Bryn Deri Primary School

Complaints Procedure Policy

2025-26

A community developing happy, confident, caring, creative children with a positive attitude to life and learning

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This document contains 19 pages

1. Introduction

1.1 Section 29(2) of the Education Act 2002 requires the Governing Bodies of all maintained schools in Wales to:

- Establish procedures for dealing with complaints; and
- Publicise such procedures.

In consultation with the Local Authority (City and County of Cardiff: Schools and Lifelong Learning Service) and the Welsh Government, this document is defined as the established Procedure. Publication of the current version of this Procedure takes place via the Bryn Deri Primary School website.

Our definition of a complaint is '*an expression of dissatisfaction in relation to the School or a member of its Staff (including Governors) that requires a response from the School*.'

Bryn Deri Primary School is committed to dealing effectively with complaints. We aim to clarify any issues about which a complainant is unsure. If required and if possible, we will put right any mistakes we have made. We aim to learn from mistakes and to use that experience to improve what we do.

2. Purpose

2.1 This Complaints Procedure supports our commitment and its purpose is to ensure that anyone with an interest in the school (an 'Interested Party') can raise a complaint, with confidence that it will be heard and, if well-founded, addressed in an appropriate and timely fashion.

2.2 It provides a framework which aims to ensure that:

- Parents are clear about how they can raise complaints, and how they will be responded to; and
- The Head Teacher, School Staff and Governors are clear about their roles and responsibilities in responding to complaints.

3. Guidance for Parents/Complainants

3.1 Most questions that parents might have about the running of the School will be answered in the information that the School routinely provides for parents. Bryn Deri Primary School also provides a variety of occasions when parents can gather information about the school and learn about the progress of their children.

3.2 In addition to the information dissemination discussed above, Parents have a right to:

- Be able to raise questions and complaints which go beyond these matters and to know how they will be dealt with, and
- Know what to do if they are not satisfied with the way in which their complaint has been received, how they can escalate the matter, and how such matters will then be dealt with.

3.3 **What the School expect from Complainants**

3.4 We believe that all complainants have a right to be heard, understood and respected, but 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. We will also not tolerate unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence or vexatious complaining. The school maintains a Policy in respect of vexatious and/or persistent complaints and may choose to exercise it if appropriate.

3.5 In the majority of instances, complaints from interested parties can best be settled by talking to the Head Teacher or a member of Staff.

3.6 The school would encourage Interested Parties to raise their complaint with The School as soon as possible, within 10 school days of an incident. The school will not normally consider a complaint more than **three months** after the event about which the complaint is formed.

3.7 This Complaints Procedure is intended to apply to general complaints received by Bryn Deri Primary School. It does not apply to the following matters, for which there are separate and specific procedures:

- Complaints about failure to follow the Curriculum or the provision of RVE and collective worship
- Disciplinary/capability complaints about members of Staff which should be handled through specific procedures
- Grievance procedures for employees

- Exclusions, admissions and ALN issues where there is a right of appeal to the Governing Body or to an independent tribunal
- Matters which are or have been the subject of legal proceedings or are under investigation by the Police or other competent body, for example, child protection issues

For complaints in respect of all of the above matters, complainants should contact the Head Teacher in the first instance.

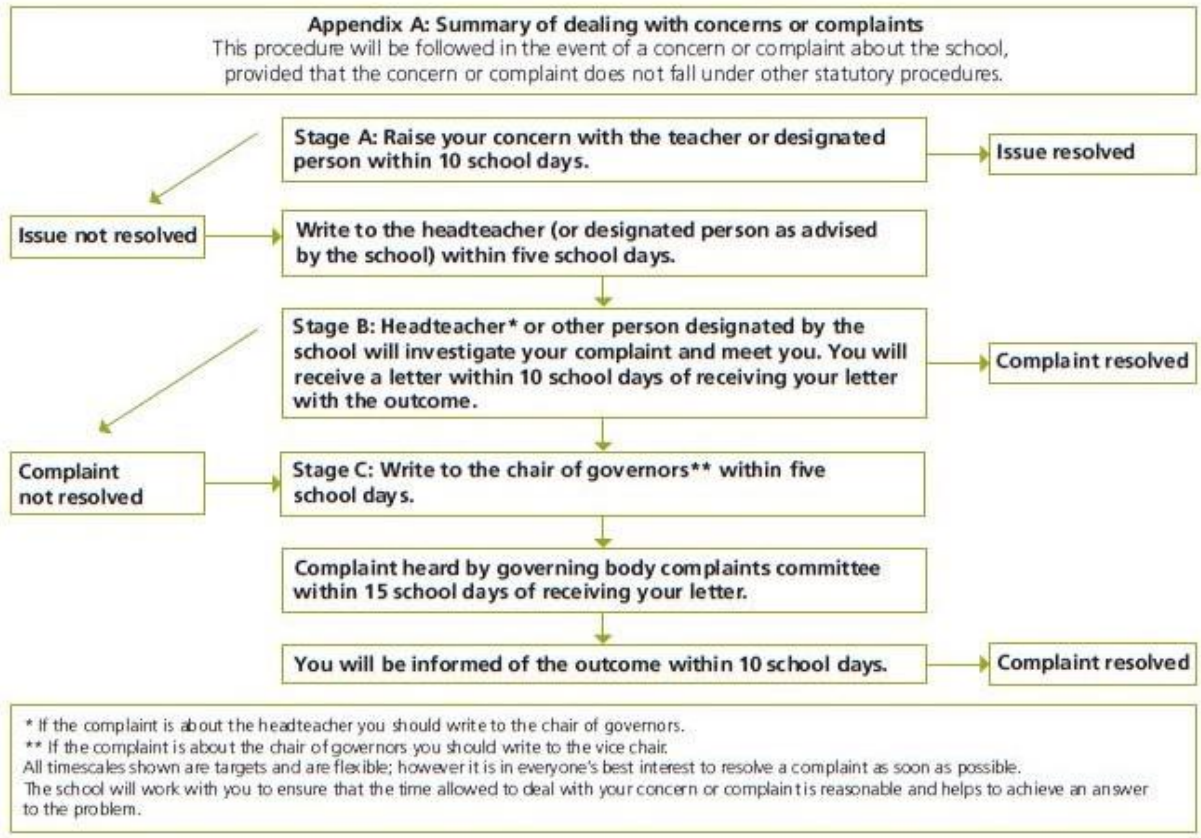
3.8 In line with Local Authority recommendations, Bryn Deri Primary School follows a Staged Complaints Procedure. There are three stages at the School level.

Stage One	Informal stage	The intention is that the vast majority of complaints will be resolved informally We will try to let you know what we have done or are doing about your concern normally within 10 school days
Stage Two	Head Teacher's investigation	A formal investigation by the Head Teacher (or delegated person) upon receipt of a written notification that a complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved informally You will receive a letter within 10 school days of receiving your letter with the outcome
Stage Three	Governing Body review	A formal procedure invoked following receipt of written notification to the Chair of Governors within 5 school days, that stages one and two have not satisfied the complainant, when the Governing Body seeks to establish the facts of the situation, to resolve the complaint if possible and to recommend action to prevent re-occurrence of the complaint where appropriate. Complaint heard by governing body complaints committee within 15 school days of receiving your letter. You will be informed of the outcome within 10 school days

3.9 In addition, there is a further stage available when a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage Three (Governing Body) review. The purpose of this further stage is to review the way in which the complaint has been handled; it is not a re-hearing of the substantive complaint.

Further Stage	Local Authority review	Review of procedures

4. Complaints Procedure (process flow)



4.1 The role of the Local Authority (Schools Service)

4.2 When the Local Authority (Schools Service) receives a general complaint concerning the conduct of the School, the complainant will be referred to the School and advised to pursue the complaint through the School's complaints procedure. (The exceptions to this are where the complaint concerns one of the areas covered by statutory requirements or is obviously concerned with child protection or Staff disciplinary matters.)

4.3 The complainant will be advised to contact the Head Teacher to discuss and, if necessary, pursue the matter further. If the complaint has already involved the Head Teacher, but the matter has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complainant will be referred to the next stage of the School's complaints procedure and advised to contact the Chair of Governors.

4.4 The Local Authority (Schools Service) can provide advice to complainants on Schools' complaints procedures and how they can access them.

4.5 The Local Authority (Schools Service) also offers advice to Head Teachers and Schools on the use of complaints procedures at Stages One, Two and Three.

4.6 The Local Authority (Schools Service) can also provide a fourth review stage. Upon receipt of a letter from a complainant expressing dissatisfaction with the outcomes of a Stage Three (Governing Body) review, the Chief Schools Officer can designate an appropriate officer who will review the procedures followed by the School in order to establish whether the original complaint has been fairly and fully investigated. The purpose of this stage is to review the way in which the complaint has been handled by the school; it is not a re-hearing of the substantive complaint.

5. Stages of the Complaints Process

5.1 Stage One – The Informal Stage

5.2 In most cases, we would expect that your concern is resolved informally.

- Complainant should address their concern or complaint to the relevant member of Staff or the Head Teacher. Written concerns or complaints can be emailed to the school via the school email address brynderiprm@cardiff.gov.uk for consideration by the appropriate member of staff

- If a Governor, including the Chair of Governors, is approached directly with a complaint at this stage, the Governor will refer the matter to the Head Teacher. Written complaints should be emailed to the Governing Body via Governors@brynderips.co.uk

5.3 If not the initial point of contact, then the Head Teacher will be kept informed by the member of Staff of any developments.

5.4 In all cases, members of staff dealing with a complaint will make a note of the date and details of the complaint and the outcomes of the contact and will inform the Head Teacher.

5.5 The School will try to let you know what has been done or is 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.

5.6 If it appears that the discussions are not going to lead to resolution and/or the complainant indicates that they are dissatisfied with the response, the Staff member will inform the complainant of the next stage of the procedure. If the complaint is not immediately resolved, the Staff member dealing with the matter will make sure that the complainant is clear about what will happen next. This may be put in writing if it seems the best way of making the outcome clear and of giving evidence in an attempt at resolution.

5.7 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

5.8 **Special circumstances**

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

- *A Governor or group of Governors* - The complaint will be referred to the Chair of Governors for investigation. The Chair may alternatively delegate the matter to another Governor for investigation. Stage Two onwards of the complaint's procedure will apply.
- *The Chair of Governors or Head Teacher and Chair of Governors* - The Vice Chair of Governors will be informed and will investigate it or may delegate it to another Governor. Stage Two onwards of the complaint's 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 Three of the Complaints Procedure will then apply.
- *The Full Governing Body* - The complaint will be referred to the Clerk to the Governing Body who will inform the Head Teacher, Chair of Governors and Local Authority. The authorities will agree arrangements with the Governing Body for independent investigation of the complaint.
- *The Head Teacher* - The complaint will be referred to the Chair of Governors who will undertake the investigation or may delegate it to another Governor. Stage Two onwards then applies.

5.10 Stage Two – Head Teacher's Investigation

5.11 Complainants who wish to pursue a complaint to Stage Two must put the complaint in writing to the School. This can be via email @brynderiprm@cardiff.gov.uk 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.

5.12 The Head Teacher (or designated member of Staff) will acknowledge the complaint in writing within five school days of receipt, giving a brief explanation of the complaint's procedure and a target date for providing a response. This will normally be within 10 school days. If it is not possible to deal with the matter in this time, the complainant will be informed of when the investigation is likely to be concluded.

5.13 The Head Teacher (or designated member of staff) will provide an opportunity for the complainant to meet him/her. Timescales for dealing with your complaint will be agreed with you. The school will aim to have a meeting with you and to explain what will happen, normally within 10 school days of receiving your letter. The complainant may, if he/she wishes, be accompanied by a friend or relative who can speak on his/her behalf.

5.14 The school's designated person will complete the investigation and will let you know the outcome in writing within 10 school days of completion.

5.15 If necessary, the Head Teacher (or designated member of staff) will interview any witnesses and take statements from those involved. If the complaint centres around a pupil, the pupil may also be interviewed, normally with his/her parent/guardian present. In some circumstances this may not be possible and a senior member of Staff with whom the pupil feels comfortable will attend with him/her.

5.16 If a member of Staff is complained against, they will be made aware of the complaint, and have an opportunity to respond and be accompanied by a representative if required.

5.17 The Head Teacher (or designated member of staff) will ensure that written records of meetings, telephone conversations and other documentation are kept. Such records may be requested by the LA/WG should the complaint be escalated to Stage Four or Five.

5.18 Once all the relevant facts have been established, the Head Teacher (or designated member of staff) will arrange a meeting with the complainant to discuss or resolve the matter. This meeting will be followed up with a letter setting out the outcome of the meeting.

5.19 The complainant will be advised in this letter that if they are not satisfied with the outcome, and wish to escalate the complaint, that he/she should notify the Chair of Governors within five school days of receiving the letter detailing the outcome of the complaint.

5.20 If the complaint is against the action of the Head Teacher, then the Chair of Governors (or designated Governor) will carry out all the Stage Two procedures.

Stage Three - Review by the Governing Body

5.21 Complaints only rarely reach this formal stage, but the Governing Body is prepared to deal with them where necessary. The complaints Committee It should be noted that Stages 1 and 2 must be completed before this stage can be initiated.

5.22 Formal complaints to the Governing Body must be made in writing to the Chair of Governors within 5 school days. Complaints should be emailed to Governors@brynderips.co.uk The Chair of Governors will ask the Clerk to the Governing Body to acknowledge the complaint and to make arrangements for a meeting of the committee of the Governing Body charged with dealing with complaints. The complaint will be heard by governing body complaints committee within 15 school days of receiving your letter**.** Complaints which have the potential to lead to disciplinary action will be managed in accordance with the School's appropriate procedures.

5.23 The Governing Body will ensure that no Governor can be accused of prejudice by ensuring that:

- at Stage Three, an individual Governor does not deal with the complaint
- the complaint is quickly referred to a committee charged with dealing with complaints or to the Head Teacher if the Complaints Procedure at the preceding levels have not been exhausted
- the complaint is not reported to the whole Governing Body until it is resolved, and then not in detail

5.24 The Governing Body will ensure that all parties to the complaint are given a fair hearing – both complainant as well as the party about whom the complaint is addressed

5.25 The decision of the committee will be given in writing to the complainant and any person against whom the complaint is made within **ten school days** of the committee's meeting

5.26 The decision letter will also advise the complainant that if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the procedure, they may write to the Chief Schools Officer who can carry out a further review. This further review will only consider whether the

complaint has been fully and fairly considered according to the school's complaints procedures; it will not re-hear the substantive complaint.

5.27 Further Stage - Review by Local Authority

5.28 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the school's complaints process, they may write to the Chief Schools Officer. The Chief Schools and Lifelong Learning Officer will designate an appropriate officer to carry out a review of the procedures which have been followed in order to confirm that the complaint has been fully and fairly considered.

5.29 This Stage is governed by Local Authority procedures and does not form part of this Complaints Procedure.

6. Possible Outcomes

6.1 **Our approach to answering your complaint**

6.2 The School will consider your complaint in an open and fair way.

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

6.4 Timescales for dealing with your complaint may need to be extended following discussions with you.

6.5 At any point, we may ask for advice from the Local Authority where appropriate.

6.6 Some types of complaint (such as those which cannot be addressed under this procedure, or those which may lead to disciplinary action if substantiated) may raise issues that have to be dealt with in another way (other than this complaints procedure), in which case we will explain why this is so and will tell you what steps will be taken next.

6.7 The Governing Body will keep the records of documents used to investigate your complaint for seven years after it has been dealt with. Records will be kept in School and reviewed by the Governing Body after seven years to decide if they need to be kept for longer.

6.8 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.

6.9 Where complaints are considered to have been made only to cause harm or offence to individuals or the School, the Governing Body will ensure that records are kept of the investigations that are made and what actions are taken, including the reasons for 'No Further Action'.

6.10 The possible outcomes from each stage are as follows:

- Resolved through Clarification – the point in contention is clarified, and the complaint is found to be no longer relevant. No further action is required.

- Agreement – the complainant and the School agree that the complaint is valid, and a course of corrective action is agreed.
- Including the considerations detailed in Para 6.8, or where no (or insufficient) evidence is found to substantiate the complaint, the matter will be closed with a No Further Action recommendation recorded.
- Inability to agree – in which case the escalation process will be initiated. If the complainant is already at the Local Authority Review stage, the LA will describe the options (if any) that remain open to the complainant.

7. Guidance for Staff, the Head Teacher, and Governors

7.1 The requirement for maintained schools to create and maintain a Complaints Procedure is mandated by law.

7.2 A complaint may be received by any member of Staff, the Head Teacher, or a Governor, and it is essential that complaints are recorded, responded to and resolved (or escalated) in line with this Procedure. Therefore, it is incumbent upon anyone who may receive a complaint, to be familiar with the School Complaints Procedure as defined herein.

7.3 Deviation from this Procedure is both unfair to the complainant, who has an understanding of what to expect from the School; and is also counter-productive in that it may cause the entire procedure to be recommenced.

