

Complaints Policy

October 2018



LOWER SCHOOL

Where Learning Starts

Reviewed	October 2018
Policy Status	Recommended
Review Period	Bi Annually
Person Responsible	Head Teacher

Introduction

Should you, as a parent, be dissatisfied about any aspect of school life that affects your son or daughter, it is important that the issue is brought to the attention of the school at the earliest opportunity. The procedures that should be followed are set out below in summary form and described in more detail on the following pages. Should it be necessary for you to express a concern or make a complaint, it is important that you follow the procedures set out below as failure to do so may result in your complaint not being heard.

Executive Summary

Informal Concerns / Complaints

1. Initially discuss the matter with your child's class teacher.
2. If the issue has not been resolved by the discussion with the class teacher, it should be raised with the Head Teacher

Formal Complaints

1. Where an issue has not been resolved at either of the two above stages, a written complaint should be made and addressed to the Head Teacher.
2. If the matter cannot be resolved to your satisfaction by the Head Teacher, it will be referred to the Chair of Governors.
3. If the matter cannot be resolved by the Chair of Governors, it will be referred to the Governor's Complaints Panel which normally consists of three school governors. This is the highest level at which a complaint can be heard within the school and the decision of the Governor's Complaints Panel is final and not open to further internal challenge.
4. In the unlikely event that you still remain dissatisfied with the decision of the Governor's Complaints Panel, and you feel that the Governing Body has acted unlawfully or arbitrarily, you may take your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills.

Please note that complaints regarding the following are not included in this document: Admissions; National Curriculum; Child Protection; School Exclusions; Special Educational Needs and complaints about Governors. For further guidance on these matters parents are advised to contact the Local Authority.

Procedure for resolving complaints

As partners in your children's education, the School wishes to work with you in the resolution of problems and this policy is designed to show what steps may be taken. The resolution of a concern can take the three steps, which are described in detail below.

An Informal Concern

1. On most occasions these can be resolved immediately by speaking to your child's class teacher. It may be necessary for you to make an appointment at a time, which is convenient to both of you. Please let the teacher know the nature of your concern when making an appointment so that they may investigate further on your behalf if necessary. The purpose of the meeting should be to establish a solution or to agree a plan of action to resolve the concern.
2. If the meeting fails to do so, then you should make an appointment to see the Head Teacher. The Head teacher will normally make further investigations on your behalf and meet with you to suggest a workable solution. If you feel that the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, you may request a further meeting with the Head teacher or consider making the matter the subject of a formal complaint.

It is important that due procedure is followed with a view to seeking resolution to a concern or complaint. A failure to follow the procedure may result in the procedure being terminated by the Governing Body.

A Formal Complaint

1. If the concern is not resolved at the informal stage it must be put in writing and passed to the Head teacher who will either investigate the matter or delegate this responsibility to a senior colleague. The complaint should include details, which might assist the investigation such as names of potential witnesses,

dates and times of events and copies of relevant documents. The Head teacher may meet with you to clarify the matter. On the conclusion of the investigation, the Head teacher will write to you with the outcome of the investigation. If the outcome of the investigation results in the implementation of staff disciplinary procedures, such procedures will remain strictly confidential.

2. If you are not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, or if the complaint is about the Head teacher, then a full written complaint should be made to the Chair of Governors at the School's address. The Chair of Governors will write to you to confirm receipt of your letter and will investigate the matter fully and reply within a further five working days. In some circumstances, the Chair may ask another Governor to carry out the investigation on their behalf. The Chair will collect such other evidence as is deemed necessary and may interview other witnesses. The Head teacher will be provided with a copy of the complaint and any additional evidence presented by you or collected by the Chair.

Once there has been an opportunity for the Head teacher to consider this she will meet separately with the Chair to present a response. A friend or representative may accompany the Head teacher at this meeting. At the conclusion of this meeting you and Head teacher will be informed in writing of the outcome. You will not be informed of any disciplinary or capability action which might ensue.

This will now bring the Chair's investigation to a close. If you are not satisfied with the manner in which the complaint has been investigated, a request may be made for the Governing Body to hold a formal review of the process, which will take the form of a hearing. Any such request must be made in writing to the Chair within two weeks of receiving notice of the outcome of the Chair's investigation and must state the reasons for the implementation of the next stage. Please note you are not entitled to access any details of the investigation except for any statements that may have been provided by your child.

A Formal Review

On receiving a formal request for the complaint to be taken to the next stage, the Chair of Governors will write to you within five working days to inform you of the date and time of the hearing and of the composition of the panel who will hear the complaint. The members of this panel will have had no previous involvement or knowledge of the complaint.

The hearing may take one of two forms at the discretion of the Governing Body.

1. You may be invited to attend the meeting, given the opportunity to inform the Governing Body of the details of your concern. The Governors may question you to seek further clarification of the detail of your concern. You may bring a friend or representative with you to the hearing. The Governors will then ask you to leave and will then meet with the Head teacher and Chair of Governors to seek their view of the issue. The Head teacher may be accompanied by a friend or representative. Once the Governors have clarified any issues, the Head teacher and Chair of Governors will be asked to leave while they consider their response to the complaint.

2. Alternatively, the meeting may follow the same course described above with both parties in attendance for the duration of the hearing. In this case after both parties have stated their case and responded to questions, you and the Head teacher and/or Chair of Governors will be requested to sum up their positions before being asked to leave. No further questioning will be allowed at this point. The Governors will then consider their response.

The Governing Body will write to you and the Head teacher or Chair, as appropriate, within forty-eight hours of the hearing with their findings. You will not be informed of any disciplinary or capability action which might follow. However, if the investigation does result in a change to the School's policies being implemented, you will be informed of the detail of this if so requested. This will bring the involvement of the Governing Body to a close and further correspondence cannot be entered into.

Where a complaint is judged by the Governing Body to be vexatious, you will be informed that the complaint will not be accepted and will not be investigated. If you believe that the Governing Body has acted unlawfully or arbitrarily in handling the complaint, then you may make representation to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills.