



COMPLAINTS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

In this school, all the staff are dedicated to giving all the children the best possible education and caring properly for their health, safety and welfare at all times. We are committed to working closely with parents and believe that the school and parents should work in partnership, each carrying out their particular responsibilities to help the pupils gain the most from their time at school.

If you feel that something is not going quite as you would like it to, we are doing something you are unhappy with, or not doing something you feel we should, then please tell us about it.

THE FIRST STEP

As a first step, if you are unhappy with anything about the school, please talk to [your child's class teacher](#), or [with the particular teacher concerned](#).

Usually, teachers are available for a short while after classes have finished, but to make sure that the teacher has time to listen properly to what you have to say, [please contact](#) the school to make an appointment to see the class teacher at [a mutually convenient time](#).

We would hope that most concerns can be resolved in this way.

The teacher will not only try to address your concern but will report the matter to the Head so that he is aware of your concern and what is being done about it.

THE SECOND STEP

Very occasionally, it may be that your concern cannot be resolved by the teacher, or you may feel that the situation has not altered. If this is the case, or if your concern is about the conduct of a particular teacher, you should discuss the matter with the headteacher.

It would be helpful to telephone the school and make an appointment so that the headteacher can set aside time to sit down and talk through the situation carefully with you. [In almost all cases we can sort things out satisfactorily in this way.](#)

THE THIRD STEP

You should make a formal written complaint to the headteacher, unless the complaint is about the conduct of the headteacher. You should then receive a written response.

TAKING MATTERS FURTHER

We would expect most, if not all, complaints to have been resolved through the stages described so far. In exceptional circumstances, however, this may not be the case and you may wish to pursue the matter further and more formally.

If your complaint is about the conduct of the headteacher, or if you are dissatisfied with the headteacher's response to your formal complaint letter, then you will need to contact the governors.

You should send written details of your complaint, with any correspondence and evidence to support your complaint, to the Clerk to the Governors, St Anne's Church of England Primary School, Harrowby Road, Grantham, Lincs NG31 9ED.

If, for some reason, you do not feel that you can do that, please telephone the Clerk, who can be contacted through the school, and explain to him/her that you want to make a complaint but are unable to set it out in writing. The Clerk will produce a typewritten statement of your complaint, at your instruction, for you to sign.

The governors will investigate your complaint and write to advise you of the outcome.

External appeal:

The decision of governors is normally final; however, if you are dissatisfied with the governors' response, you may be able to take your complaint to an external body.

For certain complaints about schools maintained by the Local Authority, parents can write to the Secretary of State for Education . You must do this in writing, either by post to:

School Complaints Team

Department for Education

Castle View House

East Lane

Runcorn,

WA7 2GJ

Or, by using the online School Complaints form. This can be accessed at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/b00212240/guidance-on-making-a-complaint-about-a-school/how-to-complain-to-the-department-about-a-school>

You should be aware that the Secretary of State for Education will usually only consider a complaint once the school's internal processes have been exhausted. For the Secretary of State to intervene in a matter, he would also need to be sure that:

- The school has acted or proposes to act unreasonably in the exercise or performance of its functions under certain legislation
- Or, the school has failed to carry out a duty at all under certain legislation.

Please note that, unless your complaint is about the **governors'** response or lack of response, your complaint will generally have to be considered first by the governing body of the **school**.

Original document: 19 October 1994

Last Reviewed: October 2010 September 2013

Governors Complaints Procedure

- If a parent is not satisfied with the response from the Headteacher regarding their complaint or if their complaint is about the Headteacher, then he/she is entitled to take their complaint to the Governing Body.
- All complaints to the Governing Body must be initiated by means of a letter, detailing the complaint and accompanied by any supporting evidence, and sent to the Clerk to the Governors, care of the school. The Clerk will then ensure the complaints process is commenced as soon as practicable (a complainant can request that the Clerk to the Governors write down the complaint on their behalf where writing a letter is difficult).
- The Governors will appoint a minimum of three of their number to form a Complaints Committee to adjudicate upon the complaint. Those Governors chosen ideally, should have no knowledge whatsoever of the details surrounding your complaint or of the complainant.
- It is appreciated this may not always be possible, particularly in some rural schools. However, the Governing Body should always strive to find an impartial selection of Governors whenever possible.
- Once the Complaints Committee has been formed, they must then decide how they wish to investigate the complaint.
- The Governors effectively have two options available. The Governors can elect to deal with the complaint by means of an oral hearing or through written representations. The LA advises that, wherever possible, it should be through written representations.

If the Governors elect to have an oral hearing, the parent will be invited to attend a meeting where they will be able to put their complaint personally to the Governors. The Headteacher will also be present to respond to the complaint. Teachers should not attend. If their evidence is needed, it should either be obtained via the headteacher, or where this is not appropriate, by a governor either before or after the meeting with the parent. The governors will only make a decision about the complaint once they have heard the parent's and the school's evidence.

The structure of such a meeting should be flexible. However, it is anticipated it will follow a similar process to exclusion or admission appeals. The complaints committee should have familiarised themselves with the written complaint before the meeting opens and will have an opportunity to ask any questions, as will the headteacher. The complaint should then be responded to by the headteacher with questions from both parties being permitted. Each party can then be asked to summarise their position. Both parties will then leave to allow the governors to make their decision in private.

Both the complainant and headteacher are entitled to bring a representative with them if they wish. Although it would not normally be necessary, either party may bring a legal representative if they wish. Either party intending to bring a representative would be expected to contact the clerk to the governors before the hearing to notify them.

If the governors do not wish to hold an oral hearing - that decision being at the discretion of the complaints committee - the investigation will proceed by way of written representations.

Should the governors choose to adopt this procedure, the clerk to the governors will write to the complainant, outlining the procedure.

The complaint will be forwarded to the headteacher who will then have 7 working days in which to respond.

That response will then, in turn, be sent to the complainant for comment, any responses to be provided within 7 working days.

Finally, that response will go to the headteacher who has 7 working days in which to respond to the clerk.

A copy of the headteacher's final response should be sent to the complainant with the advice that it is only for their information and that any further response from the parent will not be considered except in exceptional circumstances.

All the responses are then put before the complaints committee for consideration.

For the avoidance of doubt, all communication should be through the clerk to the governors, neither party should send their response to the other directly.

Regardless of which method is adopted, the complaints committee must take a robust approach and not simply endorse the decision of the headteacher without any consideration of the evidence.

The complaints committee must have all the necessary evidence they feel is necessary for them to make their decision. If they are not satisfied and require further evidence from either party, they should adjourn and request that information. The complaints committee should only make their decision if they are satisfied they have sufficient evidence with which to make a final decision.

The decision of the complaints committee should be given to the complainant in writing within 5 working days of the decision. Providing the procedures as laid down in the complaints policy are followed then there is no right of appeal following this decision.

The decision letter should outline the nature of the complaint, the factors taken into consideration and the decision of the complaints committee. There is therefore no need for minutes to include any other information.

Under the Data Protection Act, parents can request to have sight of all documents relating to their complaint, subject to restrictions as detailed in Section A06 of this handbook.