followed its own procedures but will not normally reinvestigate the substance of the complaint. The School Complaints Unit will not overturn a school's decision about a complaint except in exceptional circumstances where it is clear that the school has acted unlawfully or unreasonably, and they may ask the school to reconsider the complaint.

Further information can be obtained from the School Complaints Unit by calling the National Helpline on 0370 000 2288 or going online at www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus or by writing to the Department for Education, School Complaints Unit, 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD.

Unacceptable behaviour

As a school, we are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, providing a high quality service to those who make them. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However, there are a small number of people who hinder our work with serial or persistent complaints, for example where the school is contacted repeatedly by an individual making the same points, or who asks us to reconsider our position. We consider this unacceptable behaviour and will inform the individual and ask them to change it. If the unacceptable behaviour continues, we will take action to restrict their contact with our school staff. In all cases where we decide someone's behaviour is unacceptable, we will write to tell them why, what action we are taking and how long it will last. We will also tell them how they can challenge the decision if they disagree with it. New complaints from people whose behaviour has been unacceptable in the past will be looked at without bias.

We also do not expect our staff to tolerate behaviour that is unacceptable, for example, abusive, offensive or threatening and we will take action to protect our staff from such behaviour, including reporting the matter to the police or taking legal action. In such cases, we may not give prior warning of that action. Alternatively we may temporarily bar such an individual from the school premises. We will write to tell them why they are being barred from the school site, how they can maintain contact with the school, and how long it will last. Anyone wishing to complain about being barred can do so by letter or email to the headteacher or Chair of Governors. However, complaints about barring cannot be escalated to the Secretary of State or the Education Funding Agency.

CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS FLOWCHART

Stage 1
Informal discussion of concerns with the appropriate member of staff and/or headteacher

Issue resolved
No further action required

Issue not resolved
Consider submitting formal complaint to complaints co-ordinator (if complaint about headteacher move to Stage 3)

Stage 2
Formal complaint to complaints co-ordinator

Complaints co-ordinator will:

- acknowledge receipt of complaint within two school days
- investigate complaint
- arrange meeting with complainant to discuss outcome of investigation within 12 school days (not including holidays)
- immediately after meeting write to complainant outlining results of investigation and meeting

Issue resolved
No further action required

Issue not resolved
Consider submitting formal complaint to Clerk to the Board of Governors

Stage 3
Formal complaint to Clerk to the Board of Governors

- Clerk will acknowledge receipt of complaint within two school days
- Clerk will check if complaint referred within three months of incident
- Clerk will arrange complaints appeal panel meeting at a mutually convenient time within 15 school days (not including holidays) of receipt of complaint, and deal with paperwork
- The panel will hear evidence from both the complainant and school and make a decision on the complaint
- The clerk will issue a letter confirming the panel decision within five school days of appeal panel meeting

Issue resolved
No further action required

Issue not resolved
Consider submitting formal complaint to Secretary of State, Department for Education

Stage 4
Formal complaint to Secretary of State, DfE

- The School Complaints Unit will consider complaint on behalf of the Secretary of State
- The SCU will look at whether the school followed its own procedures and will not normally reinvestigate the substance of the complaint
- The Secretary of State will only intervene where the Board of Governors has acted unlawfully or unreasonably and where it is expedient or practical to do so

College Road Primary School
Complaint form

This form is designed to help you ask the complaints co-ordinator to investigate your formal complaint, or where your complaint is against the headteacher to ask the Clerk to the Board of Governors to arrange a Complaints Appeal Panel meeting.

Please complete this form and return it to the school office (complaints co-ordinator) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

If you need assistance with completing this form please contact the school administrator or parent support adviser.

Your name:	
Pupil's name:	
Your relationship to the pupil:	
Your address:	
Your postcode:	
Your telephone number (daytime):	
Your telephone number (evening):	
Your email	

Please give details of your complaint including dates, names of staff and what happened:
What have you already done to try and sort out your complaint, including who have you spoken to at school/academy and what did they say?

What do you feel would be a satisfactory and reasonable outcome to this complaint?	
If you have attached any relevant documents to this form please list them below:	
Your signature:	
Date:	
OFFICIAL USE	
Date acknowledgement sent:	
By who:	
Complaint referred to:	
Date:	

Data Protection Act – We will hold personal data about you in our files and on computer. We will hold this data securely and only use it to help us to deal with your comment or complaint. You have rights under the Data Protection Act 1998 to have a copy of your personal data. There are exceptions to this right, the main one being where we feel that releasing particular information to you would prevent us from properly investigating your complaint. A fee will normally be charged. Analysis will be restricted to types of complaints and individual complainants will not be identified. The analysis will be reported to the Board of Governors on an annual basis. The reporting will include identifying particular trends of complaints, which may require some change in the school's/academy's procedures.