

SOMERVALE SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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The Governors have drawn up the following complaints procedure in the belief that it is important that parents and others are clear about the procedures to be followed in making a complaint and with the assurance that any complainant will be dealt with sympathetically and speedily.

The procedures agreed are in line with advice given by the Local Education Authority.

There are *separate procedures* for the following four areas that the Governing Body must follow. In the event that you wish to complain about one of the areas, a copy of the procedures to be followed can be obtained from the Chair of Governors.

1. **The Curriculum** under Section 409 of the Education Act 1996. The areas covered by Section 409 include:
 - the provision of the school's curriculum, including Religious Education and Worship
 - National Curriculum and National Curriculum Assessment
 - applications for exemption or temporary withdrawal from the National Curriculum
 - operation of charging policies in relation to the curriculum
 - provision of information to parents about the curriculum
2. **Admission** to a school.
3. **Failure** to assess a child's special education needs.
4. **The Exclusion** of children.

In all other situations the Governors will follow the procedure below.

OUR COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

We believe there is a free flow of information between home and school but recognise there may be times when misunderstandings arise, you are concerned about aspects of your child's progress or you may be unhappy about a particular event or activity which you have heard has taken place. In any event it is important you do not keep a problem or concern to yourself but approach the school.

STEP 1 – Informal Discussions with Class Teacher/Form Tutor

Before making a complaint, we would suggest that you are clear about your concern and also that you discuss this with an appropriate member of staff.

The first point of contact for a specific concern should always be the appropriate Head of College or member of the Leadership Team who will be able to suggest whom it is best to speak to.

It is preferable if you can agree a time and place to discuss your concerns in peace and quiet rather than at a time when the teacher concerned is possibly surrounded by other children and/or parents. This could be a telephone conversation at an agreed time. We would expect most problems to be sorted out in this informal way be a frank and open discussion, free from distraction.

Please remember that all members of staff wish to help reassure you by listening to you and helping you meet with the most appropriate person.

STEP 2 – Informal Discussions with Senior Members of Staff and Headteacher

Sometimes you may still feel dissatisfied with the outcome of your discussions and want to take the matter further. If you are in this situation you may make an appointment to contact the Headteacher (NB: larger schools may wish to introduce an additional stage of an informal meeting between the parent and senior member of staff before the meeting with the Headteacher).

STEP 3 – Formal investigation by the Headteacher

If, following your informal discussions you wish an investigation to be undertaken by the school you should put your concerns in writing to the Headteacher. You should state the outcome which you feel would satisfy your complaint. The Headteacher will undertake a full investigation which may require a further interview with you or a request for additional written information. A written reply will be sent to you following the investigation. This will normally take place within a four week period.

STEP 4 – Formal investigation by the Governors

If the problem cannot be resolved by you and the Headteacher, you may make a formal complaint to the Governing Body. The complaint which you should send to the Chair of Governors (the school secretary will advise you of the address for contact) should set out precisely why you are dissatisfied and what you wish to be done. The Chair of Governors will nominate a small group of Governors to investigate your complaint. You may be invited to attend an interview by the investigating Governors in addition to any written submission you make.

Following the investigation by the Governors you will be sent a formal response informing you of their decision. This investigation will be completed within a maximum six week period.

STEP 5 – Investigation by the LEA

Following your formal complaint to the Governing Body, you have a further right of appeal, to the LEA, if you consider the Governing Body has not acted properly in carrying out its investigation into your complaint. Complaints should be sent to the Directorate's Complaints officer (the Clerk to the Governors can advise you of the address to contact). You should receive a reply to your complaint within four weeks of it being acknowledged.

STEP 6 – Appeal to the Secretary of State for Education & Employment

After appealing to the LEA, you have the final right of appeal to the Secretary of State that the LEA has acted unreasonably. If your complaint to the LEA is not upheld the officer investigating it will inform you of your rights and the address for contact.

COMPLAINTS INVOLVING THE HEADTEACHER

If your complaint involves the Headteacher you should firstly have direct discussion with the Headteacher. Where it is not possible to resolve the complaint through discussions you should set out your complaint in writing and send it to the Chair of Governors with a copy to the Headteacher. If your complaint could involve disciplinary action against a member of staff, the Governors should follow procedures set out by the LEA. If this situation arises, the Chair of Governors will inform you of the procedures to be followed.