



Complaints Policy and Procedure

Policy Written: September 2021

Policy Reviewed: September 2022

Next review: September 2023

Updates in blue

From time to time problems may arise in school. As a parent, please talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance.

If you have any concerns relating to the school and how it operates, please speak to the Phase Lead for your child, this is Mrs Barker F2 / KS1 or Mrs Hollands KS2. It is hoped that concerns and complaints can be dealt with initially through these discussions.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 2002
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Immigration Act 2016
- Equality Act 2010
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005
- The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Exclusion Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, a “**complaint**” can be defined as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction’ towards the actions taken or a perceived lack of action taken.

A “**concern**” can be defined as ‘an expression of worry or doubt’ where reassurance is required. For the purpose of this policy, concerns will be classed and addressed as complaints.

Complaints can be resolved formally, through this procedure, or informally dependent on the complainant's choice. Any complaint or concern will be taken seriously, whether formally or informally, and the appropriate procedures will be implemented.

A “**grievance**” is an issue raised by a member of staff where they feel the school has not implemented a policy or process fairly or properly. Grievances will be dealt with in line with the school's Grievance Policy.

For the purpose of this policy, “**unreasonable complaints**” include:

- Vexatious complaints, which:

- Are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, and repetitious.
- Insist upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason.
- Insist upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner.
- Are designed to cause disruption or annoyance.
- Demand for redress which lacks any serious purpose or value.
- Serial or persistent complaints, which:
 - Are duplicated, sent by the same complainant once the initial complaint has been closed.
 - Are new complaints that are submitted additionally, as part of an existing open complaint, by the same complainant.

Serial or persistent complaints will only be marked as 'serial' once the complainant has completed the complaints procedure. It is the complaint that will be marked as 'serial', meaning the complainant can complain about a separate issue if necessary.

For the purpose of this policy, “**duplicate complaints**” are identical complaints received from a complainant’s spouse, partner, grandparent or child. These complaints will not be addressed again, the individual making the second complaint will be informed that the complaint has been dealt with on a local level and if they are dissatisfied with the result, they can appeal to the DfE.

Any new details provided by a complainant’s spouse, partner, grandparent or child, will be investigated and dealt with in line with the complaints procedure.

This is the formal procedure for dealing with complaints.

There are three stages:

1. **The Informal Stage** – The complainant should contact the Headteacher or appropriate officer of the Local Authority (the Headteacher will help to identify this person) to discuss the nature of the complaint. Should informal discussions fail to resolve the difficulty you would move on to stage two.
2. **Formal Complaint to the Governing Board** – This involves a written complaint to the Governing Board. If this too proves unsatisfactory, then there may be a need to proceed to the third stage.
3. **Formal Complaint to the Local Authority** – This will apply where the first two stages have failed to resolve the problem or where the complaint concerns the LA and therefore it would be inappropriate to refer to the Governing Board.

The Local Authority has produced some guidance on procedures to follow for complaints.
<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/schools-childcare/education>