



Longmeadow Primary School Complaints Procedure

Policy Agreed: Spring 2017

Complaints Procedure

This Policy meets the standards set out in the [Education Act 2002: Section 29](#) and reflects DfE advice. It is intended for use by any complainant, who may or may not have a formal connection to the School.

The Policy is in two parts. Part 1 outlines general principles of the Policy, and Part 2 describes the procedures complainants and the School should follow.

Part 1: Introduction

From time to time we may all find ourselves in the position of wishing to raise a concern or make a complaint regarding an aspect of our lives. Your child's education is of paramount importance and on occasion you may feel that you would like to discuss elements of the school's performance or policy. As a school we take our responsibilities to parents, children and our wider community extremely seriously and endeavour to provide a high quality service for all. We also believe that we work in partnership with parents and members of our community and that by working together we can improve the standards of education we offer our children.

The complaints procedure consists of three stages:

- A. informal (usually a meeting with the complainant)
- B. formal (the complaint is put in writing)
- C. a panel hearing

Concerns are always taken seriously and the vast majority can be resolved immediately. Procedures beyond the Informal Stage will be invoked only if the person raising the concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further. It is useful for complainants to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem.

Members of the Governing Body will refer people with complaints to the person directly referred to in the complaint or to the person's Line Manager. Members of the Governing Body are required to be impartial in the complaints procedure and thus must not become involved in a complaint, unless called upon to sit on a panel for the Governing Body. The exception to this is the Chair of Governors.

Every effort is made to listen to complaints responsibly and to act upon inconsistencies of practice as soon as possible. All complaints are investigated and solutions are sought. We endeavour to provide a high quality service and will react responsibly to all complaints.

Complainants are expected to interact with school staff politely and behave acceptably at all times. Shouting, swearing or threatening behaviour is not acceptable, and complainants demonstrating such behaviour will have the discussion terminated. It may be that the original complaint is reviewed and a decision made by Governors on whether to continue to investigate the complaint.

Staff involved in handling a complaint will be suitably supported by senior staff, as required.

There may be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the Chair of Governors will inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

A written record is kept of all complaints, and:

- (i) whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and
- (ii) action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld); and
- (iii) all correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

For almost all complaints, the procedure ends with the Governing Body and there is no following stage of complaint to the Local Authority.

However, if your complaint is about the way that a school is providing for your child's Education Health Care Plan you do have a further stage of complaint to the Local Authority.

In this case, you can write to the Complaints Manager who will acknowledge your complaint within five working days and then inform the Chair of Governors and Headteacher. The Complaints Team will aim to investigate your complaint within 25 working days, however the investigation may take longer in complex situations. When your complaint has been fully investigated the Complaints Manager will write to let you know the decision. S/he will give the reasons for the decision, any action or proposed action to be taken and any further avenues open to you. S/he will send a copy to the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors and anyone else concerned in the investigation. Parents who remain dissatisfied following further investigation by the Local Authority have the right to complain to the Secretary of State who may decide to conduct an additional investigation.

Part 2: Procedures for Complainants to Follow

If you have a concern or complaint we would be grateful if you would use the following procedures.

A. Informal Stage

Where possible staff will discuss matters with you immediately. If this is not possible a mutually convenient appointment will be offered in order to discuss the problem, in person or by telephone. We always endeavour to make these appointments as close to the request as possible and aim to do so within five working days.

All written complaints will be acknowledged in writing **within five working days** of receipt.

1. In the first instance, if you have a concern regarding a classroom matter please take it to the class teacher.
2. For classroom matters, should you feel that your discussions are inconclusive a further appointment can be made with the Phase Leader.
3. Appointments may also be made with individual Curriculum Leaders or our Special Educational Needs Leader. Requests should be made via the school office who will make the appointment for you with the appropriate member of staff.
4. Complaints regarding Health and Safety issues should always be addressed to the Headteacher.
5. Should you have an administration complaint please address your complaint to see the Headteacher's PA.
6. Complaints regarding the school meals service should be made to the Headteacher's PA who will refer the issue to the catering service.
7. Complaints regarding the conduct of the Headteacher should be made directly to the Headteacher and if not resolved to your satisfaction should be referred directly to the Chair of Governors.
8. Complaints regarding the conduct of individual members of the Governing Body itself should be referred to the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher.
9. Complaints regarding the Premises staff of the school should be made directly to the Site Manager and if not resolved should be referred to the Headteacher's PA.
10. Complaints regarding external bodies involved with the school, e.g. Educational Psychologist, School Health, Music tuition, should be made in the first instance to the Headteacher. These complaints will then be forwarded to the appropriate authority.

11. A written response or notes of meetings will be provided on request.
12. If you feel that your complaint has not been resolved after discussions with the people directly concerned with the complaint, please make an appointment to discuss the matter further with the Headteacher or the Deputy either in person or in writing.

B. Formal Stage

1. Should you still feel dissatisfied with the treatment of your complaint please make an appointment to discuss your complaint with the Chair of Governors, (contacted via the school office), who will, if necessary, call a meeting of Governors to discuss your complaint and where you will be able to present your case. We aim to convene a meeting within 10 working days.
2. Complainants will be invited to attend and may be accompanied at the meeting if they wish.
3. A formal written response will be provided to the complainant.
4. Should the complainant still feel their complaint has not been resolved, they may request to move to Panel Stage. Such a request should be addressed to the Chair of Governors.

C. Panel Stage

1. If the complaint proceeds to the panel stage, complainants are given reasonable notice of the panel hearing date. We aim to convene a panel within 15 working days.
2. Governors will make provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the school. The panel will consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint; and one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the school.
3. It is a matter for the school to identify suitably independent individuals who can fulfil the role and responsibility of being the independent member.
4. Complainants will be invited to attend and to be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish.
5. Once the panel has concluded its findings and made recommendations, a copy of those findings and recommendations is provided to the complainant and, where relevant, to the person complained about. The written report remains available for inspection on the school premises by Governors and the Headteacher.