

YSGOL GYMRAEG GLANRAFON,

YR WYDDGRUG.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES.

Background.

Section 29 of the 2002 Education Act, which became into force on September 1st 2003, ensures that the Governing Body of every maintained school in Wales, deals with complaints by parents, pupils, members of staff, governors, members of the local community and others. This includes complaints regarding the school and any facilities and community services offered by the school.

Purpose of the procedures.

The procedures have been planned to ensure that anyone with an interest in our school, can raise a concern and voice a complaint with the confidence that they are given serious consideration, and act upon any recommendations made, if this is deemed necessary within an appropriate time scale.

A short summary of the Complaints Procedures is included in the school prospectus, which is reviewed annually.

The elements not included in these procedures.

- *The refusal of admission for a child to the school.*
- *Pupil exclusions.*
- *Staff discipline.*
- *Child protection.*
- *Complaints regarding the curriculum.*
- *Complaints regarding Religious Education and worship.*
- *Additional Educational Needs.*

Dealing with complaints – 3 Stage Procedure.

Stage 1 – The Informal Stage.

- *If the complainer contacts a member of the Governing Body directly, including the Chairperson, with a complaint during this stage, the member will refer the matter immediately to the Head teacher.*
- *Ysgol Glanrafon feels that the majority of complaints can be dealt with quickly and informally by a member of staff that a parent contacts in the first instance.*
- *In every situation, the member of staff dealing with the complaint will record the matter and give the results of the first contact together with the date, and inform the head teacher.*
- *The school will investigate the complaint rigorously, and if it's not possible to resolve the complaint immediately, the member of staff dealing with it, will explain the next steps to the complainer.*
- *If it seems that discussions will not resolve the matter and that the complainer is unsatisfied with the response, the member of staff will inform the complainer of the next step in the procedure.*

Stage 2 – The Head Teacher and Management team’s Investigation.

- *Parents who wish to move the complaint to the second stage, should do so in writing to the school. The complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 3 school days of receipt, giving a short explanation of the complaints procedure and a target date for the preparation of a response. If the matter can not be dealt with within 10 school days, the complainer will be informed in writing as to when it is likely to be completed*
- *The Head teacher and/or the Management team will give the complainer an opportunity to come to school to discuss the complaint having made an appointment before hand. If he/she wishes, an opportunity will be given for the complainer to bring a friend or relative with him/her to that meeting.*
- *If it is deemed necessary, the Head teacher and/or the Management team will interview any witnesses and take declarations from the relevant persons. If the complaint is regarding a child, it is possible that the pupil will also be interviewed in the presence of witnesses.*
- *The Head teacher and/or the management team will ensure that all meetings, telephone conversations and any other relevant documents will be recorded in minutes.*
- *Once all the relevant facts have been gathered and collated, the Head teacher and/or management team will convene a meeting with the complainer to discuss or resolve the matter. Following that meeting, a letter will be sent to explain the outcome of that meeting. It is stated in that letter that the complainer will need to inform the chairperson of the Governing Body within 15 school days if he/she wishes to take the complaint further.*

Stage 3 – Governing Body Review.

- *If the complainer wishes to take the complaint to this final stage, he/she must write a letter to the chairperson of the Governing Body giving full details of the complaint.*
- *The Chairperson of the Governing Body will ensure that a meeting of the designated Body’s Complaints sub-committee is arranged within 15 school days of receipt of the letter. Individual complaints are not discussed by the full Governing Body and is not reported to it until the matter has been resolved, and even then, not in detail.*
- *The chairperson of the Complaints sub-committee, (the Governing Body’s vice-chairperson), will ensure that the head teacher, the complainer and any witnesses receive written information 5 school days prior to the meeting to state the time and place of the meeting, nature of the complaint, and any relevant documentation, stating the persons’ right to bring one witness with them if they so wish, or the committee’s choice to discuss the matter in the absence of the head teacher and complainer.*
- *The meeting is to be minuted appropriately. School will ensure that a copy of all correspondence and relevant notes are stored in a file in school, away from any individual pupil’s records.*
- *At the close of the meeting, the chairperson will explain that the Complaints sub-committee will consider its decisions and will write to both parties giving them information of their decisions within 5 school days.*

- *Following their discussions and considerations, the sub-committee can partly or wholly dismiss the complaint, can partly or wholly uphold the complaint, decide on appropriate actions to resolve the complaint or recommend changes to school systems, policies and procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.*

The role of the L.E.A.

- *If a complainer is not satisfied with the school's complaints process, he/she can write to the Director of Lifelong Learning and Leisure. The Director will appoint an appropriate officer to carry out a review of the procedures carried out to confirm that the complaint has been given full and fair consideration.*
- *The L.E.A. does not have a statutory role to resolve complaints against schools. That is the sole responsibility of the Governing Body. Statutory legislation has made schools far more independent of the L.E.A. If schools ask for it, there are officers in the Schools Service available to offer information and advice.*
- *If anyone contacts the L.E.A. to complain about a school, they are referred at once to the school.*
- *If a complainer is not happy with the school's processes, he/she does not have the right to appeal to the L.E.A.*

The role of the Welsh Assembly Government.

- *If the complainer continues to be unsatisfied with the response of the Governing Body, he/she has the right to refer the matter to the Welsh Assembly Government on the grounds that the Governing Body has, or intends to act unreasonably. This can lead to the issuing of a direction against the Governing Body.*
- *The direction does not normally overturn a Governing Body's decision, but it can require a Governing Body to reconsider a matter or consider it for the first time if it has failed to do so, or to amend its process to ensure it does not happen again.*
- *The courts have defined unreasonable as action which no sensible authority acting with due appreciation of its responsibilities, would have decided to adopt.*

The role of the Ombudsman.

- *School Governing Bodies do not fall within the responsibilities of the Local Government Ombudsman. Therefore, if a complainer is not satisfied with the response of the Governing Body, it is not appropriate to refer the complaint to the Ombudsman.*

Role of the Children's Commissioner.

- *The Commissioner may review the arrangements made in order to deal with the complaint to ensure that they have been done in the most effective way in the best interest of the children.*

- *The Commissioner has the right to receive information, explanations and assistance regarding the procedures carried out to deal with the complaint.*
- *The Commissioner does not, however, take the place of existing complaints procedures nor acts as an avenue of appeal.*

Anyone with an interest in our school is welcomed to see a copy of this document after making relevant arrangements before hand with the school in that respect.

This document will be reviewed in the event of any changes in the statutory obligations for schools in Wales in this matter.

The content of this document was discussed by the Governing Body.

Signed: _____ Date: _____