Cyfarthfa High School

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Complaints Policy

POLICY DATE

September 2026

SCHEDULED REVIEW

September 2028

Policy Lead

Lindsey Thomas | Deputy Headteacher

Approval date 08.10.26

Approval

Role	Name and signature	Date
Chair of Governors	D Williams	08.10.26
Headteacher	B Davies	08.10.26
Designated SLT member	L Thomas	08.10.26

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Introduction

Cyfarthfa High School 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.

We have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of bullying and harassment and promote respectful relationships between learners, parents, staff, and governors.

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.'

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.

When to use this procedure

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 to you how your concern will be dealt with.

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.

What this policy does not cover – See Appendix A.

Have you asked us yet?

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 we describe below. Most concerns can be settled quickly just by speaking to the relevant person in school, without the need to use a formal procedure.

What we expect from you

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

Nor will we tolerate unreasonable demands, unreasonable persistence nor vexatious complaining. We have a separate policy to manage situations where we find that someone's actions are unacceptable.

Our approach to answering your concern or complaint

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

At all times, the school will respect the rights and feelings of those involved and make every effort to protect confidential information.

Timescales for dealing with your concerns or complaints may need to be extended and we will notify you.

We may ask for advice from the local authority or diocesan authority where appropriate.

Some types of concern or complaint may raise issues that have to be dealt with in another way (other than this complaints policy), in which case we will explain why, and tell you what steps will be taken.

Complaints that are made anonymously will be recorded but investigation will be at the discretion of the school depending on the nature of the complaint.

Answering your concern or complaint

There are up to three Stages: 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.

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.

If you are a pupil under 16 and wish to raise a concern or bring 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.

Stage A

If you have a concern, you can often resolve it quickly by talking to a teacher or Mrs. Lindsey Thomas (Deputy Headteacher). 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.

The longer you leave it the harder it might be for those involved to deal with it effectively.

If you are a pupil, you can raise your concerns with your school council representative, form tutor or a teacher chosen to deal with pupil. 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.

We will try to let you know what we have done or are doing about your concern normally within 10 school days, but if this is not possible, we will talk to you and agree a revised timescale with you.

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

Stage B

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.

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. The form at Appendix B you may find useful. If you are a pupil we will explain the form to you, help you complete it and give you a copy.

If your complaint is about the headteacher, you should put your complaint in writing to the chair of governors, addressed to the school, to ask for your complaint to be investigated.

In all cases, Mrs. Lindsey Thomas (Deputy Headteacher) can support you to put your complaint in writing if necessary.

If you are involved in any way with a complaint, [name of the school's designated person] will explain what will happen and the support that is available to you.

Mrs. Lindsey Thomas (Deputy Headteacher) 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 school's designated person will complete the investigation and will let you know the outcome in writing within 10 school days of completion.

Stage C

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.

If you need assistance instead of sending a letter or e-mail, you can talk to the chair of governors or [person designated by the school] who will write down what is discussed and what, in your own words, would resolve the problem and then be asked to sign them as 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. 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.

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.

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

Protocol for the Complaints Meeting – See Appendix C.

We aim to write to you within 10 school days of the meeting explaining the outcome of the governing body's complaints committee's consideration.

The governing body's complaints committee is the final arbiter of complaints.

Special circumstances

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

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 onwards of the complaints procedure will apply.

The chair of governors or headteacher and chair of governors:

- The vice chair of governors will be informed and will investigate it or may delegate it to another governor. Stage B onwards of the complaints procedure will apply.

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.

The whole governing body:

- The complaint will be referred to the clerk to the governing body who will inform the headteacher, chair of governors, local authority and, where appropriate, the diocesan authority.
- The authorities will agree arrangements with the governing body for independent investigation and consideration of the complaint.

The headteacher:

- The concern or complaint will be referred to the chair of governors who will undertake the investigation or may delegate it to another governor. Stage B onwards of the complaints procedure will apply.

Our commitment to you

In all cases the school and governing body will ensure that complaints are dealt with in an unbiased, open, and fair way.

We will take your concerns and complaints seriously and, where we have made mistakes, will try to learn from them.

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.

Appendix A: What is not covered by this complaints policy

These areas are not covered by this complaints policy:

- Staff Capability
- Staff Grievance
- Staff Discipline
- Safeguarding
- School Admissions or Exclusions
- ALN Provision
- School organisation proposals
- Curriculum delivery: Religion, Values and Ethics

Appendix B: Model 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, will explain it to you and will give you a copy of it when it is completed.

Section A Your details

Surname

_____

Forename(s)

_____

Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/other

_____

Address and postcode

_____

_____

Daytime phone number

_____

Mobile phone number

_____

Email address

_____

How would you prefer us to contact you?

_____

Section B If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else

Their name in full

_____

Address and postcode

_____

What is your relationship to them?

_____

Why are you making a complaint on their behalf?

_____

Appendix B Model Complaint Form continued

About your complaint (continue your answers on separate sheets of paper if necessary)

Name of the school you are complaining about: Cyfarthfa High School

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 matters right?

_____

_____

Have you already put your complaint to a member of staff?

_____

If so, please give brief details about how and when you did so.

_____

_____

Signature of complainant: _____ Date: _____

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

Please send this form and any documents to support your complaint to:
governor.support@merthyr.gov.uk

Appendix C: Protocol for meeting (Stage C)

The chair will ensure that:

- Everyone is introduced and their role in meeting clarified.
- It is understood that a decision will be made on facts, and the decision will be final.
- All relevant issues are addressed.
- The meeting is conducted with respect and courtesy.
- Everyone has the opportunity to speak and ask questions without interruption.
- The meeting does not become confrontational – if this may happen the committee may agree to meet both parties separately.

During the meeting:

- The chair will open the meeting and clarify meeting expectations.
- The chair will ask the complainant to explain their complaint.
- The chair will ask the headteacher or whoever is representing the school to explain their findings and any actions taken by the school. If not present at the meeting the chair will establish facts/actions subsequent to the meeting.
- The chair will ask any witnesses to speak.
- All parties have the opportunity to ask questions.
- The complainant and school representative(s) will be asked if there is anything further they would like to say.
- The complainant and school representative(s) will be asked to leave the meeting.
- The committee will consider its decision in private.
- The committee will write to the complainant and school representative(s) about its decision within 10 school days.