

Q7. What will happen next?

A panel of governors who haven't been involved with the complaint, will undertake a review.

The Clerk to the Governors will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient date, time and place for you to meet with the panel and will send you a Governing Body Review Request Form to complete.

You will be invited to meet with the panel within 15 school days to explain your concerns. You may bring a friend if you wish. This could be anyone you think will be able to support you.

After the meeting the panel will then review and/or investigate the Headteacher's handling of/response to your complaint and decide if it was appropriate and fair. They may wish to meet with any staff or witnesses who can provide information.

They will write to you within 15 school days to explain their decision. This decision will usually be final.

Q8. What do I do if I'm still unhappy?

If you are still unhappy you may, if you wish, ask the LA whether your complaint is one that can be investigated by them. To do this you need to write to the Parental Complaints Co-ordinator in the LA within 10 school days of receipt of the governors' panel letter.

The LA's role is to look at the way a complaint is handled, ie whether the complaints procedure was followed correctly. It cannot investigate the original complaint.

If you are still unhappy you may contact Ofsted.

Remember the whole process exists so that everyone's views can be heard. The aim is that the complaint should be properly and fairly dealt with. Communications with school are welcome and the latter stages of this complaints procedure are rarely used but remain part of the process.

Helpful Websites

Somerset Parent Partnership

<http://www.somersetparentpartnership.org.uk>

Advisory Centre for Education

<http://www.ace-ed.org.uk>

Department for Education and Skills - Parent Centre

<http://www.parentcentre.gov.uk>

Ofsted

www.ofsted.gov.uk



Let's make a difference
www.somerset.gov.uk

Concerns and Complaints: A Guide for Parents and Carers

This leaflet aims to help you in approaching your child's school when you feel that things are going wrong.

This process has been developed to enable schools and parents/carers to work together to resolve issues.



Working together for equalities

This document is also available in Braille, large print, on tape and on disc and we can translate it into different languages. We can provide a member of staff to discuss the details.



RNID typetalk

Introduction

Your child's school will provide many opportunities to keep you informed and involved in your child's progress with regular reports, open days and visits all helping the process. Cooperation between parents, staff and governors leads to a shared sense of purpose and good atmosphere in the school.

However, sometimes parents and schools have a misunderstanding and these can often be sorted out by speaking to the right person. Your concern can then be looked into and a response given.

Q1. What should I do first?

Be clear what you want to talk to the school about

Remember that although you may want to change a situation, you want it to end on a positive note with no bad feelings. Because of this you should try to follow the process and not back yourself, or anyone else, into a corner. Talking with the school can help you to understand how they see the situation and give you the chance to say what it looks like to you.

Although some schools, particularly for younger children, can see parents who just "pop in", this is not generally possible. If you have a concern, make an appointment so you have enough time to talk things through.

Q2. Who should I contact?

That depends on the particular situation. Often the teacher is able to deal with the matter. More serious issues will require a senior member of staff or the headteacher. Mutual courtesy is expected and ensures things go smoothly. There should always be discussion in the hope of solving difficulties informally. Most problems are solved in this way.

Q3. What if I am still unhappy?

Ask for an appointment with the Headteacher (or Head of Year/Deputy Head/Head of Department in a Secondary School).

It may help to give the school some times when you are free, to help them make a suitable appointment as both your time and theirs is busy and valuable. Do try to be patient, as every effort will be made to see you as soon as possible.

If your child has special educational needs you may want to contact Parent Partnership to talk about your concerns (01823 355578).

Before attending the meeting it would be useful for you to put your concerns down in writing. Both you and the school can then focus on finding a solution. When attending the appointment you may take a friend or family member with you, if you wish.

Q4. What should I expect to happen as a result of the meeting?

After the meeting the Headteacher may need to undertake further investigations to inform his/her decision and help achieve resolution. He/she will write to you outlining the investigation and giving details of any action (if appropriate) to be taken within a mutually agreed timescale.

Q5. What if I feel the head hasn't answered my question or investigated my query?

If you are still unhappy you may, if you wish, ask the governing body to hold a review. This is a formal process.

Q6. What will I need to do?

Write to the Clerk to the Governors, within 10 school days of receiving the Headteacher's response, stating that you wish to make a formal complaint. Make it clear what it is you are complaining about and what you would like the governors to do. If it will help you, the school can give you a form that can be used for this purpose. You cannot introduce new or different complaints at this stage.