

# **The Croft Primary School**



## **Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure 2021**

## **Overview**

At The Croft Primary School we would like to hear from you if you:

- Are happy with our services and would like to compliment the staff and its pupils
- Have any suggestions on how we can improve the quality of provision
- Have a complaint or concern

From 1 September 2003 Governing Bodies of all maintained schools in England are required to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides.

At The Croft we are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complaints have with the school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from behaviour which may be abusive, offensive or threatening.

This policy is intended to allow you to raise a compliment, concern or complaint relating to the school.

## **Key Messages**

1. The school maintains an open door policy and actively encourages two-way communication between parents, the community and the school. For the benefit of the child it is important that both parties raise any concerns at the earliest stage to try and ensure that there is no adverse effect on the child.
2. Wherever possible, it is in the interest of all parties, the child, the parent, the complainant and the school to try and resolve any issues without the need for formal procedures. In most cases the class teacher will be the first person a parent should speak to as they will most likely be able to resolve the issue.
3. The school recognises that anyone can make a complaint about any provision of services or facilities that The Croft provides but typically the majority of complaints are made by parents and carers of pupils.  
The school wishes to reassure anyone making a complaint that it will be dealt with under the procedures outlined in this policy.

4. The formal approach will need to be invoked when initial attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful and the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further.

5. We are aware that complaints need to be considered and resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible. To enable a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of school as soon as possible. We will always strive to ensure that our procedure for dealing with complaints contains effective time limits. We would like to reassure our parents and anyone who raises a complaint that we take all complaints seriously and they are given full and proper consideration. Please be aware that the School reserves the right not to review a complaint made by a complainant that has not been brought to the attention of the school within three months of the alleged incident occurring. However, the School will consider any complaint outside of that timescale in certain circumstances.

6. An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

7. When things go well at the school, it is very helpful that parents express their approval. This helps maintain high levels of staff commitment and motivation which are essential to the provision of an outstanding educational experience. You can write, telephone email or speak to staff personally.

### **Aim of the Complaints Procedure**

- encourage resolution of problems by **informal** means wherever possible;
- be easily **accessible**;
- be **simple** to understand and use;
- be **impartial**;
- be **non-adversarial**;
- allow **swift** handling with established **time-limits** for action and keeping people informed of the progress;
- ensure a full and **fair** investigation by an independent person where necessary;
- respect people's desire for **confidentiality**;
- address all the points at issue and provide an **effective** response and **appropriate** redress, where necessary;

- provide **information** to the school's senior management team so that services can be improved

## **The Croft School Complaints Procedure**

### **Stage 1: Informal Complaint Heard by Staff Member/Headteacher**

- The parent/complainant should express their concern at the earliest possible stage to the child's classroom teacher.
- This may be either made in person, by telephone or in writing
- If the parent believes that they would have difficulty discussing a complaint with the classroom teacher, they should contact the Headteacher and request that the complaint is handled either by another member of staff or the Headteacher.
- Where the complaint concerns the Headteacher the parent should contact the Chair of the governing body.
- Further Advice can be sought from the school office

### **Stage 2: Formal Complaint Heard by the Headteacher**

If it has not been possible to resolve a difficulty informally then parents may ask to use the formal complaints procedure.

- The parent should contact the Headteacher verbally, in writing or ask the classroom teacher to refer the complaint.
- Where the complaint is accepted verbally or from the classroom teacher, the Headteacher will write or talk to the parent confirming the details of the complaint, notes will be taken of meetings and/or conversations, these are to be kept on record
- There is a complaint form - see appendix 1 which may assist the complainant provide the school with relevant information to assist the investigation
- It would be helpful if the parent could state what actions they feel might resolve the problem
- The HT will endeavour to respond to the complaint within 7 working days

### **Stage 3: Formal Complaint to the Governing Body**

- Where the complaint involves the Headteacher or cannot be resolved by the Headteacher, the parent should contact the Chair of the governing body verbally or in writing.
- Where the complaint is accepted verbally the Chair will write to the parent confirming the details of the complaint.
- It would be helpful if the parent could state what actions they feel might resolve the problem.
- The Governing body will endeavour to respond to the complaint within 14 working days
- The outcome of a complaint to the Governing Body will be advised to the parent in writing and will include:
  - Details of the complaint
  - The scope of any investigation
  - The conclusion of the investigation
  - Any action which has resulted
- Where the complaint is upheld, appropriate redress will be made by the school to the parent.
- If the issue is not resolved or the complainant is still dissatisfied then the complaint can escalate to Stage 4

### **Stage 4 : Formal Complaint heard by the Governing Body Complaints Appeal Panel**

- The complainant is to write to the chair of the appeals committee within 10 schools days of receiving the outcome of the original complaint
- The Governors will then convene an appeal panel of three to five people
- A letter will be issued to the complainant inviting them to a meeting
- Following the hearing a further letter will be issued confirming the panel decision and any action to be taken

The Complaints Appeal Panel can:

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

Please refer to the DFE document Best Practise Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2020 for detailed advice.

Some Complaints are not in the scope of the Schools Complaints Procedure. These include:

- Admissions to school
- School re-organisation proposals
- Whistle blowing
- Staff grievances & disciplinary procedures
- Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use the school premises

### **Complaints Against a Governor or Governing Body**

- If a complaint is made against the Chair of Governor's or an individual Governor then these should be referred to the Clerk, who will arrange for the complaint to be heard
- This initial hearing can be undertaken by a skilled and impartial member of the Governing Body and would be classed as Stage 1
- If the complaint is not resolved it would then be referred to a committee of governing body members - Stage 2
- Complaints against the entire Governing Body or complaints involving both the Chair and Vice Chair will be referred to the Clerk who will advise on the best course of action to take depending on the nature of the complaint.

### **Serial, Persistent and Vexatious Complaints**

There may be some occasions where the complainant, despite having followed the complaints procedure remains dissatisfied. If a complainant tries to reopen the same issue/complaint the school can inform them that the procedure has been completed and that the matter is now closed.

If the complainant continues to contact the school on the same issue then the school's Persistent & Vexatious Complaints Policy will be invoked.

If a parent/complainant wishes to raise a complaint with the school they should do so within 3 months.

## **The Role of the Secretary of State for Education/ School Complaints Unit**

- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the committee's decision they can raise the matter with the Secretary of State for Education.
- Parents do not have a general right of appeal should they disagree with the governor's decision. They may raise the matter with the County Council's Education Service or Secretary of State. However, they will only investigate further if the Governing Body failed to adopt/follow correct procedures or if new information not considered by the committee has come to light. If the governors have followed the complaint reasonably, the Secretary of State/SCU 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.

Adopted by the Governing Body: February 2021

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