

WHAT MIGHT A COMPLAINT BE ABOUT?

your child's academic/social progress

bullying by other pupils

your child's relationship with teachers or other staff

homework, too much or too little of it

unfair treatment of your child as you or your child perceive it

issues on the Health and Safety of your child

absence (authorised/unauthorised)

missing property

detentions and other sanctions

Parents' Evenings

any situation which causes you or your child concern

How To Complain – A Summary

Talk to the staff member concerned or

other appropriate staff member

Talk to the Headteacher

Write to the Chair of Governors

Write to ask for a complaints panel

FINALLY...

Please be assured that we will take your complaint seriously and treat you fairly. If something has gone wrong we want to put it right, and if you are not happy with the result, then neither are we!

- We want to listen to parents' views about their children's education and well-being at school.
- We will try to resolve parents' concerns and complaints as informally and quickly as possible.
- We will take any complaints seriously and provide a thorough and appropriate response.
- No pupil will be penalised or intimidated as a result of her/his parent making a complaint.
- We aim to learn from any mistakes or weaknesses, in order to improve further the standards of education offered at the school.
- There is a set of clear and detailed procedures for handling complaints that is available to parents who wish to pursue a complaint beyond the initial informal stage.
- The school will ensure that all complaints are logged.
- The governing body as a whole will not discuss individual complaints, and any governor receiving such a complaint will direct the parent to the school's complaints leaflet and procedures.

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School Complaints Procedure



**'Small School,
Big Ambitions**

Introduction

We aim to provide your child with the best possible education and meet his or her needs as well as we can. However, in any school, parents may occasionally feel concerned about something or have a complaint. If this is the case we want to hear from you. This leaflet explains how you can voice a concern or complaint, and how we will respond.

What is a complaint?

It can be a concern or problem or feeling of dissatisfaction that you have about an aspect of our work.

What do I do if I have a complaint about the school?

Tell a member of staff. Preferably speak with the member of staff most knowledgeable of the facts of the matter. He or she will talk it over with you and try to sort things out. She/he will discuss your complaint with you and seek to resolve the matter.

What do I do if I feel my complaint hasn't been sorted out?

You may contact the school office and ask for an appointment to see the Headteacher. The Headteacher will listen carefully and ask you any questions to help him/her understand the situation fully. She/he will probably then have to talk to other people, but will get in touch with you as soon as s/he is able to respond fully.

If I feel unhappy with what the headteacher says, what can I do then?

You may then write to the Chair of the school's governors at the school address, setting out your complaint and why you are unhappy with the school's response. Please write within 14 days of receiving the headteacher's response. The Chair (or designated governor) will write acknowledging your letter within a few days and may invite you for an informal meeting to discuss your complaint. If not, the Chair (or designated governor) will then write again once s/he has investigated more fully. You should receive a full response within 10 working days.

What happens if I am unhappy about the Chair of Governors' response?

You are entitled to ask a panel of 3 governors to meet to consider your complaint. If you want to do this, write to the Chair body within 14 days of receiving the Chair's response. Say that you have a formal complaint and that you remain unhappy with the way the school and Chair of governors have responded, and that you would like a panel of governors to consider your complaint. There is no need to write all the details of the complaint in this letter but you will be required to explain clearly what you are complaining about. The Chair will contact you about the panel and explain what will happen. You may bring someone with you if you wish.

What happens at the Panel meeting?

One of the governors will chair the meeting, and s/he will explain what will happen. You may be asked to outline your complaint. Panel members may ask you questions. You may also ask other people (witnesses) to speak about what happened. The Panel may interview the Headteacher or other members of staff separately.

After this, everyone except the panel and the person taking minutes will leave, so that the panel can consider its findings. The Chair of the panel will write to you within a few days setting out the panel's findings. They will also write to the headteacher and Chair of governors. Their findings are binding upon the school.

The panel's findings are the school's final response to you about your complaint. Schools are responsible for their own activities, and the Local Authority cannot get involved. The Local Authority cannot tell a school or governing body what to do. If you are still unhappy you could write to the Secretary of State for Education, but again there is no power to intervene unless the governing body has acted unreasonably or has failed to fulfil its statutory responsibilities.

There are certain specific complaints that are handled differently.

If your child is refused admission to the school you have a statutory right to appeal to an independent appeals panel. The school will be able to give you details.

If your child has been excluded for between 5 and 15 school days, you have a right to make representation to the governing body. If your child has been permanently excluded you have the right to an independent appeal.

If your child has Special Educational Needs (SEN) and you have a complaint about her/his SEN provision, the school will be able to give you details of the Local Authority's dispute resolution arrangements, the Parent Partnership service, and the SEN Tribunal for disputes about a Statement of Special Educational Need.

The Advice and Conciliation Service

Before any action is considered it is essential that you discuss your concerns with the Advice and Conciliation Service. The Advice and Conciliation Service is an impartial Service based within Children and Young People's Services and aims to help all sections of the Service in Sheffield become more responsive to comments, complaints, criticisms and suggestions from parents and carers, young people and other service users. The Advice and Conciliation Officer can be contacted on Sheffield 0114 2053938/2053939