



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Background

The Education Act 2002 Section 29(1)(a) and (b) requires governing bodies to have procedures to deal with complaints not covered by other statutory arrangements and to publicise these procedures. The Local Authority is responsible for providing a range of services to parents and carers:

- statutory assessments for special educational needs (SEN)
- a parent partnership service for parents of children with SEN
- assessments, support and advice by the educational psychology, education welfare and behaviour support services
- education other than at school (EOS) for pupils unable to attend school
- county wide planning of school places
- youth services.

Complaints to the school

The school works hard to explain its procedures to parents and to give parents a realistic understanding of what can be expected. Where there are occasional misunderstandings or misrepresentations parents are encouraged to contact the school directly to speak to the member of staff concerned. A courteous approach will almost always bring about a speedy resolution of the problem. Where parents are aggressive and/or unreasonable with school staff this will be raised as a separate issue and, where necessary, steps will be taken to protect the well being of teachers and other staff.

The satisfactory resolution of a complaint is of paramount importance to the school. Where home and school work together in a spirit of co-operation children feel secure and supported and do their best. Where there is ongoing conflict children feel confused, have divided loyalties and lose confidence. It may not always be possible to reach agreement between home and school but, in these cases, it is almost always possible to reach acceptance of the two positions in the pupil's best interests overall.

Most complaints to the school fall into the following categories:

- academic (e.g. Concern about the curriculum, concern about teaching, perceived lack of progress, homework, religious education, collective worship, trips and visits).
- pastoral (e.g. concern about sanctions, bullying, unhappiness at school)

Very rarely there may be complaints about an individual teacher. Child protection issues may also be raised from time to time. There are clear procedures in the case of Child Protection, which will be explained at the time.

The school aims to deal with all complaints as quickly and as sensitively as possible.

Procedures

Stage 1

The complainant should speak directly with the class teacher. Unless it is a fairly low level matter where clarification will produce resolution, the conversation should be face to face. However, telephone conversations should, if unavoidable, be conducted with respect and courtesy on both sides. The member of staff will listen to the concerns and then endeavour to resolve the matter. They will make a record of the complaint and give advice as to the next stage in the process if the complaint is not resolved. The member of staff should advise the complainant to speak to the Headteacher. If the member of staff is new to the profession or new to the school it would be appropriate for a more senior colleague to support them at this stage.

Stage 2

A copy of the complaints procedure should be offered at this stage.

If the Stage 1 procedures have not resolved the problem the complainant should now write formally to the Headteacher, support in doing so will be provided by the school. The complainant should write stating the nature of their complaint and providing as much evidence to support their case as possible. The Headteacher will then:

- acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days
- investigate the complaint and meet with the complainant
- confirm the outcome of the investigation and offer a resolution in writing within 20 working days.

Stage 3

If the complainant is still not satisfied after informal discussion about the complaint, the complainant will need to put the complaint in writing and send it to the Headteacher, stating that they wish to make a formal complaint. Full and fair consideration will be given to the complaint and urgent cases will be considered as a priority. The Governing Body follows all relevant complaint and appeal procedures, as set out in the DCFS Guide to the Law for School Governors.

The complaint will be heard by the next scheduled meeting of the Governing Body. The complainant will be able to attend the meeting and to call upon any evidence in support of their case. The complainant will be informed of the Governing Body's decision in writing.

If the complaint is about religious education and the complainant follows a particular religious tradition, the complainant are entitled to ask for a member of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education representing that tradition to be co-opted to the panel. The headteacher will be able to advise the religious traditions represented in the SACRE.

Stage 4

The Local Authority offers a further right of appeal for complainants who have exhausted the school's procedures, if the complaint is about:

- the National Curriculum and related matters
- provision of collective worship and religious education

The Secretary of State

If a complainant wishes to pursue a complaint because they feel a school has acted unreasonably, they can write to the Secretary of State.

Vexatious Complaints

Complaints become vexatious when they are:

- repeatedly and obsessively pursued
- unreasonable or seeking unreasonable outcomes
- reasonable but pursued in an unreasonable manner

In such cases the school may decide to restrict communication to formal letter only and for all communication to be through a named individual member of staff. If a conclusion has been reached about a complaint but the complainant continues to pursue it, the school will reiterate that the matter is now concluded and state that future correspondence will be read and filed but there will be no acknowledgement.

Abusive Complaints

Verbal and physical aggression will not be tolerated by the school. All parties are entitled to courtesy and respect. In such instances the school will restrict further contact to senior staff only, insist that such behaviour stops and consider reporting the matter to the police. Repeated aggressive contacts will be reported to the police.

Anonymous Complaints

In general anonymous complaints will be ignored by the school unless there is evidence that the issue and the fear of identification are genuine or that the issue is one of Child Protection.

**CALMORE JUNIOR SCHOOL
COMPLAINTS FORM**

Name of parent/carer

Pupil's name

Address

What is your concern?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so please list this below.

Have you discussed this matter with a member of staff before filling in this form? If so, who did you speak to and what was the response?

What would you like to happen as a result of making this complaint?

Signature

Date

For official use only

Date of acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date: