Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council

	Polisi Cwynion Complaints Policy	Polisi / Policy 8



In accordance with **Annex 1** of Welsh Government's:

Guidance for governors on how to deal with complaints
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1. Introduction

1.1 **Ysgol Gynradd Aberaeron** 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.

1.2 We take a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of bullying and harassment, and we promote respectful relationships between learners, parents, staff, and governors. Complaints about bullying will be considered in conjunction with other relevant school policies and will be treated with the utmost importance.

1.3 Our definition of a complaint is '***an expression of dissatisfaction in relation to the School, a member of its staff or the Governing Body that requires a response from the School.***'

1.4 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. When to use this policy

2.1 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 how your concern will be dealt with.

2.2 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.

3. Have you asked us yet?

3.1 If you are approaching us for the first time 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 described below. Most concerns can be settled quickly just by speaking to the relevant person in the School, without the need to use a formal procedure.

4. What we expect from you

4.1 We believe that all complainants have a right to be heard, understood, and respected. School staff and governors also have the same right. We expect you to be polite and courteous and we will not tolerate aggressive, abusive, or unreasonable behaviour.

4.2 School staff have numerous interactions with learners, parents and visitors on a daily basis and are therefore unable to accommodate unreasonable demands, unreasonable persistence, or vexatious complaints.

4.3 The School operates an **Unacceptable Actions Policy** which will be followed in all instances of unreasonable behaviour, as referred to above. A copy of this policy can be obtained from the School upon request.

5. Our approach to answering your concern or complaint

5.1 We will consider your concerns and complaints in an open and fair way.

5.2 At all times, the School will respect the rights and feelings of those involved and we will work in accordance with information governance principles and confidentiality legislation.

5.3 It may be necessary to need more time to fully investigate a complaint. In such instances, we will notify you if we are unlikely to meet the timescales that are prescribed within this policy.

5.4 We may ask for advice from the Local Authority if deemed appropriate. This will usually be the case when dealing with complex or sensitive complaints.

5.5 Some types of concerns or complaints may raise issues that have to be dealt with in another way (other than this complaints policy). In such instances, we will explain the reasons for this and tell you what steps will need to be taken.

5.6 Complaints that are made anonymously will be recorded but any investigations will be undertaken at the discretion of the School, depending on the nature of the complaint.

5.7 In the interests of protecting your confidentiality and that of staff members, we must hear about your complaint from you – either by telephone, in person, or via e-mail. The school is unable to formally receive, or respond to, complaints that are made via social media platforms.

6. Answering your concern or complaint

6.1 There are three stages to this complaints policy: Stage A, B and C. Most complaints can be resolved at Stages A or B. 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, unless you require special assistance. We also recognise that when the complainant is a pupil it is reasonable for the companion to speak on their behalf and/or to advise the pupil.

6.2 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.

6.3 If you are a pupil under 16 and wish to raise a concern or make a complaint, we will ask for your permission before we involve your parent(s) or carer(s). If you are a pupil 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.

6.4 We **will not** be able to relay any information back to you in a formal response if it relates to another child and/or any third parties. Neither will we disclose the outcomes of any investigations regarding staff conduct, due to the School's obligations to adhere to the General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR). However, we will seek to provide reassurances where possible, in respect of any actions taken as a direct consequence of receiving and/or investigating your complaint.

7 Stage A

7.1 If you have a concern, you can often resolve it quickly by talking to a teacher or **the Acting Headteacher, Geraint Thomas**. 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.

7.2 The longer you leave it the harder it might be for those involved to deal with it effectively. The ability to conduct a robust investigation may also diminish with time, and therefore it is essential that complaints are raised in a timely manner.

7.3 If you are a pupil, you can raise your concerns with your School council representative, form tutor or a teacher you are comfortable speaking with. 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.

7.4 We will try to let you know what we have done or are doing about your concern normally within **15 school days**, but if this is not possible, we will talk to you and agree a revised timescale with you.

7.5 The person overseeing your concern or complaint will aim to keep you informed of the progress being made. This person will also keep a log of the concern for future reference.

8 Stage B

8.1 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.

8.2 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. You may find the Complaint Form, included in Appendix 1 (pages 9 & 10), useful. If you are a pupil we can explain the form to you, help you complete it and give you a copy.

8.3 If your complaint is about the Headteacher, you should put your complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors and address it to the School, asking for your complaint to be investigated.

8.4 In all cases, **the acting Headteacher, Geraint Thomas** can support you to put your complaint in writing if necessary.

8.5 If you are involved in any way with a complaint, **the acting Headteacher, Geraint Thomas** will explain what will happen and the support that is available to you.

