

Complaints Procedures for Children

Last review March 2024	Next Review March 2026	Review Frequency Every 2 years	Coordinator Director	Nominated Trustees EC&T Committee
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Introduction

Central to the work of The Mulberry Bush School is reflecting on our practice in order to improve outcomes for the children. Fielding and managing concerns or complaints is, therefore, an important part of this process.

It is in everyone's interest that any concerns or complaints about The Mulberry Bush School are resolved at the earliest possible stage.

Aims

The aims of the process are that the child should feel their complaint is heard and they are satisfied with the outcome.

Staff need to be clear about the difference between a concern and a complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints. The underlying principle is that concerns ought to be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures.

The requirement to have a complaints procedure need not in any way undermine efforts to resolve the concern informally. In most cases the staff members will receive the first approach. It is helpful when staff are able to resolve issues on the spot. This may include offering a clear explanation; in some cases, accepting that a situation could have been handled better; in other cases, an apology may be appropriate.

Addressing children's concerns and complaints quickly keeps us all safe, staff and children, and helps develop a shared understanding of the issues.

Procedure

- Any complaint made by a child should be listened to seriously and a Clear Care Complaint form should be completed. This has three sections. The first section is for recording the details of the complaint. The second section is for recording the management of the complaint. The last section indicates if the child is happy with how the complaint has been dealt with.

- All complaint forms are to be found on the school's electronic information management system (Clear Care). The three sections of the complaint form need to be completed by all relevant adults; including by the adult who takes the complaint and by other adults who try to sort the complaint out. This will include an adult who is a senior manager at the school.
- Once all the adults concerned have completed the work required to resolve the complaint they must record the work on the relevant sections of the Clear Care form. If a child is happy with the work that has taken place they will indicate that this is the case and the form will then be ready to be signed off by the Director (the Complaints Officer). If the child is not happy with the work that has taken place the Director will ensure that further work is undertaken in order that the complaint process can be finished so that the child is satisfied with the outcome.
- In some cases a child may not feel able to take part in the complaint process themselves but are happy for an adult to complete the procedure on their behalf. All adults must offer this opportunity to a child if they are making a complaint at any time.
- There may be occasions when a child does not want to make a complaint but an adult believes that there are grounds for a complaint. If this is the case the adult must complete the complaint process on the child's behalf.
- All adults must look to deal with the complaint as quickly as possible, and then inform the Director about it. All complaints should be completed within 28 days. If the timescales in relation to any complaint are not likely to be met due to complexity or other reason(s), the School Complaints Officer will let the child know why this is the case and explain to them how and when the complaint work will be completed.
- If any adult feels uncomfortable with managing the complaint they should seek advice from a manager or the School Complaints Officer (Director).
- Any complaint that may have child protection issues must be passed on as soon as possible to a Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Director.
- Any adult who is the subject of the complaint should not be involved in the management of it.
- At the end of the process, the complainant should be asked what they would like to happen with their complaint, i.e. how they would like it dealt with and what outcome they would like.
- The complaint can be dealt with by any staff member as long as they are not the subject of the complaint. Staff should follow the process set out on the complaint form, with the support of a line manager if necessary.

- If a child is asking how to complain, adults should try and help them make an informed decision as to what will happen with the different complaint routes they may choose.
- An example of the Completely Care child complaint form is attached as an appendix to this policy.

Role of the Management Team

The Complaints Officer (Director) should monitor complaints, ensuring they have been properly managed and resolved.

Role of Staff

All staff must be aware of this policy and must know how to help a child make a complaint should this be needed.

Role of Children

Pupils should make use of the complaints process and procedure when they are not happy with how something has been managed.

Raising Awareness of this Policy

School Leadership Team for staff
All staff for the children.

Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy

Complaints Officer (School Director)
Trustees via their visits
Reg 44 Independent Visitor

Complaint form

Summary

Adults - The complaint number is the Clear Care Task Number.

Tell us about your complaint

We want to know what you are upset about.

Child using this form

The date you are filling this form in:

Is this complaint for you, or for somebody else?

- For me
- For somebody else

If for somebody else, please tell us their name

If this complaint is for somebody else, do they know you have complained?

What are you unhappy about?

How did it start?

What happened next?

How did it end?

What do you want to happen to sort it out?

Action taken about this complaint

This section to be completed by the adult who takes the complaint and by senior adults who try to sort the complaint out.

Staff member this is dealing with the complaint: what action has been taken? Name and date / time for each entry please.

Other relevant people informed: SW, TT, etc. Please say where record of communication can be found. Name and date/time for each entry please.

Senior member of staff (HM, SLT): what has been done about this complaint? Name and date / time for each entry please.

Are you happy?

Adults should check with the child who complained:

Are you happy that your complaint has been sorted out

What else would you like to be done? If this is revisited, please add date / time for each entry.

Director / Complaints Officer to confirm they are satisfied that this complaint has been dealt with and is now complete.

Director / Complaints Officer to confirm they are satisfied that this complaint has been dealt with and is now complete.

Complaint complete

