

Complaints Procedures

The purpose of the procedure

The aim of this procedure is to achieve a fair, effective and as rapid as possible resolution of parental concerns about the education and/or welfare of individual children in the care of schools. It will not normally be an appropriate mechanism for representations in respect of school policy. Parents may always write to the Head of the School about these.

Effective and fair resolution of concerns usually requires that they are brought to the School's attention promptly. To be considered under this procedure, complaints should normally be brought within three months of the relevant event(s).

Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's class teacher or the school committee as appropriate. In many cases the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction.
- The teacher/ the school committee will make a written record of all complaints and the date on which they were received. Should the matter not be resolved within 5 school days or in the event that the member of staff and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, and the parents are not satisfied with the response, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head of School as soon as possible. The Head will investigate the complaint. The Head will respond to the parents usually within 5 school days.
- The Head will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. The school will also keep a written record of all complaints and of whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a Panel hearing.
- Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents informed of this decision in writing. The Head will also give reasons for his/her decision.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents wish to have their complaint considered at a Panel Hearing, they should write to the Head of School, setting out their complaint. The school will form a panel to deal with the complaint.
- In the interests of resolving the complaint expeditiously, complaints should focus on the main issues. It is helpful if the complainant is able to indicate the nature of the outcome which they are seeking as a means of resolving their complaint.
- A hearing will be scheduled to take place as soon as practical and normally within 10 school days of receipt of the parents' letter.
- The parents should supply copies of their previous written complaint to the Head and any other documentation they may wish to rely on Head not more than 7 days after the date of notification of the hearing. Documentation must be relevant to those matters set out in the complaint.
- Conduct of the hearing shall be at the Panel's discretion which will be exercised in the interests of a fair, effective, and appropriately rapid resolution of the complaint. The Chairman of the Panel will normally write to the parents before the hearing, having considered the nature of the complaint and the documentary material, to state how the hearing will be conducted. Prior to the hearing, decisions relating to procedure may be dealt with by the Chairman of the Panel acting alone. Should the parents have any questions concerning the Panel's procedure, they should address them to the Chairman of the Panel.
- After due consideration of all relevant facts, the Panel will reach a decision and may make findings and recommendations.
- The Panel will write to the parents normally within 5 school days informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The Panel's findings, and (if any) recommendations will also be sent in writing to the Head and the person(s) against whom the complaint was made.

□ The findings and recommendations referred to may be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection or where any other legal obligation prevails.