



THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE PRIMARY PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT

PRU COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS PROCEDURE

January 2019

This policy was agreed by the Management Committee: February 2019

This policy will be reviewed by: 30/01/22

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Introduction

Our Management Committee has adopted this procedure to deal with concerns or complaints from members of the PRU community or general public.

Aims and Objectives

Our PRU aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint and to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding.

Careful consideration will be given to all concerns and complaints and we will deal with them as swiftly as possible. We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed.

In all cases we will put the interests of the child above all other issues.

Our procedure is underpinned by the following **framework of principles**: -

- encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible
- be easily accessible and publicised
- be simple to use and understand
- be impartial
- be non-adversarial
- allow swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress
- ensure a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary
- respect people's desire for confidentiality, wherever possible (some information sharing may be necessary to carry out a thorough investigation)
- address all points of issue, providing an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- provide information to the PRU's senior leadership team so that services can be improved.

Areas not covered by this procedure

This procedure does not apply to issues concerning admissions, exclusion appeals, statutory assessments of special educational needs or grievances by PRU staff. These are the subject of separate complaints procedures; more information can be obtained from the PRU.

In addition, Ofsted has the power to investigate certain (qualifying) complaints about maintained PRUs, including those from parents. A qualifying complaint is one that affects the whole PRU, not an individual. More information can be obtained from the PRU or Ofsted.

All other complaints are handled by the PRU according to the arrangements set out below.

The PRU will, to the best of its ability, maintain an open communication with parents/carers throughout the process until a resolution is reached.

Stage 1 – initial concerns

If you have any concerns about the PRU, or the education we are providing at any time, please discuss the matter with your child's class teacher or a Teacher in Charge at the earliest opportunity.

It is **not** appropriate to publicise any concerns you may have on social networking sites. Please speak, or write, to someone at the PRU at your earliest convenience, rather than using any other means.

The PRU considers any concerns very seriously and most problems can be resolved following discussion and a shared understanding of the issues. All members of staff work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at PRU and is making good progress and they always want to know if there is a problem so they can help to resolve it.

Most concerns can be resolved at this level, however, if after speaking to the class teacher or Teacher in Charge you are still concerned please discuss the matter with the Executive Headteacher. An appointment can be made at the PRU office for a mutually convenient time.

Stage 2 – formal procedure

Most concerns are resolved at Stage 1, however if you remain dissatisfied and wish to take the matter further you can let us know in person, by telephone or in writing.

There is a complaint form (Appendix 1) attached to this procedure which can be helpful to complete. The aim of the form is to give us as clear an understanding as possible of your complaint and includes a section on what actions you feel would resolve the problem.

If you would like support in completing the form from someone unconnected with the complaint, please let us know and we would be happy to organise this for you.

If you are making your complaint in writing, it should be returned to the Executive Head teacher. However, if the complaint is about the Executive Head teacher or a member of our Management Committee, it should be returned to the chair of the Management Committee at the PRU address, marking the envelope 'FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION'. If your complaint is about the chair of the Management Committee, your completed form should be returned to the clerk of the Management Committee.

You will receive an acknowledgement of the receipt of your complaint within 5 PRU working days.

Investigation

An investigation will be carried out into the complaint and the way it has been handled by the PRU. This will include a review of any relevant documentation and information and seeking the views of relevant people, where necessary. The person undertaking the investigation will normally write to you with the outcome of this process within 15 working days of receiving the complaint.

If, at any time, it becomes apparent that the complaint is a disciplinary or capability issue, the matter will be dealt with by following the appropriate procedure rather than the complaints procedure. You will be notified if this is the case with your complaint; however, you are not entitled to know which procedure, or the final outcome, because of the right to confidentiality of the member of staff involved.

Following the outcome of the investigation, if you feel your concern has not been resolved, you may choose to move to Stage 3 of the procedure. You must let the PRU know if you wish to do this within 15 working days of the completion of Stage 2.

Stage 3

At this stage the complaint will be considered by a panel, who will meet to consider the complaint and make a final decision about it on behalf of the Management Committee.

Panel members will have no detailed prior knowledge of the complaint, or connection with the complainant. The meeting will normally take place within 15 working days of your request.

You will have the opportunity to submit evidence on the complaint prior to the meeting of the panel and also to attend, accompanied by a friend/partner if you wish, to put your case. The Executive Headteacher will be given the same opportunities. Appendix 2 outlines the process that will be followed at a panel hearing.

Outcome of the Panel Hearing

The panel will write to you with its conclusion within 5 working days of the meeting, and its decision is final.

If you are still not satisfied, you may wish to put your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education, who can review whether the PRU has acted reasonably and followed the correct procedures.

The PRUs Complaint Unit (SCU) considers complaints relating to LA maintained PRUs in England on behalf of the Secretary of State and can be contacted via: -

- National Helpline 0370 000 2288
- online at: www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus
- by writing to the Department for Education, PRU Complaints Unit, 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD

Serial or Persistent Complaints

Unfortunately, in a small minority of cases, people pursue their complaints in a way which can either impede the investigation of their complaint or can have significant resource issues for the PRU.

These actions can occur either while the complaint is being investigated, or once the PRU has concluded the complaint investigation.

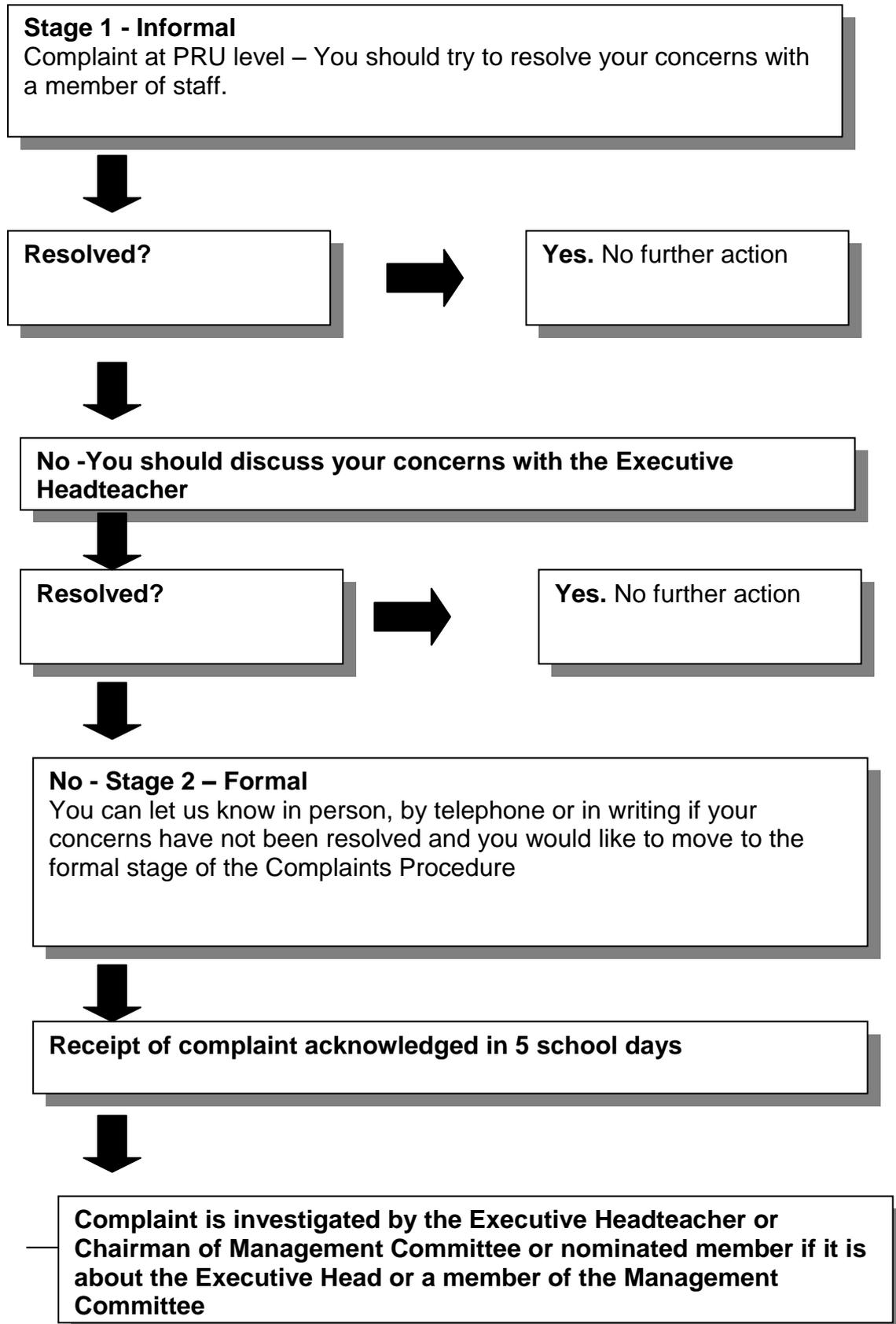
In such cases, the PRU will follow advice from the Local Government Ombudsman

Monitoring and Review

The Management Committee monitors the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Executive Headteacher logs all formal complaints received by the PRU and records how they were resolved. The Management Committee examine this log on an annual basis and consider the need for any changes to the procedure.

Flowchart Summary*

* Please refer to the procedure for more detailed information.





You will be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 15 school days of receiving the complaint.



Resolved?



Yes. No further action



No - If you wish to take your complaint to Stage 3 of the procedure you will be asked to confirm this within 15 school days of the completion of Stage 2.



Management Committee Complaints Panel meets to consider your complaint with 15 school days. If you wish to submit evidence to the panel you will be invited to do so in advance of the meeting. You will also be invited to attend the panel meeting to explain the nature of your complaint.



Panel will make a final decision on behalf of the Management Committee and writes to you within 5 school days.



Resolved?



Yes. No further action



No - You can write to the Secretary of State of Education and Skills if you feel the school has acted unreasonably or not followed the correct procedures.

Appendix One - Complaint form

Please complete and return for the attention of the Buckinghamshire Primary PRU Executive Headteacher who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give concise details of your complaint, including dates, names of witnesses etc., to allow the matter to be fully investigated:

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.
(Who did you speak to/write to and what was the response)?

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

Appendix Two - At the panel hearing

- After introductions, the complainant will be invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses (if any).
- The Executive Headteacher/Chair of the Management Committee may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The Executive Headteacher/Chair of the Management Committee is then invited to explain the PRU's actions and be followed by the PRU's witnesses (if any).
- The complainant may question both the Executive Headteacher/Chair of the Management Committee and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The panel may ask questions at any point.
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
- The Executive Head/Chair of Management Committee is then invited to sum up the PRU's actions and response to the complaint.
- The Chairman of the panel explains that both parties will hear from the panel within five PRU days.
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
- The clerk remains to support the panel.

Signed by.....
Chair of Management Committee

Signed by.....
Executive headteacher
