

Complaints Procedure for Northview Primary School

This document sets out the complaints procedure for Northview Primary School. It may be used by parents and other service users. The procedure covers all matters relating to the life of the school including matters to do with the curriculum and religious worship - except admissions, exclusions, special educational needs and child protection for the following reasons.

1. School staff and the headteacher handle criticisms and concerns informally, in the first instance, not as formal complaints.
2. Formal complaints are made in writing, but may be complemented or clarified by an oral presentation.
3. Formal complaints are investigated and handled as swiftly as possible and the complainant kept fully informed throughout all stages of the investigation, preferably in writing.
4. Each complainant will receive a formal response in writing, once the investigation is complete.
5. An anonymous complaint will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances which include serious concerns such as child protection issues or bullying allegations, which the school would either involve appropriate external agencies or else conduct its own internal reviews to test whether there is any corroborative evidence which might trigger a formal investigation.

A printed guide to the complaints policy will be produced and left on display in the reception.

The Arrangements

The arrangements for dealing with complaints are simple and include the following.

6. School staff and the headteacher handle criticisms and concerns informally, in the first instance, not as formal complaints.
7. Formal complaints are made in writing, but may be complemented or clarified by an oral presentation.
8. Formal complaints are investigated and handled as swiftly as possible and the complainant kept fully informed throughout all stages of the investigation, preferably in writing.
9. Each complainant will receive a formal response in writing, once the investigation is complete.

If, in the course of an investigation, the governing body considers that disciplinary action should be taken against a member of staff, disciplinary proceedings will be initiated.

Stage 1

As is the case with a grievance, a complaint can best be resolved in informal discussion with the headteacher or a member of the school staff. A discussion at the informal stage is, more often than not, likely to resolve many a complaint. The first port of call for parental complaints is the class teacher. A complaint that is not resolved by a staff member is referred to the headteacher. It will be dealt with as soon as possible and no later than five working days where practicable.

Stage 2

Where a complaint is of a serious nature and has not been resolved informally, the complainant will be directed to the chairperson of the governing body. The chairperson will offer the complainant and respondent the opportunity to make their cases - orally and/or in writing, receiving any supplementary information that is germane to the case and decide on what to do. She or he will then inform both parties of the outcome, giving explanations of why a particular course of action was adopted. The chairperson will deal with the complaint within 10 working days where practicable.

Stage 3

If the complainant is still not satisfied, she or he will be asked to put the complaint in writing formally to the governing body (for the attention of the clerk) for consideration by a complaints panel. It is possible that, at this stage, the complaint may well be different from the original one, as it would include dissatisfaction with the action taken by the headteacher and chairperson of governors in handling the original perceived problem.

The panel of governors will be appointed by the full governing body and consist of three members - none of whom would have had anything to do with dealing previously with the complaint. The complaints panel will convene within 15 working days of receipt of the complaint or as soon as practicable thereafter.

Written evidence will be circulated to both parties and members of the panel in advance of the meeting and the procedure will be as follows.

1. Introductions by the chairperson of the panel.
2. Complainant makes statement of complaint and background.¹
3. Questions to complainant by the headteacher/chairperson of governors and members of the panel.
4. Headteacher/chairperson of governors makes statement.
5. Questions to headteacher/chairperson of governors by complainant and members of the panel.
6. Headteacher/chairperson of governors makes final statement.
7. Complainant makes final statement.
8. Interested parties withdraw from the meeting and the panel reaches a decision on whether the complaint is upheld or rejected. In either case, the panel may call for certain action to be taken by the school.
9. Both parties are informed of the decision no later than three days after the hearing.

The decision of the panel of governors will be binding on the headteacher, chair of governors and the school. If the complaint is a curricular one and the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, she or he may refer the matter to the Director of Children's Services of Brent. If the complaint is related to a non-curricular matter and the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision of the governing body, she or he may take the matter further to the Secretary of State for Education and Employment on the grounds that the governing body has behaved unreasonably.

