



School Complaints Procedure

Our school is committed to providing a safe, stimulating, consistent and accessible service to children and their parents/carers. We always aim to provide high quality services for everyone, but accept that sometimes things do not always go to plan. In such circumstances, we want to know so that we can put them right and learn from any mistakes.

Under normal circumstances the Head teacher will be responsible for managing complaints. If a complaint is made against the Head teacher then the Governing Body will conduct the investigation (See Stage 3).

Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 states that the governing body of a school shall establish procedures for dealing with all complaints relating to the school, other than those to be dealt with in accordance with any other statutory provision.

This procedure does not cover concerns about the following, for which there are separate arrangements laid down by law:

- The school curriculum, collective worship and religious education and the provision of information required by law
- Matters relating to the exclusion of pupils from school where there are separate arrangements in place
- School admissions
- Home to school Transport
- Statements and provision of special educational needs

Stage One- Initial contact with School

If a parent/carer has a complaint about some aspect of an activity or about the conduct of a member of staff, it will often be possible to resolve the problem by simply speaking with the individual concerned. As a school we are committed to open and regular dialogue and we welcome all comments on its services, regardless of whether they are positive or negative.

In the first instance parents/carers are encouraged to speak to the relevant member of staff if deemed appropriate. If not, the Head teacher should be approached and they will try to resolve the problem (See below).

Stage Two - Formal Consideration of your Complaint

If informal discussions of a complaint or problem have not produced a satisfactory resolution to the situation, parents/carers should put their complaint in detail and in writing to the Headteacher. Relevant names, dates evidence and other important information on the nature of the complaint should be included. As part

of the schools consideration of your complaint, you may be invited to a meeting to discuss the complaint. If you wish, you can ask someone to accompany you to help explain the reasons for your complaint.

The Head teacher will keep written and dated records of all meetings and telephone conversations and other related documentation.

If the Head teacher has good reason to believe that the situation has child protection implications, they will make a referral and ensure the local Children's Services department is contacted, according to the procedure set out in the Child Protection Policy. If any party involved in the complaint has reason to believe that a criminal offence has been committed, then they will contact the Police.

The Head teacher will arrange a time to meet the parents/carer concerned and any other relevant individuals, such as members of staff, to discuss the complaint and any response to it.

Stage 3 - Consideration by the Governing Body

If concerns have already been through Stages 1 and 2 and parent/carers are not happy with the outcome, or the complaint is in relation to the Head teacher, the next step is to make a formal complaint to the Governing Body.

Parent/carers should contact the school's Clerk to the Governing Body, by letter or by e-mail, enclosing a copy of the written complaint originally submitted, indicating which matters remain unresolved. No new complaint may be included. Written correspondence should be sent to **Clerk to the Governing Body of (name) School, c/o Governor Support Team, Floor 2, Bunny Hill Centre, Hylton Lane, Sunderland SR5 4BW**. If you prefer to e-mail your complaint this can be sent to governor@sunderland.gov.uk. Upon receipt of the written complaint this will then be forwarded to the relevant school governors.

The case may then be referred to a meeting of the Governing Body Complaints Committee.

The aim of a Complaints Committee meeting is to resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the parent(s)/carer(s). However, it may sometimes only be possible to establish facts and make recommendations, which will reassure parent/carers that the complaint has been taken seriously.

The format of such a meeting would be for the parent/carer to attend to present the case and allow the governing body to take evidence. A separate meeting will then take place to allow the school staff to do the same.

Should the Governing Body agree to hold a Complaints Committee meeting, the complainant will be informed of the date, time and place of the meeting by letter from the Clerk to the Committee. The letter will also explain what will happen at the meeting and provide information about the entitlement to be accompanied at the meeting. With agreement of the Chair of the

Committee, the Head teacher may invite members of staff directly involved in matters raised to attend their meeting.

As a general rule, no evidence or witnesses previously undisclosed should be introduced into the meetings by any of the participants.

The Clerk will send the complainant and the Head teacher a written statement outlining the decision of the committee within two weeks.

Stage 4 - Complaint to the Secretary of State.

If the complainant wishes to pursue the complaint further, they can write to the Secretary of State including all correspondence from the complaint investigation so far.

The Secretary of State
Department for Children, Schools and Families
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Ofsted

As well as inspecting schools and monitoring how they perform, Ofsted also consider complaints if they affect **the school as a whole**. For example:

- The school is not providing a good enough education
- The pupils are not achieving as much as they should, or their different needs are not being met
- The school is not well led and managed, or is wasting money
- The pupil's personal development and well-being are being neglected.

You can contact Ofsted by calling their hot desk from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday or by email to enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Staff on the helpdesk will discuss the complainant's concerns with and advise whether or not to put the complaint in writing to them.