

Sharing your concerns about your child's education A Parents' Guide

Northern House School recognises that at times things can go wrong. This 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 his/her class teacher at the school.

The school's governing body 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 headteacher is responsible for making decisions on a daily basis about the school's internal management and organisation. So 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
- something that 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 the class teacher.

This informal approach is nearly always the quickest and most effective way of resolving your concerns.

If you feel that your concern has not been resolved, then it is important to speak to or write to the headteacher who will look into your concern.

If you are unhappy with the headteacher's response you should write with your complaint to the Chair of Governors/Clerk to the Governing Body at the school address. Mark your envelope 'FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION'.

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 complete a complaint form and will offer help in completing the form, if appropriate

Within 5 working days of receiving the form the Chair will decide whether mediation should be offered to help you and the headteacher explore possible resolution.

If mediation is agreed, the chair of governors will endeavour to set up the meeting **within 10 working days**. If that timescale is not possible you will be told the reason.

If mediation is not deemed appropriate or if it is not successful, 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 being complained of. 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 without fear or favour.

Five working days before the hearing the clerk will send to you, the complainant, the headteacher 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 headteacher will be invited into the room where the panel is being held at the same time.
2. After introductions, you, the complainant will be invited to explain your complaint.
3. The headteacher may question you.
4. The panel will question you.
5. The headteacher will be invited to explain the school's actions.
6. You, the complainant may question the headteacher.
7. The panel will question the headteacher.
8. The panel may ask questions at any point.
9. You, the complainant will then be invited to sum up your complaint.
10. The headteacher will then be invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
11. The chair will explain that you and the headteacher will hear from the panel **within five working days**.
12. Both you and the headteacher will leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
13. 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 procedures, you can write to the Secretary of State for Education,

<http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus/dfe>