

Part Five. Model letters

Model Letters

1. Initial contact following complaint
2. Follow up letter following initial complaints meeting
3. Outcome of initial investigation
4. Invitation to appeal meeting
5. Outcome of appeal
6. Dispensation – unreasonable pursuance of complaint
7. Banning – warning
8. Initial banning
9. Revoking the ban
10. Endorsing the ban

Name of school

Telephone:

Date

Dear

The details of the complaint you made to the school on *xx insert date xx* have been brought to my attention, and I am appointed by the governing body to make contact with you.

In order that I can follow the school's policy on dealing with concerns or complaints and proceed with the matter, I would like to discuss your *{concern/complaint}* with you. It would be appreciated if you could contact me via the *{School/other preferred means}* in order to discuss your complaint.

If within 10 working days of the date of this letter, I have had no response from you, I will assume that you no longer wish to continue with your complaint and I shall advise the school that the matter be closed. The recommendation will be on the basis that without your assistance and co-operation it is not practicable for me to investigate the complaint further.

Yours sincerely

Appointed Person
School Governor

Name of school

Telephone:

Date

Dear

RE: Complaint against {name of school}

I refer to your complaint against {school name} dated {date} and our meeting on {date}. At that meeting you agreed that your complaint be dealt with by way of the {School Resolution/School Investigation} process and you requested the following action be taken.

{free text}

I will now review the details of your complaint, and I will write to you within 10 working days to report my findings, or, if the matter proves more complex, to update you on progress. If you prefer to have updates by other means such as e-mail or telephone, then please contact me.

If the matter takes longer than 10 working days I will notify you of the expected date of its completion and when you can expect contact from me. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me on (add email or phone number) if I can be of any further assistance.

Appointed Person

School Governor

Name of school

Telephone:

Date

Dear

I refer to your complaint against {xx school} dated {date}.

You agreed that your complaint be dealt with by way of the {School Resolution/School Investigation} process and we agreed a set of actions which have been carried out as follows:

{List actions as agreed with complainant in the action plan and detail the action you have taken in response to each aspect of the plan}

I do hope that you find I have carried out the investigation in line with your wishes. Enclosed is a copy of my report and findings, which will be reported to the governing body.

{free text}

As a result of complaints made by members of our school community, we can influence the development of individuals and the working practices of {insert school name}.

On behalf of the school may I take this opportunity to apologise that on this occasion you felt that the service you received fell below the standard which you expected. I hope that any future contact you have with {insert school name} restores your confidence in our service.

If you wish to appeal against the above decisions/actions please can you state this in writing, addressed to the Chair of Governors c/o the school within 20 working days.

Yours sincerely

Appointed Person
School Governor

Signature Block & email address

3. Outcome of initial investigation

Name of school

Telephone:

Date

Dear

I refer to your complaint against {xx school} dated {date}.

You have informed us that you wish to appeal against the decision/s made following the school investigation.

Therefore we would like to invite you to attend an appeal meeting on (date/time/venue).

If this date is inconvenient, please can you inform me as soon as possible so that an alternative date can be arranged.

You will receive any paperwork that relates to the initial school investigation 7 days in advance of the appeal meeting.

At the meeting, a panel of three governors, who have had no previous dealings with your complaint, will listen to your appeal, they will also listen to what the headteacher has to say, and then they will come to a decision whether to uphold the appeal fully or in part, or whether they believe that the school has acted appropriately and that no further actions are necessary. This panel are not able to hear any other complaints or additional concerns at this meeting.

Whilst this is a part of the formal complaints procedure, we aim to make the meeting as informal as possible, so that all parties can put forward their views in a positive and respectful manner.

When the appeal panel have considered all the information made available to them, they will make a decision and inform you in writing of the outcome.

Yours sincerely,

Clerk to Governors/Chair of Appeal Panel

Signature Block & email address

Name of school

Telephone:

Date

Dear

I refer to your complaint against {xx school} dated {date}.

Following the appeal meeting held on (insert date), I am writing to inform you of the panel's decision.

In this instance the panel have decided to *uphold the appeal made regarding the following issues raised/not to uphold the appeal regarding the following issues.*

(State which items are upheld and what actions will be taken – remember not to pre-empt any decisions the GB might make about specific actions, especially where a member of staff is concerned, but give enough information so that the complainant is clear what they might see as an outcome)
(Now state any aspects of the appeal which were not upheld and explain briefly why the panel have decided that the school policy/practice was appropriate). If any aspects are upheld, add:

(Following consideration by the school of the recommendations by the appeal panel, I shall be in contact with you in (state a timescale – be realistic if this needs to involve significant changes) to report on progress of these actions).

The complaints procedure is now complete and there is no right to a further appeal. I hope that you feel that the school has dealt with your complaint effectively. However if you are unhappy with the way the school has managed your complaint, you may submit a complaint to the Department for Education online at: www.gov.uk/complain-about-school

Or write to:

School Complaints Unit
Department of Education
2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate
Manchester M1 2WD

Yours sincerely,

Appointed Governor/Chair of Governors

Signature Block & email address

Name of school

Telephone:

Date

(Attach Part Three of this guidance entitled 'Developing Clear Parental Expectations and Managing Unreasonable Behaviour' to give the background to the school's decision).

Dear

I write with reference to your complaint against *xx insert name of school xx*.

Having reviewed the matter, it is my intention to apply to The Governing Body to dispense with your complaint(s), the grounds for doing so are that (choose explanation from options as follows)

OPTION 1 – UNREASONABLE BEHAVIOUR

The school's guidance states that a complainant "*behaves unreasonably when he/she:*

- *Refuses to specify the grounds of a complaint, despite offers of assistance.*
- *Refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process.*
- *Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure.*
- *Makes unjustified complaints about staff and/or governors who are trying to deal with the issues, and forwarding information to others or requesting that someone else deals with the issue.*
- *Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds.*
- *Denies or changes statements he or she made at an earlier stage.*
- *Introduces trivial or irrelevant new information at a later stage".*

OR

OPTION 2 – UNREASONABLY PERSISTENT

The school's guidance states that a complainant is "*unreasonably persistent when he/she:*

- *Persists although the complaint has been comprehensively addressed.*
- *Reframes the complaint.*
- *Demands a review of the complaint.*
- *Makes an issue of trivial things, repeatedly, and makes unreasonable demands of the school".*

OR

OPTION 3 - UNREASONABLY DEMANDING

The school's guidance states that a complainant is "unreasonably demanding when he/she:

- *Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the school's complaints procedure or with good practice.*
- *Insists on unattainable outcomes.*
- *Wants revenge or retribution.*
- *Makes demands about the way the complaint should be handled.*
- *Provides an extraordinary degree of irrelevant detail.*
- *Creates complexity where there is none and proposes unreasonable arguments".*

OR

OPTION 4 – UNREASONABLE ARGUMENTS

The school's guidance states that it will "be unreasonable to:

- *Advance irrational beliefs (e.g. seeing cause-and-effect links where none exist).*
- *Advance and stick to what is clearly a conspiracy theory unsupported by evidence.*
- *Insist that a particular solution is the correct one.*
- *Insist on the importance of an issue that is clearly trivial.*
- *Refuse to co-operate with the school".*

OR

OPTION 5 - UNREASONABLY LACKING IN CO-OPERATION

The school's guidance states that a complainant is "unreasonably lacking in co-operation when he/she:

- *Presents a large quantity of disorganised information.*
- *Withholds information.*
- *Refuses to define the issues underlying the complaint.*
- *Focuses on principles, rather than issues.*
- *Changes the complaint".*

In my consideration, your approach in this matter has been **xx insert description xx** and therefore meets the above criteria.

OR

OPTION 6 – VEXATIOUS, OPPRESSIVE, REPETITIVE or AN ABUSE OF THE PROCEDURE

A repetitious complaint is one which:

- *is substantially the same as a previous concern or complaint, or*
- *contains no new information which significantly affects the matter, or*
- *contains no new evidence to support the concern or complaint.*

The matter to which you refer is already the subject of a previous complaint, **xx cross ref xx** and is substantially the same. Your letter contains no new information that significantly affects the matter and no new evidence to support your complaint.

I consider that the matters you raise are **(vexatious, oppressive or an abuse of the procedure)** for the following reason.

(insert reason(s))

As a consequence, your complaint will not be progressed.

Yours sincerely

**Appointed person
School Governor**

Dear

I am writing to you about your conduct on (enter date and time).

[Add summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils, other parents].

I must inform you that the School will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to defend its staff and pupils. On behalf of the governing body I am therefore issuing a formal warning to you, and if this behaviour is repeated, I will have no alternative but to ban you from the premises in line with Section 206 of the Education Act 2002.

In order for us to re-establish good working relationships, I would therefore ask you to contact me at the school to arrange a meeting in order to agree next steps.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Dear

I am writing to you about your conduct on (enter date and time).

[Add summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils, other parents].

I must inform you that the School will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to defend its staff and pupils. On behalf of the governing body I am therefore instructing that (for a temporary period – make this proportionate, this should be a cooling off period not a punishment) you are not to reappear on the premises of the school. If you do not comply with this instruction, I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under Section 206 of the Education Act 2002. If convicted under this section, you are liable to a fine.

In the case of a primary school include: For the duration of this decision you may bring your son(s)/daughter(s) (complete as appropriate) to school and collect them/him/her (delete as appropriate) at the end of the school day, but you must not go beyond the school gate.

In the case of infant children, also insert: Arrangements have been made for your (delete as appropriate) son(s)/daughter(s) (insert child/rens names) to be collected, and returned to you, at the school gate by a member of the school staff.

The withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises takes effect immediately. However, I still need to decide whether it is appropriate to confirm this decision and before I do so I would like to give you an opportunity to give me in writing any comments or observations of your own in relation to this letter. These comments may include any expressions of regret on your part and any assurances you are prepared to give about your future good conduct. To enable me to take a decision on this matter at an early point, you are asked to send me any written comments you wish to make within 5 working days.

If on receipt of your comments I consider that my decision should be confirmed, you will be supplied with details of how to pursue a review of the circumstances of your case.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Dear

I am writing to you about your conduct on (enter date and time).

[Add summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils, other parents].

Following your communication with me regarding the circumstances of the above behaviour, in this instance I have decided to revoke the ban that was imposed on (date). Therefore, on behalf of the governing body, I would like to invite you to meet with **myself and/or named governor** to agree how we move forward to ensure that we establish clear expectations and lines of communication between home and school, so that this incident is not repeated. Please contact me at the school to arrange a meeting.

May I reassure you of our continued commitment to provide the very best education for your **child/children**.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Name of school

Telephone:

Date

Dear

I am writing to you about your conduct on (enter date and time).

[Add summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, pupils, other parents].

I must inform you that the school will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and will act to defend its staff and pupils. On behalf of the Governing Body I am therefore instructing that you are not to reappear on the premises of the school. If you do not comply with this instruction, I shall arrange for you to be removed from the premises and prosecuted under Section 206 of the Education Act 2002. If convicted, you are liable to a fine.

This decision will be reviewed on (set a date that is proportionate to the incident) and I will be in contact with you within one working week of this date to discuss the outcome of the review.

May I reassure you of our continued commitment to provide the very best education for your child/children and I hope that after this cooling-off period, we can agree further arrangements which will enable us to re-establish a good working relationship.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher