



## Complaints Procedure

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This procedure aims to reassure parents and others with an interest in the school that:

- Any complaint against the school will be dealt with in a fair, open and responsive way, with the aim of achieving a speedy and satisfactory resolution
- The school recognises that a willingness to listen to questions and criticism and to respond positively can lead to improvements in practices and provision for pupils

A complaint is defined as a clear statement of dissatisfaction about any specified aspect of the school's work.

This procedure deals with specified day to day complaints against the management and/or operation of the school which fall outside the following procedures:

- Complaints which have an alternative statutory avenue of appeal, ie. admissions, exclusions, SEN assessments, Section 49 Curriculum complaints and those covered by the Education (School Records) Regulations 1989.
- Serious complaints which must be dealt with by specific employment procedures, ie. allegations of professional abuse, criminal offences or those that are potentially staff disciplinary issues.

Complaints may be from anyone (parents, carers, grandparents, neighbours of the school or anyone with an interest in the work of the school). However, it is expected that it will be mainly parents or carers who will make use of this procedure.

Complaints may be made by telephone, email, in person or written.

The school and/or parent may request advice or guidance from the LA or Children's Services at any stage in the procedure.

Records of all conversations and meetings with parents to resolve complaints will be kept. At A Governors' Complaints panel meeting, minutes will be taken. To help prevent recurring complaints, copies of correspondence and notes will be kept on file in the school's records, separately from individual pupil records.

If at any stage it becomes apparent that the complaint falls outside of this general complaints procedure, parents will be informed.

There may be rare occasions when, despite all the stages of the procedure having been followed, a parent remains dissatisfied. If the parent seeks to re-open the same issue, the school reserves the right to inform him/her in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter is closed

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## **Stage 1**

### **Informal**

On occasions a parent may raise a concern directly with school staff without any formality. At this stage it may be unclear whether the parent is making a complaint, seeking information, or has misunderstood a situation. In any effect, the school aims to resolve the concern at this point in a speedy and effective way.

However, if the concern is not resolved immediately and a complaint is confirmed by the parent, the opportunity to discuss the matter with an appropriate member of staff will be given (ie. Headteacher, Deputy Head, Assistant Head). In the case of a complaint against the Headteacher, this stage will always be heard by the Headteacher him/herself.

The member of staff will discuss the issue with the parent and those involved in school with the aim of resolving the complaint as soon as possible. The parent will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and what action, if any, the school proposes to take.

If the informal process has been exhausted and no satisfactory solution has been found, the parent will be asked by the member of staff dealing with the complaint whether he/she wishes the complaint to be considered formally at stage 2 of this procedure

If wishing to proceed with the complaint, the parent will be invited to put the complaint in writing to the Headteacher using the form attached at appendix 1. The form should be sent to the Headteacher within **10 school days**.

## **Stage 2**

### **Referral to Chair of Governors or Headteacher for further investigation**

Where the complaint has been addressed by the Headteacher at stage 1, this stage will be heard by the Chair of Governors. Where another member of staff has addressed the complaint at stage 1, this stage will be heard by the Headteacher.

The Chair of Governors or Headteacher will acknowledge the written complaint within 5 school days of receipt and provide an opportunity to meet the parent to discuss the complaint.

The Chair of Governors or Headteacher will investigate the complaint and a written response will normally be made within 10 school days of receipt of the complaint. If this is not possible, a letter will be sent explaining the reason for the delay and providing a revised target date.

The written response will include full reasons for the conclusions reached and what action, if any, the school proposes to take to resolve the matter.

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If the parent still remains dissatisfied he/she will be advised that in order to progress the complaint further he/she must notify the Clerk to the Governing Body in writing within 10 school days, copying the original complaint form. The Clerk will then ensure that a parent is offered the opportunity of taking the complaint to the Governors' Complaints Panel at stage 3 of this procedure.

### **Stage 3**

#### **Review by the Governors' Complaints Panel**

Complaints only rarely reach this level.

A written acknowledgement of the complaint and the request for it to be heard at stage 3 will be sent to the parent by the Clerk within 5 school days. The letter will inform the parent that the complaint will be heard by the Complaints Panel within twenty school days of receiving the complaint. It will also inform the parent of the right to submit any further documents other than the complaint form and that these must be made available to the Clerk within 5 school days of receipt of the acknowledgement letter. The right to call witnesses to the meeting, subject to the approval of the Chair of the Complaints Panel, will also be explained.

The Clerk to the Governors will then convene a meeting, having consulted will all parties regarding convenient times. This will be confirmed at least 5 school days in advance.

The names of all parties and witnesses (if any) to attend the meeting and all relevant documents to be referred to at the meeting will also be provided by the Chair of the GCP to all panel attendees. This will be provided at least 5 school days before the meeting.

A written decision will be sent to both the parent and the Chair of Governors and/or the Headteacher within 10 school days of the hearing. This will explain that the decision is final but that complaints can be taken to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on the grounds that:

- A Governing Body or Local Authority is acting, or proposing to act unreasonably; or
- The Governing Body or the Local Authority has failed to discharge its duties

**Appendix 1**

**Form to notify formal school complaint (stage 2/3)**

Child's name (to whom issue relates) .....

Class .....

Parent/guardian .....

Address .....

.....

Tel. nos .....

Details of complaint  
(please be as specific as possible, ie. Giving dates, who was involved, where etc.)

*Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary*

What would you like to see done to resolve your complaint and bring the matter to an acceptable closure for yourself and the school?

Signed ..... Date .....

(parent/guardian)

Please return completed form to the Headteacher/Chair of Governors at the school

## **Appendix 2**

### **Composition of the Governors' Complaints Panel**

The GCP should consist of 3 members of the Governing Body. A chair should also be appointed.

The Governing Body may decide to appoint the 3 members annually, together with 3 reserves, designated in the order which they would be called upon.

No member of the GCP should have had prior involvement with the complaint. As the Chair of the Governing Body may be involved at an earlier stage it may be wise not to include the Chair as a member of the GCP.