



Children's



Endeavour



Trust

# Complaints Policy

The Children's Endeavour Trust comprises:

- Abbot's Hall Community Primary School
- Bosmere Community Primary School
- Broke Hall Community Primary School
- Chilton Community Primary School
- Combs Ford Primary School
- Freeman Community Primary School
- Springfield Junior School
- Whitehouse Community Primary School

## Document Control

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	May 2020	CEO	Specific new school details added to appendices.
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This policy applies to any matter (other than matters relating to admissions, exclusions, and matters involving child protection involvement) which has been raised with any individual school by parents/carers as a matter of concern. Please note that the matters which fall outside the remit of this policy are subject to separate procedures.

This policy must be made available to parents/carers of pupils at the following schools:

- Abbot's Hall Community Primary School
- Bosmere Community Primary School
- Broke Hall Community Primary School
- Chilton Community Primary School
- Combs Ford Primary School
- Freeman Community Primary School
- Springfield Junior School
- Whitehouse Community Primary School

## **1. Stage 1 – Informal Resolution**

**1.1** It is a precondition to the operation of this policy that the complainant shall have made reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution and shall have acted in relation to the matter in a reasonable and measured way. The Chair of Trustees shall have a discretion, which will be exercised reasonably, not to allow a complaint to be pursued where this precondition has not been met.

**1.2** The Trust publishes guidance on how matters of concern should be raised on an informal basis. For each school within the Trust, this is documented in Appendices 1 and 2. Generally, it is expected that where the matter relates to a pupil, it will have been raised with the pupil's class teacher before a request is made to deal with it under this policy. The class teacher may be assisted by another member of staff to address the issue.

**1.3** Where the matter is not resolved at the informal stage, the parent/carer may elevate it to Stage 2.

**1.4** The Headteacher may escalate a complaint directly to Stage 2 where they deem the matter to require formal resolution at leadership level.

## **2. Stage 2 – Formal Resolution at Leadership Team Level**

**2.1** The complainant must put the complaint in writing, setting out the facts and stating what it is that the complainant considers should have been done or where the school has not met reasonable expectations. The complaint should be marked 'Formal Complaint' and addressed to a member of the Senior Leadership Team (as set out in Appendices 1 and 2). Where support is required for reading or writing, the complainant is able to request for a member of the office team to scribe their complaint. The scribe may record the exact words the complainant uses but may not advise on the content or wording of the complaint.

**2.2** The Chief Executive Officer will be notified by the school that a Stage 2 complaint has been raised.

**2.3** An investigation will be carried out by the Senior Leader which may include the offer of a meeting with the complainant. Whenever reasonably possible, any meeting with the complainant will take place within 15 school days of the written complaint being received. At any meeting, the complainant will be entitled to be accompanied by a friend but legal representation will not be allowed. The Senior Leader will then conduct an investigation regarding the complaint raised.

**2.4** The Senior Leader will put their findings in writing and will indicate what, if any, steps should be taken to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done within 15 school days of any meeting with the complainant; if no meeting is arranged it will be within 15 school days of the written complaint being received.

**2.5** Where the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may request that the complaint is dealt with at Stage 3. Any such request must be set out in writing, **stating where the complainant remains dissatisfied** and lodged within 10 school days of the complainant receiving the findings in writing.

**2.6** Any formal complaints relating to the designated Senior Leader must be raised with the Headteacher who will investigate the matter, moving the complaint to Stage 3.

### **3. Stage 3 – Formal Resolution: Headteacher**

**3.1** The complainant must put the complaint in writing, addressed to the Headteacher, setting out the facts and stating what part of their original complaint has not been resolved and what the complainant considers should be done to resolve the matter.

**3.2** The Headteacher will consider the complainant's view and assess the validity of the Stage 2 investigation. The Headteacher may offer to meet with the complainant. Whenever reasonably possible, any meeting with the complainant will take place within 15 school days of the Formal Stage 3 written complaint being received. At any meeting, the complainant will be entitled to be accompanied by a friend but legal representation will not be allowed. The Headteacher may appoint a member of the Local Governing Body to support or carry out Stage 3.2.

**3.3** The Headteacher or the member of the Governing Body will put their findings in writing and will indicate what, if any, steps should be taken to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done within 15 school days of any meeting with the complainant; if no meeting is arranged it will be within 15 school days of the Formal Stage 3 written complaint being received.

**3.4** Where the complainant remains dissatisfied they may request the complaint is dealt with at Stage 4. Any such request must be set out in writing, **stating where the complainant remains dissatisfied, what remedies are being sought** and be lodged within 10 school days of the complainant receiving the Stage 3 findings in writing.

The request must be addressed to the Chair of the Children's Endeavour Trust.

Chair of Trustees

Children's Endeavour Trust

58 Chatsworth Drive

Ipswich

IP4 5XD

## **4. Stage 4 – Formal Resolution: Panel Hearing**

**4.1** The Complaints Panel of the Children’s Endeavour Trust will consider all complaints at Stage 4.

**4.2** The Complaints Panel will comprise of at least three people, which will include one person who is independent of the management and running of the Trust and any of its schools.

