

MAKING A COMPLAINT

As a Parent/ Guardian you are your child's primary educator.

Therefore, we aim to provide as many opportunities to keep you informed and involved in your child's progress as we possibly can.

Regular reports, open days, formal/informal meetings and visits all help the process. Questions and concerns are usually dealt with quickly and helpfully.

If your child is experiencing a problem and you need to see your child's teacher please ring or write for an appointment and outline the nature of the concern.

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.

The following may help should you have an issue.....

What to do First:

Take a few minutes to 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:

1. Talk to your child's Teacher.

When you are clear in your own mind as to what you believe has happened, you then need to speak to someone at school - contact the office to **arrange a meeting** with the teacher.

Although sometimes we can arrange to see parents who just “pop in”, this is not generally possible. It is always best to try to make an appointment where you can sit and talk things through calmly and without interruption.

Investigating complaints does take time and the answers aren't always readily available, but you will at least be able to decide whether the action taken (or not taken) was reasonable and whether any further steps taken by the teacher would solve the problem.

2. Talk to the Principal.

If talking to the teacher does not resolve the situation **seek an appointment with Principal.**

If you are still unhappy.....

In most cases, the problem will have been solved by this stage.

However, if having seen the Principal you are still unhappy, then you should contact the **Chairperson of the Board of Management.**

At this stage your complaint must be in writing.

The school will tell you how to make contact with the Chairperson - who may help to resolve the problem informally, possibly by arranging a meeting between those involved.

You will have the opportunity to talk through your concerns with an independent party who is there to listen and to discuss what is being said.

If, after this, you are still not satisfied with the answer, then you should ask to make a formal complaint to the Board of Management.

Complaints to the Board of Management

As this is a serious step to take, it is important that you have thought things through carefully and that every possible attempt has been made to solve your concerns by other means.

Normally, a meeting of the Board of Management will be called to hear your case and all sides will be asked to submit a written statement. You will also be invited to attend any hearing that is held, to present your side of the story. You may bring someone with you to this type of meeting.

The decision of the Board of Management will then be sent in writing to all parties.

And, if you are still unhappy

If after the Board of Management has dealt with your complaint, you are still unhappy with the decision that was taken, you can contact the Department of Education & Skills or the National Parent' Council-Primary for advice on what to do next.

For example, if you feel that the Board of Management has acted unreasonably, you can consider complaining to the Department of Education & Skills.

In Summary:

Six steps to resolving your concerns

1. Ask yourself **'What really happened?'**
2. Decide what you want to complain about.
3. Make an appointment to see the appropriate person - in most cases this will be, as a first step, the **child's teacher**.
4. If you are still not happy **make an appointment to meet the Principal**.
5. If you are still not happy - **write to the Chairperson of the Board of Management**.
6. If you are not satisfied after you have taken the steps above you can **contact the Department of Education & Skills**

If your child is experiencing a problem and you need to see your child's teacher please ring or write for an appointment and outline the nature of the concern.

Please note, that it is important that your child sees that you support the school and the teacher and that we are partners in the education process.

Lastly, **under no circumstances**, should a parent/guardian attempt to deal with a concern/problem, relating to another person's child, by first approaching that child or children in the school yard or building.

This Policy will be reviewed annually.

January 2014

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