

Complaints Procedures Policy of Roe Green Infant Strathcona School

The Governing Body of Roe Green Infant Strathcona School established a complaints procedure to deal as quickly as possible with any concerns or worries that parents may have. This also covers any person, including members of the general public, who may make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that the school provides, unless separate statutory procedures apply.

There are three stages for handling every complaint, which are as follows:

Stage 1

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. The complainant may be asked what they think might resolve the issue.

Stage 2

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

Stage 3

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 for Children's Services, London Borough of Brent, Brent Civic Centre, Engineer's Way, Wembley HA9 0FJ.

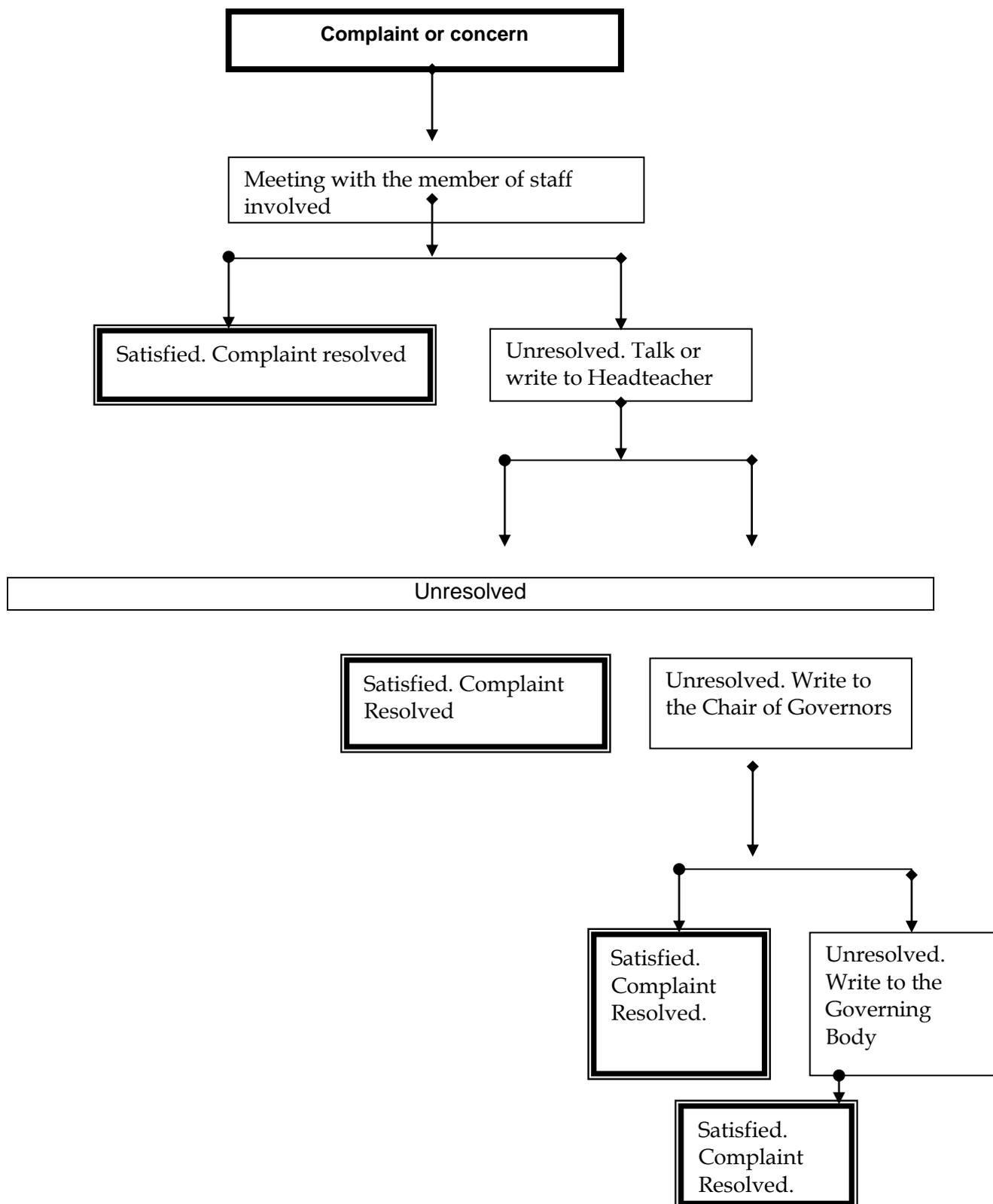
If the complaint is about a non-curricular matter - like bullying, the length of the school day or something else - you may take it further with and write to the Department for Education, School Complaints Unit, 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD.

Overleaf is a chart that explains the different stages.

Attached Appendices:

1. Complaints Procedure
2. Serial and Persistent Complainants

Complaints Procedure for Parents to follow at Roe Green Infant Strathcona School



APPENDIX 1

Complaints Procedure for Roe Green Infant Strathcona School

This document sets out the complaints procedure for Roe Green Infant Strathcona School. The procedure covers all matters (except admissions, exclusions and special educational needs - as there are separate statutory arrangements for them) relating to the life of the school - including matters to do with the curriculum and religious worship.

The Arrangements

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

1. Criticisms and concerns are handled informally by school staff and the Headteacher, 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. The progress and final outcome of the complaint will be recorded. The school is aware that complainants have a right to copies of these records under the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts.

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.
In presenting its case, each party may call witnesses who could be questioned by the other side and members of the panel.
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 for Children's Services in 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 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.

APPENDIX 2

Serial and Persistent Complainants

The School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

The School defines unreasonable complainants as 'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints'.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:-

1. Refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
2. Refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
3. Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
4. Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
5. Introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
6. Makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
7. Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
8. Repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
9. Refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;
10. Seeks an unrealistic outcome;
11. Makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:-

1. Maliciously;
2. Aggressively;
3. Using threats, intimidation or violence;
4. Using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
5. Knowing it to be false;
6. Using falsified information;
7. Publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact the School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from the School.

Barring from the School Premises

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Schools will therefore act to ensure they remain a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of their community.

If a person's behaviour is a cause for concern, a school can ask him/her to leave school premises. In serious cases, the Headteacher or the local authority can notify them in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any representations that the person may wish to make. Schools should always give the person the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing.

The decision to bar should then be reviewed, taking into account any representations made by the person and either confirmed or lifted. If the decision is confirmed the person should be notified in writing, explaining how long the bar will be in place.

Anyone wishing to complain about being barred can do so, by letter or email, to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors. However, complaints about barring cannot be escalated to the Department for Education. Once the school's own complaints procedure has been completed, the only remaining avenue of appeal is through the Courts; independent legal advice must therefore be sought.