

Procedure:

The following stages are sequential. It would not normally be appropriate for any stage to be omitted.

1. **The Preliminary Stage** – an informal approach

Most concerns can be dealt with informally, quickly and to everyone's satisfaction.

Concerns should be addressed in the first instance by an informal meeting between an appropriate member of staff and parents or members of the community. Staff will be available to discuss problems at the earliest opportunity working schedules will allow. An appointment should be arranged by telephoning the school.

2. **Stage One** – refer complaint to Headteacher

If an informal approach fails to resolve the issue satisfactorily, a complaint should be made in writing to the Headteacher, giving details of the concern and enclosing any appropriate paperwork. A Complaints Form is available from School Reception if required, but need not necessarily be used to submit a complaint.

The Headteacher or designated senior member of staff will respond to the complainant as soon as possible. Standard practice is to acknowledge the complaint or offer a full response within **5 school days**.

If the complaint requires an in-depth investigation, the Headteacher will need to acknowledge this and let the complainant know that a full response will take longer than usual. Standard practice is to investigate the complaint and prepare a response **within a further 14 school days**.

The Headteacher will provide a written summary of main points following any meeting, so that all parties have a clear understanding of progress or agreements. If the issue remains unresolved the Headteacher will give a final response and refer the complainant to Stage Two of the Complaints Procedure.

3. **Stage Two** – refer complaint to Chair of Governors

The complainant should contact the Chair of Governors in writing to explain the reasons for pursuing the complaint beyond the Headteacher's response and enclosing any relevant paperwork. The Chair of Governors will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within **14 school days**.

This stage offers an opportunity for reconciliation between all parties.

Informal discussions between the Chair of Governors and the complainant and between the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher will be used, where possible, to agree a way forward and so prevent further escalation of the disagreement. If further consideration is necessary the Chair of Governors will decide who is responsible for dealing with the issues involved, and therefore what powers are available to governors with respect to the particular complaint. The Chair of Governors may decide to look at the whole issue afresh, or under certain circumstances, may only be empowered to review the decisions made. In other circumstances the Chair of Governors may decide the issue should be referred to the Headteacher for possible onward referral to the Disciplinary Standing Committee. That is beyond the scope of this policy.

In the rare circumstances that the complainant is unhappy with the outcome, the Chair of Governors will offer a right of appeal to the governing body's Complaints Panel.

4. **Stage Three** – Complaints Panel of governing body – reconsideration or review

Complainants who wish to appeal to the governors should do so by writing to the Chair of Governors. **Individual governors should not be contacted**, as this would make them ineligible to adjudicate as part of the Complaints Panel. Appeal may take the form of reconsideration or review depending on whom is responsible for dealing with the issues involved.

5. **Stage Four** – Local Education Authority

The Local Education Authority offers further right of appeal for complainants who have exhausted the school's procedures, if the complaint is about the national curriculum or related matters or provision of collective worship and religious education.

6. **Anonymous/Vexatious/Abusive complaints:**

The School will not normally respond to anonymous, vexatious and abusive complaints.