**4.3** The Complaints Panel may also include one or more persons from the following categories: (i) A member of the local governing body of the school from which the complaint emanated; (ii) A member of a local governing body from another school within the Trust; (iii) A member of the Board of Trustees of the Trust.

**4.4** None of the members of the Complaints Panel will have been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.

**4.5** The Chair of the Trust will invite the individual school to put in writing its response to the complainant's reasons. The school will provide this within 15 school days of receiving the Stage 4 request. At the end of that period (whether or not the school has responded) the Clerk will convene a meeting of the Complaints Panel. That meeting will be held as quickly as practicable, given the need to find a date that is reasonably convenient for the complainant, the school and the members of the Complaints Panel. Whenever possible, the meeting will be held within 15 school days of the end of the school's response time. At any meeting, the complainant will be entitled to be accompanied by a friend but legal representation will not be allowed.

**4.6** The meeting is not a court case, it will be held in private, and will be as informal as circumstances allow. The complainant will have the opportunity to put their reasons for dissatisfaction and to expand on them but they may not introduce reasons that were not previously put in writing. The school will have the opportunity to put its side of things and each side, as well as the Panel members, will be able to ask questions. The complainant will have the opportunity to make final comments to the Panel.

**4.7** The Panel may make findings and recommendations and a copy of those findings and recommendations will be: (i) given in written form (hard copy) to the complainant and, where relevant, the person about whom the complaint was made; (ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the Trust, the Headteacher and the Chief Executive Officer.

**4.8** The Panel will formulate its response as quickly as reasonably possible, aiming to do so within 10 school days, and will notify all concerned.

## **5. Additional Levels of Governance**

- There are additional levels of governance who assume responsibility and will investigate (or appoint someone else to do so) under specific circumstances for Stage 2.
- Where the complaint relates to a Headteacher, the Chief Executive Officer will designate an appropriate member of the Central Team to conduct the investigation.
- Where the complaint relates to the Chief Executive Officer, or a Trustee or a Member, the Chair of the Trustees assumes responsibility.
- Where the complaint relates to a member of the local governing body, the chair of the Local Governing Board assumes responsibility (or appoints another member of the Local Governing Board to do so).
- Where the complaint relates to the chair of the Local Governing Board, the Chair of the Board of Trustees assumes responsibility.
- If the complaint is against a member of the Board of Trustees, then the Chair of the Board (or in the case of a complaint against the Chair, the Vice Chair) assumes responsibility.

## **6. Attendance at a Complaints Panel Hearing**

The complaints panel will proceed irrespective of whether or not the complainant and/or their representatives attend. If the complainant fails to attend on the day without compelling reasons, the complaints panel will still proceed in their absence and the process will continue to its conclusion. Any further attempt to re-open the matter will be considered as falling under the serial/persistent complaint section as below.

## **7. Serial or Persistent Complainants**

If, at any level, a complainant attempts to reopen an issue or a closely related issue that has already been dealt with under this complaints procedure, the Chair of the Trust may write to the complainant to inform them that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter closed, that continued correspondence is vexatious and that the Trust will not respond to any further correspondence on this issue or any closely related issue.

If, at any level a complainant makes persistent and multiple complaints the Chair of the Trust may write to the complainant to inform them of the impact of their persistent complaints on the education of the children and the well-being of staff.

## **8. Time Limit and Exemptions for Complaints**

**8.1** Time limits: Complaints need to be considered and resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible. Complaints will not usually be able to be considered if the pupil concerned no longer attends the school.

**8.2** Please be aware that there may be an alternative legal process for a complaint, in particular if the complaint relates to admissions, exclusions, and matters involving child protection involvement. Please note the following:

*Safeguarding referrals – schools have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of their pupils. This includes making referrals to the appropriate organisation, usually local authority children’s social care services, if they have a concern about the welfare of a child. It is not for the school to*

*investigate or make a judgement about possible abuse or neglect but they must refer any concerns they may have. As such, complaints about safeguarding referrals made in accordance with a statutory duty will not be considered under this procedure.*

*Allegations of abuse – allegations against a member of school staff must be reported to the Headteacher immediately. Allegations of abuse against the Headteacher must be reported to the Chair of Trustees immediately. In all cases, the 'Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board Arrangements For Managing Allegations Of Abuse Against People Who Work With Children Or Those Who Are In Positions Of Trust' will be followed.*

## **9. Record Keeping**

A written record will be kept of all complaints that were resolved at the formal stage of the complaints procedure. Records will contain details of whether the complaint was resolved at stage 2, stage 3 or proceeded to a Stage 4 panel hearing. The action taken by the school or the Trust as a result of a complaint (regardless of whether they are upheld) will also be recorded.

## **10. Confidentiality**

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them.

## **11. Department of Education**

Once the complaints process is concluded (or a complaint has been terminated due to undue delay or failure to lodge a Stage 3 request within the time stated in the policy) the matter is closed. If the complainant is still not satisfied then they may contact the ESFA.

There is an online procedure at: <https://form.education.gov.uk>

or you may write to the:

Ministerial and Public Communications Division Department for Education  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester M1 2WD

## **Appendix 1**

# Specific Procedures and Contacts for Schools

## Stage 1: Informal Procedures

Please begin by telling the class teacher. This is usually the best and quickest way of resolving issues. It is recommended that you make an appointment to speak to the relevant member of staff as soon as possible as this will give both parties the opportunity to talk about the issue. However, please bear in mind that schools are busy organisations and it may not be possible to offer an appointment straight away. The purpose of this meeting should be to establish the nature of the concern and to seek a realistic resolution to the problem. It is good practice for the staff member to make a brief written record of the concerns raised and any actions agreed. You can make contact by letter, email or by telephoning the school your child attends:

<b>Abbot's Hall Community Primary School</b>	
Danescourt Avenue Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 1QF	Telephone: (01449) 612818  Email: office@abbotshall.suffolk.sch.uk
<b>Bosmere Community Primary School</b>	
Quinton Rd Needham Market Ipswich, Suffolk IP6 8BG	Telephone: 01449 721750  Email: admin@bosmere.suffolk.sch.uk
<b>Broke Hall Community Primary School</b>	
Chatsworth Drive Rushmere St. Andrew Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 5XD	Telephone: 01473 729544  Email: frontoffice@brokehall.suffolk.sch.uk
<b>Chilton Community Primary School</b>	
Violet Hill Road Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 1NN	Telephone: 01449 612928  Email: office@chilton.suffolk.sch.uk
<b>Combs Ford Community Primary School</b>	
Glemsford Road Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 2PN	Telephone: 01449 613112  Email: admin@combsford.suffolk.sch.uk
<b>Freeman Community Primary School</b>	
Church Road Stowupland Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 4BQ	Telephone: 01449 612067  Email: admin@freemancpschool.co.uk
<b>Springfield Junior School</b>	
Kitchener Road Ipswich Suffolk IP1 4DT	Telephone: 01473 741300  Email: admin@springfieldjuniors.net
<b>Whitehouse Community Primary School</b>	
Marlow Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 5JN	Telephone: 01473 741249  Email: parents@whcps.org

## Stage 2: Formal Procedure

At our schools, the members of the Senior Leadership Teams involved at Stage 2 is as follows:

School	Member of Staff
Abbot's Hall Community Primary School	Deputy Headteacher: Mrs Flory
Bosmere Community Primary School	Deputy Headteacher: Mr T McKeon
Broke Hall Community Primary School	Deputy Headteacher: Mrs J Noon
Chilton Community Primary School	Deputy Headteacher: Mr B Shaw
Combs Ford Community Primary School	Assistant Headteacher: Miss H Fuller
Freeman Community Primary School	Deputy Headteacher: Mrs C Clarke
Springfield Junior School	Deputy Headteacher: Mrs B Taylor
Whitehouse Community Primary School	Deputy Headteacher: Mrs S Porter

## Stage 3: Formal Procedure

If complaints have not been resolved at Stage 2, then they may progress to Stage 3.

The complainant must put the complaint in writing, addressed for the attention of the Headteacher, setting out briefly the facts and stating what it is that the complainant considers should have been done, or where the school has not met reasonable expectations. The Headteacher may nominate a member of the Local Governing Body to investigate the complaint.

School	Headteacher
Abbot's Hall Community Primary School	Mr D Pettitt
Bosmere Community Primary School	Mr L Abbott
Broke Hall Community Primary School	Mrs R Fairs
Chilton Community Primary School	Mrs L Carr
Combs Ford Community Primary School	Mr M Wesley
Freeman Community Primary School	Mrs E Gerry
Springfield Junior School	Mrs J Viner
Whitehouse Community Primary School	Dr A Hall/Miss A Siddall

## Complaints Relating to Fulfilment of the EYFS Requirements

In order to comply with the statutory framework, written concerns or complaints relating to the fulfilment of the EYFS Requirements will be dealt with in accordance with the following process:

The written concern/complaint will be acknowledged within 5 school days;

The Headteacher will investigate the concern or complaint which may include meeting with the complainant and the Head of Early Years. A written response notifying the complainant of the outcome of the investigation will be sent within 28 school days of the complaint being received.

Where the complainant remains dissatisfied, the Headteacher will ensure that a formal complaints panel will be convened in accordance with Stage 4 of this policy.

A record of the written complaints and their outcomes will be maintained and made available to Ofsted on request.

Parents are further advised that where you have concerns regarding the school meeting EYFS requirements they may contact Ofsted on 0300 123 4666.

## Appendix 2

# Flowchart of procedure at schools