7.4 Most questions that parents might have about the running of the School will be answered in the information that the School routinely provides for parents. Bryn Deri Primary School also provides a variety of occasions when parents can gather information about the School and learn about the progress of their children.

7.5 In addition to the information dissemination discussed above, Parents have a right to:

- Be able to raise reasonable questions and complaints which go beyond these matters and to know how they will be dealt with, and
- Know what to do if they are not satisfied with the way in which their complaint has been received, how they can escalate the matter, and how such matters will then be dealt with.

7.6 Upon receipt of an informal complaint (Stage One)

7.7 All complaints must initially be submitted as a Stage One (Informal) complaint. An informal complaint, whether received from a Pupil, Parent or other interested party, should normally be resolved at Stage One wherever possible. Please refer to the requirements of Stage One of the Complaints Procedure as detailed above in Paragraph 5.1.

7.8 If, at any time, a member of Staff, the Head Teacher or a Governor is unsure of the Procedure to be followed for Stage One or any subsequent Stage, they should refer in the first instance to this document. Further clarification can be sought either from the Head Teacher or from the Local Authority (Schools Service) as appropriate. See Paragraph 4.5.

7.9 Staff and Governors should ensure that anonymous complaints are recorded in the Complaints Log but investigation is discretionary unless there is a suggestion of criminal conduct or concerns about child safeguarding in which case the Local Authority/Police, as appropriate, should be informed. However, in deciding whether or not to investigate further, due consideration should be given as to whether the complainant could be afraid of being identified; this may be particularly pertinent in

the case of complaints made by pupils who may fear recriminations or being labelled troublemakers.

7.10 Responsibilities of roles/persons involved

7.11 The following is a summary of the explicit responsibilities of specific roles within the Complaints Procedure.

7.12 **THE HEAD TEACHER**

- Is responsible for ensuring that an understanding of this Complaints Procedure is flowed down through the Schools' management hierarchy to all School Staff.
- Is responsible for the publication of the latest version of this Complaints Procedure on the School website. Paper copies of this Procedure should also be made available when requested.
- Must maintain a log of all complaints received, their progress, and their closing/escalation comments. The information contained within this Complaints Log shall be deemed to be Confidential, however a summary of redacted information shall be provided to the Full Governing Body for analysis.
- Will report complaints against him/herself to the Chair of Governors in accordance with this Procedure.
- When undertaking a Stage Two (Head Teachers) Investigation, will:
    - Acknowledge the complaint in writing within **five school days** of receipt of the complaint by the school, giving a brief explanation of the complaint's procedures and a target date for providing a response.
    - Provide a response to the substantive complaint within **ten school days**. (If it is not possible to deal with the matter in this time, the complainant should be informed of when it is likely to be concluded.)
    - Were appropriate, provide an opportunity for the complainant to meet him/her.
    - If necessary, interview any witnesses and take statements from those involved
    - Should ensure that written records of meetings, telephone conversations and other documentation are kept. This is in addition to the maintenance of the Complaints Log.
    - Should arrange a meeting with the complainant to discuss or resolve the matter, once all the relevant facts have been established. This meeting should be followed up with a letter setting out the outcome of the meeting.

7.13 **SCHOOL STAFF**

7.14 Should be familiar with this Procedure, including escalation options, and should refer to the Head Teacher with any questions or points requiring clarification.

7.15 If the complaint is in regard to the Head Teacher, the matter must be referred to the Chair of Governors.

7.16 When receiving and managing a Stage One complaint, Staff will:

- Make a note of the date and details of the complaint and the outcomes of the contact and inform the Head Teacher.
- Listen, investigate and ensure that the outcome is reported back. The Head Teacher should be kept informed of any developments.
- (if the complaint is not immediately resolved) make sure that the complainant is clear about what will happen next. This should ideally be put in writing.
- Aim to ensure that all arrangements at this Stage do not involve undue formality.
- (if it appears that the discussions are not going to lead to resolution and/or the complainant indicates that they are dissatisfied with the response) inform the complainant of the next stage of the procedure.

7.17 **GOVERNORS (INCLUDING THE GOVERNING BODY)**

7.18 Complaints are mainly received by the School Staff and/or the Head Teacher, however all Governors should be familiar with this Complaints Procedure.

7.19 If a Governor, including the Chair of Governors, is directly approached by an interested party with a Stage One complaint, the Governor should refer the matter to the Head Teacher.

7.20 If the complaint is in regard to the Head Teacher, the matter must be referred to the Chair of Governors.

7.21 If a Governor, including the Chair of Governors, is directly approached by an interested party with an intent to escalate a complaint to Stage One, the Governor should ask the complainant to make the complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors.

7.22 The Governing Body should ensure that no Governor can be accused of prejudice by ensuring that:

- at Stage Three an individual Governor does not deal with any complaint
- the complaint is quickly referred to a committee charged with dealing with complaints or to the Head Teacher, if complaint procedures at Stages One or Two have not been exhausted
- the complaint is not reported to the whole Governing Body until it is resolved, and then not in detail. (See: Confidentiality of Complaints Log under Paragraph 7.12)

7.23 When part of a Stage Three (Governing Body) Review, the decision of the committee should be given in writing to the complainant and any person against whom the complaint is made within ten school days of the committee's meeting.

7.24 Governors should ensure that the complainant is made aware of the escalation options open to them in the event that they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage Three process.

7.25 **THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS**

7.26 Is responsible for publicising this Procedure to the Governing Body and requesting that they be familiar with it.

7.27 Liaises with the Head Teacher to redact the Complaints Log in order that a summary of complaints can be briefed to the Full Governing Body.

7.28 Receives complaints at Stage One that are made against the Head Teacher.

7.29 Carries out the processes of Stage Two (Head Teachers Investigation) when the subject of the complaint is the Head Teacher. (This responsibility can be delegated to any other Governor).

7.30 Receives all complaints at Stage Three (Review by the Governing Body) in writing and ensures that the Complaints Log is updated.

7.31 Liaises with the Clerk to the Governors to request that the complaint is acknowledged, and also make arrangements for a meeting of the committee of the Governing Body charged with dealing with complaints.

7.32 Forms a committee to address and resolve (where possible) the complaint. The decision of the committee should be given in writing to the complainant and any person against whom the complaint is made within five school days of the committee meeting.

7.33 Advises the Vice Chair of Governors when a complaint has been made against the Chair of Governors (whether alone or with another officer of the School, except the Vice Chair of Governors). The Vice Chair will then assume all further responsibilities under this Procedure previously attributed to the Chair.

7.34 **THE VICE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS**

7.35 Assumes the responsibilities of the Chair of Governors (Paragraph 7.25) in the following situations:

- When a complaint is made against the Chair of Governors (whether alone or with another officer of the School, except the Vice Chair of Governors). This responsibility can be delegated to any other Governor. Depending on the nature of the complaint the Vice Chair should inform the Local Authority (Schools Service) that a complaint has been made against the Chair of Governors and what action will be taken by whom.

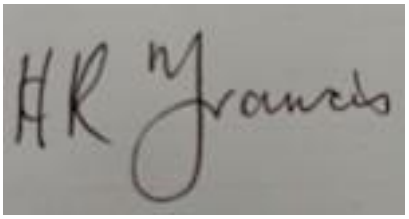
- If the Vice Chair of Governors receives a complaint against themselves and the Chair of Governors, then the Vice Chair or the Chair should advise the Clerk to the Governing Body. The Clerk will inform the Chair of the Complaints Committee, and Stage Three of this Procedure will apply. If the chair of the complaints committee is the Chair or Vice Chair of Governors, then the complaint should be referred to another member of the complaints committee and another Governor will take the place of the Chair and/or Vice Chair on the Complaints Committee.
- When the Chair of Governors is unavailable for any reason.

8. Annex A - Abbreviations and Definitions

FGB	Full Governing Body (the entire body of the legally mandated Governorship) (also: 'the Governors')
Interested Party	Pupil, Parent, Carer, Guardian, members of Staff or the local community or Governors; or other person with a valid and justifiable interest in the function of the School.
LA	Local Authority (The City and County of Cardiff: Schools and Lifelong Learning Service)
BDPS	Bryn Deri Primary School (also: 'the School')
RVE	Religion Values and Ethics
School Day	Any whole day on which the School is normally open. This is not the same as a Working Day, and 'School Days' do not include Public/Bank/School Holidays or Inset Days.
School Staff	All members of the School Staff (both Teaching and non-Teaching) excepting the Head Teacher.
ALN	Additional Learning Needs
WG	Welsh Government

9. Signature Sheet

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

Date Approved by FGB	November 2026
Signed on behalf of FGB	
Name (Chair of Governors)	Mrs Helen Francis
Date	November 2026
Date of next review (Annual)	November 2027