

Sharing your concerns about your child's education

A Parents' Guide

Stockingford Nursery School recognises that at times things can go wrong. The guidance will help you understand how to resolve concerns you may have about your child's education.

The school has procedures for dealing with concerns or complaints and we value any feedback about our services, including compliments and suggestions. If you are concerned about any aspect of your child's education you should contact The Head teacher at the school.

The School's Governing Board has overall responsibility for the school and for ensuring the well-being of pupils and that all pupils receive an appropriate and high standard of education.

The Head teacher is responsible for making decisions on a daily basis about the school's internal management and organisation. You should contact the school if you are concerned about an issue such as:

- your child's academic progress
- special education needs provision
- your child's welfare
- bullying
- an incident involving your child which has happened in school

How do I complain to the school?

First, we hope you will speak to the relevant member of staff as soon as you have a concern. This will be your keyworker initially, or the Nursery teacher or Leadteacher. This informal approach is nearly always the quickest and most effective way of resolving your concerns.

Should you consider that your concern has not been resolved, it is important to speak to or write to the Head teacher who will look into your concern.

Should you remain unhappy with the Head teacher's response you need to write with your complaint to the Chair of Governors/Clerk to the Governing Board at the school address.

Mark your envelope **'FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION'** and **'PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL'**.

This is how your complaint will be handled:

Within 5 working days the Chair of Governors will clarify the nature of your complaint by asking you to submit this in writing

Within 5 working days of receiving the form the Chair will decide whether mediation should be offered to help you and the Head teacher explore possible resolution. If mediation is agreed, the Chair of Governors will endeavour to set up the meeting **within 10 working days**. Should that timescale not be possible you will be told the reason.

Should mediation be not deemed appropriate or unsuccessful, the Chair of Governors or Clerk will set up a panel of Governors to meet **within 15 working days** to consider your complaint. The Clerk will provide details of the hearing and will request any further information you may wish to provide.

The Complaints Panel will consist of three Governors who (as far as possible) will have no prior knowledge of the events. The Panel will be supported by a Clerk who will take notes during the hearing and will stay with the Panel while they make their decision in case Governors need to be reminded about responses to a particular question. The Panel will hear the complaint impartially and make their decision.

Five working days before the hearing the Clerk will send to you, the complainant, the Head teacher and the three Panel members, copies of all papers submitted by both sides so that there is sufficient time to read the evidence before the hearing.

At the hearing

1. You and the Head teacher will be invited into the room where the panel is being held at the same time.

After introductions, you, the complainant will be invited to explain your complaint,
2. The Head teacher may question you
3. The panel will question you
4. The Head teacher will be invited to explain the school's actions
5. You, the complainant may question the Head teacher
6. The panel will question the Head teacher
7. The panel may ask questions at any point.
8. You, the complainant will then be invited to sum up your complaint.
9. The Head teacher will then be invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.

10. The chair will explain that you and the Head teacher will hear from the panel within **five working days**.
11. Both you and the Head teacher will leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
12. The clerk will remain with the panel.

Can I take my complaint further?

For most complaints, you **cannot** take your complaint to the Local Authority. The Local Authority cannot investigate school matters on a parent's behalf, nor can it review how the school has dealt with your complaint.

However, if you feel that the school has acted unreasonably or not followed the correct procedure, you can write to the Secretary of State for Education:
<http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus/dfes>

Appendix 1 - Complaints Process from Start to Finish

Concern or Complaint Received	
Stage 1 – INFORMAL STAGE	
SCHOOL ACTION	
<p>Informal discussion with the class / form / subject / pastoral teacher or other relevant member of staff, usually resulting in the resolution of the issue.</p> <p>If the complaint is about the Head teacher – proceed to Stage 2*</p>	<p>Within 7 school days, the complainant is informed of the action to be taken to resolve the issue.</p> <p>If they are not satisfied with the outcome a copy of the school's complaint procedure will be given together with information on how to proceed to Stage 2.</p> <p>If the Head teacher has addressed the complaint at this stage, then the matter should progress to Stage 3.</p>
FORMAL STAGE	
Stage 2 – COMPLAINT HEARD BY HEAD TEACHER	
<p>The complaint is submitted to the Head teacher</p>	<p>Within 5 school days the Head teacher will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and after investigation will provide a full written response to the complainant within 15 school days.</p> <p>If the complaint is not resolved at the stage, information us given on how to progress the complaint to Stage 3.</p>
Stage 2* - COMPLAINT HEARD BY CHAIR OF GOVERNORS (if the complaint is about the Head teacher)	
<p>A written complaint is sent to the Chair of Governors</p>	<p>The Chair of Governors acknowledges receipt and provides a full written response within 15 school days.</p> <p>If the complaint is not resolved at the stage, information us given on how to progress the complaint to Stage 4.</p>
Stage 3 – INVESTIGATION BY THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS	
<p>Complainant writes to the Chair of Governors within 10 school days of receiving the response confirming they remain dissatisfied and requesting further investigation of their complaint.</p>	<p>Th Chair acknowledges receipt and provides a full written response within 20 school days.</p>

	If the complaint is not resolved at the stage, information us given on how to progress the complaint to Stage 4.
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Stage 4 – COMPLAINTS APPEAL PANEL (CAP)

Complainant writes to the Clerk of the Governing Board within 10 school days of receiving the response, requesting an appeal to be heard by a Complaints Appeal Panel.	<p>The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 3 school days and will arrange for a CAP to meet within 20 school days.</p> <p>Once the CAP meeting has taken place, the Clerk will inform the Complainant of the outcome within 5 school days.</p>
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Final Stage - APPEAL

If the Complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they have the right to refer their complaint to the Secretary of State	The Secretary of State may intervene if a Governing Board has acted unlawfully or unreasonably.
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NB: Every effort will be made to meet the timescales stated but if it is not possible to meet them at **any** stage of the process the complainant will be contacted with an explanation and a revised date.

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: