



## **Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy**

Cosgrove Village Primary School is committed to providing a happy, supportive and nurturing environment for children to learn and develop. We want all pupils and their families to be happy with the education they receive and we welcome feedback to assist us with future planning and continuing development.

This Policy details the steps involved in making a Compliment, Comment or Complaint to the schools.

### **Compliments**

Compliments are always welcome and very encouraging to teachers, staff, governors and the school in general. When we are doing something right it is great to hear about it and we encourage feedback or opinions from pupils, parents, carers and any other stakeholders.

### **Concerns**

It is natural that parents may, on occasions, be concerned about an aspect of their child's education or welfare at school. This could include issues concerning the school's approach to aspects of the curriculum, homework, behavioral problems or any other issue.

The school welcomes enquiries from parents about any matter. Teachers and staff will explain the school practices, policies and how they affect the pupils.

The vast majority of concerns will be handled and resolved swiftly and positively through communication in person with the class teacher or by the subject coordinator. Alternatively, please contact the school office to arrange an appointment to discuss your concern with a member of staff that you feel is appropriate. At all times the staff will help to resolve a concern at this informal stage.

If parents feel they must state their concern more formally, the school has defined procedures for handling complaints detailed below so don't be embarrassed if you feel an issue warrants more attention.

## **Complaints**

There are three main stages involved in making a complaint at APPS. These stages follow Northamptonshire County Council recommendations.

### **Stage 1 - Initial approach**

It is important that parents contact the school first with their complaint and talk to a Teacher or the Headteacher. Most problems can be resolved at this stage.

### **Stage 2 - Formal complaint**

If you are still unhappy the next stage is to raise a formal complaint by writing to:

- the Headteacher
- or Chair of the Governing Body if you have already spoken to the Headteacher

The Headteacher (or nominated member of staff), or the Chair of Governors will investigate your complaint.

After they have looked into the issue, you may be asked to meet with the Headteacher or Chair of Governors or you may receive a letter explaining the school's response.

### **Stage 3 - Appeal to Governors**

If you are still unhappy after raising the complaint in Stage 2, you would need to inform the Chair of Governors in writing and request a hearing. There may be the opportunity for your complaint to be heard by a panel of the Governing Body. You will be asked to meet with the panel and explain your case. The panel will listen to you and the Headteacher, and will inform you in writing of their decision within 5 working days.

This concludes the school level complaint process however, if you are unhappy with the outcome of your complaint at this stage or the way it has been handled, there are further steps you can take to register your complaint with the Secretary of State for Education or the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). Details on how to forward your complaint to them will be detailed in the decision notice letter at this stage.

## **Further considerations with regards to making a complaint**

### **Time Limits:**

You should make the school aware of your complaint as soon as possible after the matter or incident has occurred that you wish to complain about. Usually, we would expect you to do this within three months of the incident occurring and if you do not contact the school within that time, we will not usually consider your complaint.

If your complaint relates to a continuing act, then occurrences outside of the three month time limit will usually be considered alongside the more recent occurrence.

If you feel there are exceptional circumstances that have prevented you from meeting the time limit, you can provide an explanation of these circumstances along with your complaint so that Governors can take them into account.

The final decision rests with Governors as to whether your complaint will be considered when it is raised outside of the three month time limit.

### **Complainant Behaviour:**

Staff and Governors are keen to ensure that all genuine complaints are dealt with fairly and promptly and in accordance with our agreed procedures. We always look to deal with issues positively and professionally and emphasise that most matters can be resolved by discussing issues with our staff at the informal stages of our procedure. The school expects that any person wishing to raise a concern or complaint will also:

- Follow the school complaints procedure.
- Treat all members of the school community with courtesy and respect.
- Recognise the time constraints that staff operate under and allow them a reasonable amount of time in which to respond / address any issues.

We recognise and appreciate that most parents will conduct themselves in accordance with this policy however; there are times when parents raise issues with or about staff in ways which are unacceptable. This can have an adverse effect on pupils, staff and the effective running of the school and ultimately cloud the concern at the heart of the complaint which may result in the delay or hindrance of a resolution. Examples of behaviours that we consider to be unacceptable include:

- Using abusive or threatening language and/or behaviour.
- Making excessive demands on staff time and resources in pursuit of a complaint.
- Harassing individual staff members.
- Persisting in repetitious complaints.
- Changing the basis of the complaint and/or making unjustified complaints.
- Pursuing unreasonable outcomes which are disproportionate to the nature of the complaint.
- Electronically recording meetings, telephone calls and conversations will not be authorised

Where a parent raises a complaint in a manner which the school feels is unreasonable, proportionate actions may be taken to remedy this including, for example but not limited to, the refusal to register a complaint or setting limitations on a parents' access to the school site.

Complaints policy reviewed: November 2015

Next review: November 2016