Should an investigation into a complaint lead to disciplining a member of staff, all those involved in the investigation or hearing will not participate in the disciplinary action that may follow - in order to secure natural justice.

¹ In presenting its case, each party may call witnesses who could be questioned by the other side and members of the panel.

Complaints Procedures for the Parents of Northview School

The Governing Body of Northview School established a complaints procedure to deal as quickly as possible with **any concerns or worries that parents may have**. There are three stages for handling every complaint, which are as follows.

Stage 1

Normal Time
Span

Dealing with the Complaint

5 working days

If you have a complaint or a concern, you should raise it directly with a member of staff. If a matter is about a member of staff, please make an appointment with that person. If the complaint is not resolved, take it up with the headteacher. If the complaint is about the headteacher, make an appointment to see her so that she can resolve the problem.

Stage 2

Normal Time
Span

Dealing with the Complaint

15 working days

If the complaint is unresolved by the headteacher, you should write to the chair of governors and direct the letter to the school. He or she will investigate your complaint and invite the member of staff to give her or his point of view. When this is completed, he or she will write to you about his or her decision and inform you of any action he or she proposes to take.

Stage 3

Normal Time
Span

Dealing with the Complaint

30 working days

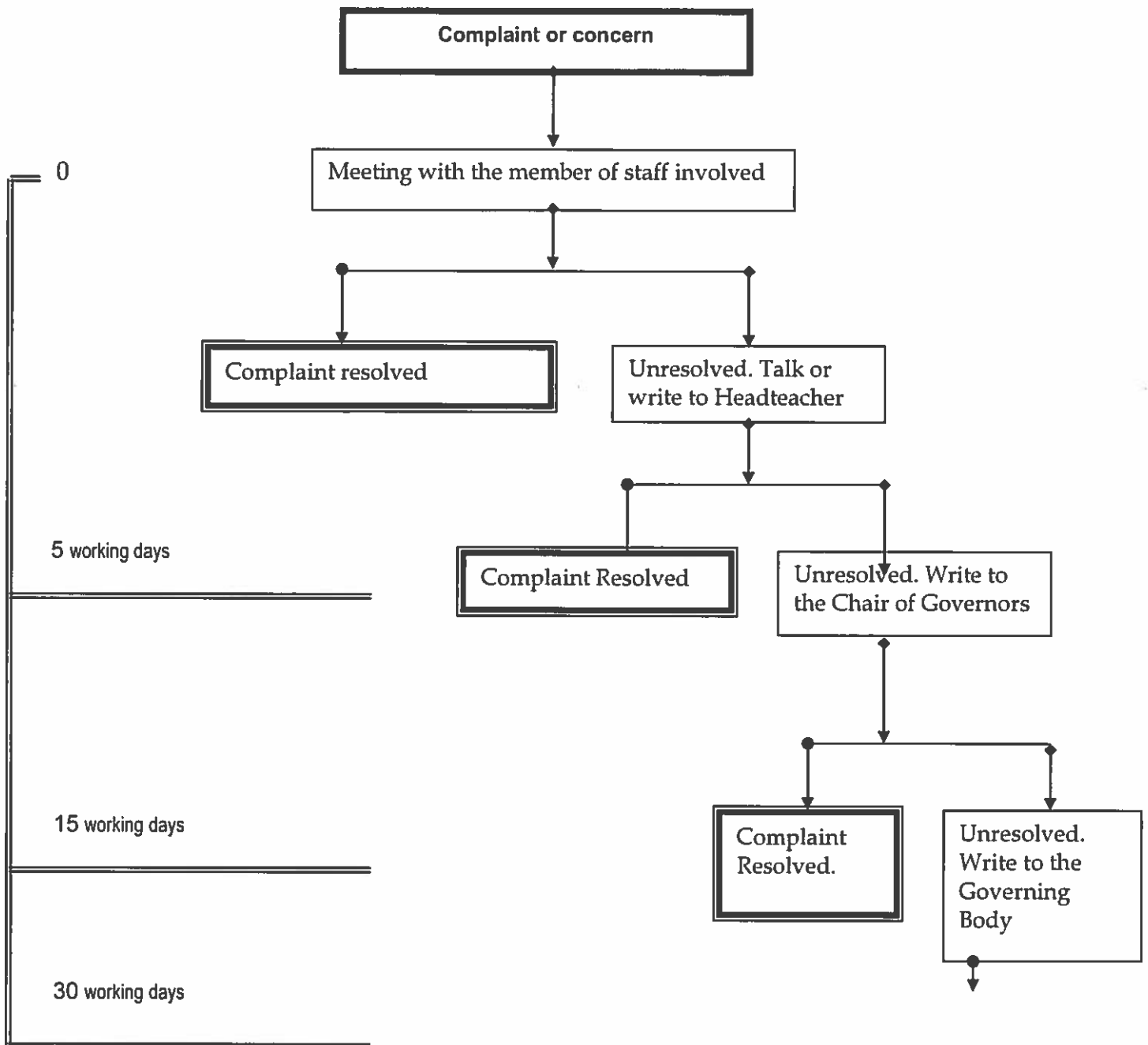
If you are still unhappy about the outcome, you may write a letter to the clerk of the governing body, care of the school, and request that the governors investigate your complaint. A small panel of the governing body, made up of three members, will invite you to a meeting. You will be able to put your side of the story to them. The headteacher and chair of governors will also be present to give their points of view. The panel will decide on whether or not to uphold your complaint and on the action that the school should take. Its decision is binding on the headteacher and chair of governors.

Finally

If the complaint you made has to do with the curriculum or religious worship and you are still dissatisfied with the decision of the panel, you can write to the Director of Children's Services, London Borough of Brent, Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 0FJ. If the complaint is about a non-curricular matter - like bullying, the length of the school day or something else - you may take it further with and write to the Local Government Ombudsman, 21 Queen Anne's Gate, London, SW1H 9BU.

Overleaf is a chart that explains the different stages.

Complaints Procedure for Parents to follow at Northview School



| Dissatisfied | |
|--|--|
| Curricular Complaint write to The Director of Education London Borough of Brent Brent Civic Centre Engineers Way Wembley Middlesex HA9 0FJ | Non-Curricular Complaint – write to Local Government Ombudsman 21 Queen Anne's Gate London SW1H 9BU |

Schools Support Services Ltd

Annex

The Education (Investigation of Parents' Complaints)(England) Regulations 2007 (SI 2007 No 1089) introduced a new procedure for dealing with parents' complaints through Ofsted. The regulations provide for the fact that Ofsted cannot look into complaints if there are alternative, more suitable legal approaches. In addition, Ofsted cannot investigate a parent's complaint until the parent has exhausted all internal methods and appeals, though this can be waived at the discretion of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools.

Parents may complain to Ofsted about

- the work of the school as a whole;
- whether the school is providing a good enough education;
- whether pupils are achieving as much as they should;
- whether pupils' different needs are being met;
- whether the school is well led and managed;
- whether the school is wasting money;
- whether pupils' personal development and well-being are being neglected; and
- the school not contributing to the well-being of the community as a whole.

Ofsted may not consider complaints about the

- admissions procedure;
- exclusion of individual pupils;
- provision for individual pupils with special educational needs;
- incidents that are alleged to have taken place; and

- how well or badly a school investigated or responded to a complaint or mediated between a parent and the school to resolve the complaint.

To make a complaint, parents should write or complete an online form at www.ofsted.gov or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Ofsted will investigate a complaint which it has received by referring it to the local managing inspector but not automatically inform the parent/s of the outcome as there could be issues of confidentiality surrounding the matter investigated.

If Ofsted cannot take the matter forward, it will explain to the parent/s the reason why and direct her/him/them to the body that may be able to help.

The Complaints Form

Please complete and return to the Headteacher, who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give details of your complaint.

**What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.
(Who did you speak to and what was the response)?**

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: