



Huntley C of E CE School

Parents

What to do if you have:

Questions, Concerns, or Appreciation.

Wherever possible every effort should be made to discuss concerns or issues in the privacy of the school building and in a rational, objective way. Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

1. Approach the class teacher.

Everyday information or concerns regarding pupil welfare or educational issues should be directed to the class teacher in the first instance. They have specific responsibility for your children so should generally be your first port of call.

After school is often the best time to speak to your child's teacher, although it may be possible to speak briefly before school begins in the morning. It may be necessary for an appointment to be made, for example to ensure confidentiality.

2. Approach the Head teacher.

If you feel that the teacher has not listened to you or given you a satisfactory explanation please contact the Head teacher.

The Head teacher will always listen and respond to parental questions or comments. She is generally available at the start and end of each day, but once again, it may be necessary to make an appointment via the school administrator. You are also welcome to put your concern in writing. The Head teacher will respond within 3 working days.

The Head teacher is accountable to both national and local legislation, including the policies which have been written and approved by the Governing body of the school.

3. Approach the Governing body.

If after talking or writing to the Head teacher, you are still not satisfied, you will need to contact the Chair of Governors, who will arrange for an investigation to be made. This should be done in writing, addressed to the school.

4. Consideration by a complaints review panel

- If your concern has already been through Stages 1, 2 and 3 and you are not happy with the outcome, the Chair of Governors will instruct the Clerk to set up a complaints review panel to consider it. This is a formal process, and your ultimate recourse at school level.
- The purpose of this arrangement is to give your complaint a hearing in front of a panel of governors who have no prior knowledge of the details of the complaint and who can, therefore, consider it without prejudice.
- The aim of a complaints review panel is to resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the parent. We recognise, however, that it may sometimes only be possible to establish facts and make recommendations which will reassure you that we have taken your complaint seriously.

The complaints review panel operates according to the following formal procedures:

1. The clerk to the governing body will aim to arrange for the panel meeting to take place within **20 working days**.
2. The clerk will ask you whether you wish to provide any **further written documentation** in support of your complaint. You can include witness statements, or ask witnesses to give evidence in person, if you wish.
3. The head teacher will be asked to prepare a **written report** for the panel. Other members of staff directly involved in matters raised in your complaint will also be asked to prepare reports or statements.
4. The clerk will inform you, the head teacher, any relevant witnesses and members of the panel by letter, at least **five working days** in advance, of the date, time and place of the meeting. We hope that you will feel comfortable with the meeting taking place in the school; but we will do what we can to make alternative arrangements if you prefer.
5. With the letter, the clerk will send you all relevant correspondence, reports and documentation about the complaint and ask whether you wish to submit **further written evidence** to the panel.
6. The letter will explain what will happen at the panel meeting and the clerk will also inform you that **you are entitled to be accompanied** to the meeting. The choice of person to accompany you is your own, but it is usually best to involve

someone in whom you have confidence but who is not directly connected with the school. They are there to give you support but also to witness the proceedings and to speak on your behalf if you wish.

7. With the agreement of the chair of the panel, the head teacher may invite **members of staff** directly involved in matters raised by you to attend the meeting,
8. The chair of the panel will bear in mind that the formal nature of the meeting can be intimidating for you and will do his or her best to **put you at your ease**.
9. As a general rule, no evidence or witnesses **previously undisclosed** should be introduced into the meeting by any of the participants. If either party wishes to do so, the meeting will be adjourned so that the other party has a fair opportunity to consider and respond to the new evidence.
10. The chair of the panel will ensure that the meeting is properly **minuted**. Please understand that any decision to share the minutes with you, the complainant, is a matter for the panel's discretion and you do not have an automatic right to see or receive a copy. Since such minutes usually name individuals, they are understandably of a sensitive and, therefore, confidential nature.
11. Normally, the written outcome of the panel meeting, which will be sent to you, should give you all the information you require. If, however, you feel that you would like to have a **copy of the minutes** it would be helpful if you could indicate this in advance. If the panel is happy for the minutes to be copied to you, the clerk can then be asked maintain confidentiality in the minutes.
12. During the meeting, you can expect there to be opportunities for:
 - you to explain your complaint;
 - you to hear the school's response from the head teacher;
 - you to question the head teacher about the complaint;
 - you to be questioned by the head teacher about the complaint;
 - the panel members to be able to question you and the head teacher;
 - any party to have the right to call witnesses (subject to the chair's approval) and all parties to have the right to question all witnesses;
 - you and the head teacher to make a final statement.
13. In closing the meeting, the chair will explain that the panel will now consider its decision and that written notice of the decision will be sent to the head teacher and yourself **within two weeks**. All participants other than the panel and the clerk will then leave.

Monitoring

The governors monitor the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The headteacher logs all complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. The Chair of Governors examines this log on an annual basis.

Closure of complaints

- Very occasionally, a school will feel that it needs, regretfully, to close an complaint where the complainant is still dissatisfied.
- We will do all we can to help to resolve a complaint against the school but sometimes it is simply not possible to meet all of the complainant's wishes. Sometimes it is simply a case of "agreeing to disagree".
- If a complainant persists in making representations to the school – to the headteacher, designated governor, chair of governors or anyone else - this can be extremely time-consuming and can detract from our responsibility to look after the interests of all the children in our care.
- For this reason, we are entitled to close correspondence (including personal approaches, as well as letters and telephone calls) on a complaint where we feel that we have taken all reasonable action to resolve the complaint.