8.6 **the acting Headteacher, Geraint Thomas** 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.

the acting Headteacher, Geraint Thomas will complete the investigation and will let you know the outcome in writing within **15 school days** of completion.

9 Stage C

9.1 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, but you do need to explain why you believe your complaint has not been addressed properly.

9.2 Stage C does not involve the re-investigation of your complaint, but you are required to state clearly why you believe your complaint has not been dealt with properly. The Complaints Committee may seek independent advice from the Local Authority under the relevant partnership and service level agreements.

9.3 If you need assistance instead of sending a letter or e-mail, you can request a discussion with the Chair of Governors or **the acting Headteacher, Geraint Thomas** who will write down what is discussed and what, in your own words, you feel would be needed to resolve the problem. You will then be asked to sign this document, confirming your agreement that it is a true record of what was said. We would normally expect you to do this within **five school days** of receiving the School's response at Stage B. 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.

9.4 The letter will also tell you when all the documentation to be considered by the Complaints Committee must be received. Everyone involved will see the 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 information or seeking advice. In this case, the person dealing with the complaint will agree a new meeting date with you.

9.5 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 and seek to make a decision on the complaint in your absence to avoid unnecessary delays.

9.6 We aim to write to you within **15 school days** of the meeting explaining the outcome of the Governing Body's Complaints Committee's consideration.

9.7 The Governing Body's Complaints Committee is the final arbiter of complaints.

9.8 In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to appoint an '**External Complaints Committee**' which will be formed by governors from other Schools within the Local Authority's remit. Such arrangements will likely have an impact on the length of time taken to conclude the complaint, and advice will be sought from the Local Authority in respect of identifying suitably independent individuals to conduct this process (as set out in point 10.7 below).

9.9 You will be notified in writing if it is likely that an External Complaints Committee will be required to consider your complaint further.

10 Special circumstances

10.1 Where a complaint is made about any of the following, the complaints procedure will be applied differently:

10.2 **The Headteacher**

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

10.3 **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 B of the complaints procedure will apply.

10.4 **The Chair of Governors or Headteacher and Chair of Governors**

The Vice Chair of Governors will be informed and will investigate the matter, or they may delegate this task to another governor. Stage B of the complaints procedure will apply.

10.5 **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 C of the complaints procedure will then apply. Consideration will also be given as to whether an External Complaints Committee needs to be appointed, and further guidance will be obtained from the Local Authority.

10.6 **The whole Governing Body**

The complaint will be referred to the Clerk to the Governing Body who will inform the Headteacher, Chair of Governors and the Local Authority. Arrangements will be made to appoint an External Complaints Committee to consider the complaint at Stage C of the procedure.

10.7 The Local Authority will agree arrangements with the Governing Body with regards to the appointment of an External Complaints Committee, and will liaise with the Clerk to arrange the necessary post-complaint briefing so as to ensure that any learning opportunity or improvements can be duly implemented.

11. Our commitment to you

11.1 In **all cases** the School and Governing Body will ensure that complaints are dealt with in an unbiased, open, and fair way.

11.2 We will take your concerns and complaints seriously and, where we have made mistakes, we will apologise and ensure lessons are learned as a consequence.

11.3 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 you may want to contact 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.

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

11.5 The Children's Commissioner for Wales can be contacted by freephone: **0808 801 1000** (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm), text: **80800** (start your message with COM) or e-mail: **advice@childcomwales.org.uk**.

The Governing Body reviewed this policy on <<DATE>>

Signed by Chair of Governors on behalf of the Governing Body:

……

Date approved: …… (by full Governing Body)

Date of review: ……

Date sent to Local Authority: ……

Appendix A

Complaint 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 pupil the School will help you complete this form, we will explain it to you and give you a copy of it when it is completed.

Your details:

Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/if other please state:	
Forename(s):	
Surname:	
Address and postcode:	
Your e-mail address:	
Daytime contact phone number:	
Mobile number:	

Please state by which of the above methods you would prefer us to contact you:

……

If you are making a complaint on behalf of somebody else – please provide their details:

Their name in full:	
Address and postcode:	
What is your relationship to them?	
Why are you making a complaint on their behalf?	

About your complaint (please continue your answers on a separate sheet if required)

Name of the school you are complaining about:	

What do you think they did wrong or did not do?
Describe how you have been affected:
When did you first become aware of the problem?
If it is more than three 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 things right?
Have you already put your complaint to a member of staff? If so, please give brief details about how and when:

Signature of complainant: …… Date: ……..

Signature if you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else:

…… Date: ……..

Please send this form and any supporting documents to: **Geraint Thomas**