

St. Nicholas CE VA Primary School - complaints procedure

Something has happened at school, and you wish to register a complaint - what can you do?

All the schools within Dorset local authority want their children to do well and be happy. They recognise that you as a parent or guardian play an important part in making this happen. Therefore, schools aim to provide as many opportunities to keep you informed and involved in your child's progress as they possibly can.

Regular reports, open days and visits all helping the process. Questions and concerns are usually dealt with quickly and helpfully. However, we recognise there are times when things go wrong, when concerns continue and differences of opinion develop. These can usually be resolved by speaking to the right person. Most concerns can be settled without too much trouble, but whatever the issue, even where you are seriously concerned about your child's future at the school, it's always important to try to find an answer. Disruption to a child's education would be the most damaging result of all.

What to do first?

Take a few minutes to read this page. Then think the complaint through.

What actually happened?

Remember there is often more than one view about an incident or situation. For example, your child may well be telling the truth but it may not be the whole story.

What do you want to complain about?

What do you hope will happen as a result of your complaint? It might help to talk this through with a friend or relative. When you make a complaint, remember that although you want to change a situation, you want it to end on a positive note with no bad feelings. In order to do this you should try to follow the procedures carefully and always try not to put yourself or anyone else into a corner.

What to do next?

You can try to resolve your complaint either informally or formally. It is always hoped that your issues can be resolved informally but in some cases this is not always possible. All schools are required to have a Complaints Policy and you should request this from the school office.

What to do if your complaint is about members of staff (other than the Headteacher)

When you are clear in your own mind as to what you believe has happened, you then should communicate directly with the person concerned. This may be by letter, by telephone or in person by appointment. You can use the [school's database](#), to find a school's contact details.

How to make a formal complaint

If the complaint is not resolved at the informal stage, you should then write to the Headteacher, who will be responsible for its investigation. You should include details to assist the investigation, such as dates and time, names of potential witnesses and all relevant documents. Investigating complaints does take time and the answers aren't always readily available. Once you have the response from the Headteacher you will be able to decide whether the action taken (or not taken) was reasonable and whether any further steps taken by the Headteacher would solve the problem. If you are unhappy with the Headteacher's response, you can refer the complaint to the Chair of Governors.

What to do if your complaint is about the Headteacher

Again, there are two stages, formal and informal. If your complaint is about the Headteacher, the informal stage will be to speak directly with the Headteacher. In the case of serious concerns, it may be appropriate to raise them directly with the Chair of the Governing Body, you should address the complaint to the Chair of Governors who will be responsible for investigating the complaint. Again, you should include details to assist the investigation, such as dates and time, names of potential witnesses and all relevant documents. As before, investigating complaints does take time and the answers aren't always readily available. Once you have the response from the Chair of Governors you will be able to decide whether the action taken (or not taken) was reasonable and whether any further steps taken by the Chair of Governors, would solve the problem.

Next Review: November 2018

Review process

In most cases, the problem will have been solved by this stage. However, if you are not happy with the manner in which the process has followed either by the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors, you may request for the Governing Body to review the process. The complainant and the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will be informed in writing of the outcome.

What to do if you are unhappy with the school and governing body's Response

Your next step is to contact the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) if you have been unable to resolve your concern with the school. To contact the LGO you can telephone their Advice Team on 0300 061 0614 or 0845 602 1983 (8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday). You will be able to discuss your complaint with one of their advisers who can explain what to do next. Alternatively you can text the LGO on 0762 480 4299, email: advice@lgo.org.uk or complete an online complaint form at [Local Government Ombudsman - Making a complaint \(opens in a new window\)](#)

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Jan 2012