



Kington St Michael CE Primary School

Complaints Procedure

The majority of concerns from parents, carers and others are handled under the following general procedures. An anonymous complaint will not be investigated unless there are exceptional circumstances. Any matter raised more than 2 months after the event cited in the complaint will not be considered, except in exceptional circumstances.

The procedure is divided into three stages;

The Informal stage aims to resolve the concern through informal contact at the appropriate level in school.

Stage one is the first formal stage at which written complaints are considered by the head teacher or the chair of governors.

Stage two is the next stage once stage one has been worked through. It involves a complaints appeal panel of governors.

Informal stage – your initial contact with the school

1. Many concerns will be dealt with informally when you make them known to us. The first point of contact should be your child's class teacher.
2. Once your concern is made known to us, we will see you, or contact you by telephone or in writing, as soon as possible. If necessary, staff may refer to the appropriate person with responsibility for your particular issues. He or she will make a clear note of the details and will subsequently check to make sure that the matter has been followed up.
3. Any actions or monitoring of the situation that has been agreed will be communicated clearly and, if required, confirmed in writing to you.
4. If necessary, we will contact appropriate people who may be able to assist us with our enquiries into your concern.
5. We will update you on the progress of our enquiries within ten working days. Once we have responded to your concern, you will have the opportunity to ask for the matter to be considered further.
6. If you are still dissatisfied following this informal approach, your concern will become a formal complaint and we will deal with it at the next stage.

Stage one - formal consideration of your complaint

This stage in our procedure deals with written complaints received if you are not happy with the result of the informal approach to your concern, as outlined above.

1. Your written complaint should be addressed to the head teacher and should use the school complaints form. This form is available from the school office. If, however, your complaint concerns the head teacher personally, it should be sent to the school marked "For the attention of the chair of governors". We will acknowledge your complaint in writing as soon within three working days.
2. We will enclose a copy of these procedures with the acknowledgement.

3. Normally we would expect to respond in full within 15 working days. However, if this is not possible we will write to explain the reason for the delay and inform you of when we hope to be able to provide a full response.
4. As part of our consideration of your complaint, we may invite you to a meeting to discuss the complaint and fill in any details required. If you wish, you can ask someone to accompany you to help you explain the reasons for your complaint.
5. The head teacher, or chair of governors may also be accompanied by a suitable person if they wish.
6. Following the meeting, the head teacher, investigating officer or chair of governors will, where necessary, talk to witnesses and take statements from others involved. If the complaint centres on a pupil, we will talk to the pupil concerned and, where appropriate, others present at the time of the incident in question.
7. We will normally talk to pupils with a parent or carer present, unless this would delay the investigation of a serious or urgent complaint, or where a pupil has specifically said that he or she would prefer the parent or carer not to be involved. In such circumstances, we will ensure that another member of staff, with whom the pupil feels comfortable, is present.
8. If the complaint is against a member of staff, it will be dealt with under the school's internal confidential procedures, as required by law.
9. The head teacher or chair of governors will keep written, signed and dated records of all meetings and telephone conversations, and other related documentation.
10. Once we have established all the relevant facts, we will send you a written response to your complaint. This will give an explanation of the head teacher's or chair of governors' decision and the reasons for it. If follow-up action is needed, we will indicate what we are proposing to do. We may invite you to a meeting to discuss the outcome as part of our commitment to building and maintaining good relations with you.
11. The person investigating your complaint may decide that we have done all we can to resolve the complaint, in which case we may use our discretion to close the complaint at this point.
12. If you are not satisfied with the way in which we have reached our conclusions, you may wish to proceed to stage two, as described below.

Stage two - consideration by a governors appeal panel

1. If the complaint has been through stage one and you are not satisfied with the outcome as a result of the way in which the complaint has been handled, you can take it further to a governors appeal panel. This is a formal process, and the ultimate recourse at school level.
2. The purpose of this arrangement is to provide you with the chance to present your arguments in front of a panel of governors who have no prior knowledge of the details of the case and who can, therefore, consider it without prejudice.
3. However, the aim of a panel is not to rehear the complaint. It is there to review how the complaint has been investigated and to determine whether this has been conducted fairly. It is there to establish facts and make recommendations which will reassure you that we have taken the complaint seriously.

The governors appeal panel operates according to the following formal procedures:

1. The governing body will convene a panel of three governors and will aim to arrange for the panel meeting to take place within **20 working days**.
2. You will be asked whether you wish to provide any further written documentation in support of your appeal.
3. The head teacher or complaint investigator will be asked to prepare a written report for the panel. The panel can request additional information from other sources if necessary.
4. You will be informed, at least **five working days** in advance, of the date, time and place of the meeting.
5. With the letter, you will receive any relevant correspondence or reports regarding stage 1.
6. The letter will explain what will happen at the panel meeting and that you are entitled to be accompanied to the meeting. The choice of person to accompany you is your own, but it is usually best to involve someone in whom you have confidence but who is not directly connected with the school. They are there to give you support but also to witness the proceedings and to speak on your behalf if you wish.
7. If it is necessary in the interests of ratifying the investigative process, the complaint investigator may, with the agreement of the chair of the panel, invite relevant witnesses directly involved in matters raised by you to attend the meeting.
8. The chair of the panel will bear in mind that the formal nature of the meeting can be intimidating for you and will do his or her best to put you at ease.
9. As a general rule, no evidence or witnesses previously undisclosed should be introduced into the meeting by any of the participants. If either party wishes to do so, the meeting will be adjourned so that the other party has a fair opportunity to consider and respond to the new evidence.
10. The chair of the panel will ensure that the meeting is properly minuted. Please understand that any decision to share the minutes with you, the complainant, is a matter for the panel's discretion and you do not have an automatic right to see or receive a copy as the minutes are the property of the governing body. Since such minutes usually name individuals, they are understandably of a sensitive and, therefore, confidential nature.
11. Normally, the written outcome of the panel meeting, which will be sent to you, should give you all the information you require. If, however, you feel that you would like to have a copy of the minutes it would be helpful if you could indicate this in advance. If the panel is happy for the minutes to be copied to you, the clerk can then be asked to maintain confidentiality in the minutes.
12. During the meeting, you can expect there to be opportunities for:
 - The panel to hear you explain your case and your argument for why it should be heard at stage 2
 - The panel to hear the complaint investigator's case in response
 - You to raise questions via the chair
 - You to be questioned by the complaint investigator through the chair
 - The panel members to be able to question you and the complaint investigator
 - You and the head teacher/complaint investigator to make a final statement

13. In closing the meeting, the chair will explain that the panel will now consider its decision and that written notice of the decision will be sent to you and the head teacher/complaint investigator **within three school days**. All participants other than the panel and the clerk will then leave.
14. The panel will then consider the complaint and all the evidence presented in order to:
 - Reach a unanimous, or at least a majority, decision on the case
 - Decide on the appropriate action to be taken, if necessary
 - Recommend to the governing body, where appropriate, changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure similar problems do not happen again.
15. The clerk will send you and the head teacher/complaint investigator a letter outlining the decision of the panel.
16. We will keep a copy of all correspondence and notes on file in the school's records but separate from pupils' personal records. These will be stored securely for a period of five years and, where the complaint is on behalf of a child, the documentation will be kept until 6 years after the child has attained the age of 18.

Closure of complaints

Very occasionally, the school will feel that it needs, regrettably, to close a complaint where the complainant is still dissatisfied. Sometimes it is simply not possible to meet all of the complainant's wishes. Sometimes it is simply a case of "agreeing to disagree".

For this reason, we are entitled to close correspondence (including personal approaches, as well as letters and telephone calls) on a complaint where we feel that we have taken all reasonable action to resolve the complaint and that the complaint has exhausted our official process. The local authority will support us in this position, especially where the complainant's action is causing distress to staff and/or pupils.

In exceptional circumstances, closure may occur before a complaint has reached stage two of the procedures described in this document. This is because a complaints panel takes considerable time and effort to set up and we must be sure that it is likely to assist the process of investigating the complaint.

The chair of governors may decide, therefore, that every reasonable action has been undertaken to resolve the complaint and that a complaints review panel would not help to move things forward.

If you wish to pursue your complaint beyond the school review, you can write to the Chief Education Officer at County Hall Trowbridge or the Secretary of State for Education.

Policy Approved by: _____S+C Committee_____

Policy Approval Date: _____May 2016_____

Policy Review Date: _____May 2018_____

KSM Complaints Procedure

If you have a complaint about anything regarding the school, staff or policies, please follow the following procedure. If, at any point, you feel that your issues have not been satisfactorily dealt with, please move on to the next stage of the procedure

Explain your concerns to your child's class teacher



Explain your concerns to the head teacher



Put your complaint in writing to the head teacher

If your complaint concerns the head teacher, please mark for the attention of the Chair of Governors



Put your complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors
(Formal Complaint)

(using the school's complaint form available from the school office or on our website)



Governor's Appeal Panel



Write to the Chief Education Officer at County Hall Trowbridge or the Secretary of State for Education.

School complaints recording form

Complaints / Feedback form

Personal Details

Name

Address

.....

Postcode

Daytime telephone number

Evening telephone number

If applicable, name of child(ren) and year at school

.....

Your relationship to the school, e.g. parent, carer, neighbour, member of the public, student:

.....

Please give details of your complaint:

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint ? Who did you speak to, when and what was the response?

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Signature

Date

Official Use:

Date of acknowledgment

By whom

Complaint referred to

Date

Dear Mr and Mrs X,

COMPLAINT ABOUT Y AND SCHOOL Z

Thank you for your letter dated.... From your letter(s) it is clear that you are still unhappy with the situation. As a result I have decided to have the matter investigated in line with the school's complaints procedure.

You complain that :

summary of complaint to be stated. State each point separately.

I have completed my investigation and can offer the following response(s) on each of the points you have raised.

1. Concerning your complaint that
2. Concerning your complaint that

It is important that you are clear about what action the school has taken at each stage of the process so far:

State what action was taken in response and the outcome of this, including any remedial action to be taken if complaint is upheld.

I hope this response answers your concerns. Please let me know if you wish me to clarify any points.

In the meantime, if you are still not satisfied with my reply, there is a further stage of the complaints procedure that you can follow. This formal stage is investigated by the Chair of Governors.

To go to this next formal stage, you should write to the Chair of Governors within fourteen school days of the receipt of this letter, giving your reasons why you wish to take your complaint further.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Dear Mr and Mrs X,

FORMAL COMPLAINT ABOUT Y AND SCHOOL Z

Thank you for your letter dated.... From your letter(s) it is clear that you are still unhappy with the situation. As a result I have decided to have the matter investigated as part of our formal complaints procedures.

You complain that :

summary of complaint to be stated. State each point separately.

I have completed my investigation and can offer the following response(s) on each of the points you have raised.

3. Concerning your complaint that
4. Concerning your complaint that

It is important that you are clear about what action the school has taken at each stage of the process so far:

State what action was taken in response and the outcome of this, including any remedial action to be taken if complaint is upheld.

I hope this response answers your concerns. Please let me know if you wish me to clarify any points.

In the meantime, if you are still not satisfied with my reply, there is a further stage of the complaints procedure that you can follow. This formal stage is a review by a panel of governors who will look at the way in which your complaint has been dealt with. The panel will not, however, rehear the whole case and cannot change the decision made by the head teacher or Chair of Governors.

To go to the next formal stage two, you should write to the Chair of Governors within fourteen school days of the receipt of this letter, giving your reasons why you wish to take your complaint further.

Yours sincerely,

Chair of Governors

Dear Mrs and Mrs

FORMAL COMPLAINT ABOUT Y AND SCHOOL Z

The panel met on ...date...to hear your appeal regarding your complaint which can be summarised as follows:

That so and so/the school did/said/did not,...

Legal or administrative background

State any legal or administrative background to the case, including any legislation relevant to the investigation.

The investigation

Set out the key facts about the complaint, the findings and conclusions from the Formal stage 1 investigation, and any continuing concerns.

Conclusion

Set out the findings of the panel

Panel decision

Outcome of the decision

Please let me know if you wish me to clarify any points for you.

In the meantime, if you remain dissatisfied with the way in which your complaint has been dealt with, there is another stage of the complaints procedure that you can write to the Chief Education Officer at County Hall Trowbridge or the Secretary of State for Education to examine the process that we have followed.

I must remind you that the decision of the panel is final. Neither the Chief Education Officer at County Hall Trowbridge or the Secretary of State for Education have the power to set aside the decision of the panel. They may only comment on the fairness of the process.

Yours sincerely,

Chair of the Governor Appeals Panel