



North

Yorkshire County Council

Children and Young People's Service



GENERAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

March 2016

Leaflet for Complainants

A responsive County Council providing excellent and efficient local services

Topcliffe CE (VC) Primary School
Overview of Complaints procedure for all
complainants

What to do if you have a concern or a complaint

We aim to work closely with everyone to ensure that all children can learn and play happily at school.

We view all complaints in a positive way, as it helps the school improve its practices.

However, sometimes problems do occur and the best person to talk to first if you have a child in school is usually your child's class/form or subject teacher. If you do not have a child in school please talk to the Headteacher.

If you are still worried or concerned, the head teacher will be happy to talk to you at a mutually convenient time. Please contact the school office to make an appointment to talk to the Headteacher or write to the Headteacher explaining your complaint and what you would like to happen now.

This is part of a full procedure which all schools have in place and has been approved by the Governing Board. If the Headteacher cannot resolve the issue or if the complaint is about the Headteacher you should then write to the Chair of Governors. If your complaint is about a governor or governors please write to the Clerk of the Governing Board through the school.

Full details of our complaints procedure can be found in this leaflet or look on the school's website for further information.

Please do not hesitate to contact us – we look forward to hearing from you!

MODEL INFORMATION LEAFLET

Topcliffe CE (VC) Primary School

I am a parent or carer of a child in school, how do I let the school know that I have a concern or complaint?

The first action you need to take is to contact your child's class teacher or subject teacher and let the school know as soon as possible that you have a concern or a complaint and give the school the opportunity to investigate the matter properly.

Most concerns or complaints can be sorted out this way. Remember, do not leave it too long to report your concern because it can be difficult to investigate something that happened some time ago. It is also helpful if you can provide a short written statement of your concern or complaint. This will help to avoid any misunderstanding and provides a written record of your concern or complaint.

This is known as the "informal" stage and the school will do everything possible to address your concerns at this stage.

I am not a parent/carer but would like to complain how do I let the school know?

Please make an appointment to see the Headteacher.

Most complaints can be resolved informally in this manner. Remember, do not leave it too long to report your concern because it can be difficult to investigate something that happened some time ago. It is also helpful if you can provide a short written statement of your concern or complaint. This will help to avoid any misunderstanding and provides a written record of your concern or complaint.

This is known as the "informal" stage and the school will do everything possible to address your concerns at this stage.

I would like to complain about a governor or governors what should I do?

Write to the Clerk of the Governing Board through the school. Please remember to include what outcome you would need to resolve the issue.

Formal Complaint Stage One

If you feel that the class or subject teacher or the informal talk with the Headteacher has not resolved the issue you can now take the complaint through a formal procedure.

All schools have in place a complaints procedure. This is a formal process which enables you and the school to address your concerns. It is very important that you follow the procedures carefully to ensure that the school can do everything possible to resolve the issue. It is particularly important that you do not miss out any stages or try to solve the matter in other ways as this

may prevent the school from dealing with your complaint in the correct manner.

To begin this process you must write to the Headteacher explaining clearly and briefly what your concern is and what outcome you would like to see to resolve it. Please use the form provided if you prefer (see end of leaflet).

If your complaint is regarding the Headteacher then please go to Stage 2.

What if my complaint is about the Headteacher?

You will need to write to the Chair of the Governing Board at the school and explain your complaint again stating what outcome would resolve your issue. The Chair or a governor delegated by them will investigate your complaint as if it was under the second stage of the procedure (see below).

Formal Complaint Stage One: Timescale

The designated member of staff/Headteacher will send an acknowledgement letter within 5 working days of receiving the written complaint and will confirm details of the complaint to be investigated and who will be investigating the complaint.

The designated member of staff/Headteacher will write to the complainant within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint and advise him/her of the outcome of the investigations in writing.

THE SECOND STAGE.

What if I am not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation?

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the first stage of the investigation or the complaint is against the Headteacher, you can move to the second stage of the formal process.

You now need to write to the Chair of the Governing Board and explain your complaint clearly and briefly stating what outcome you want to resolve the issue. If the Headteacher has previously considered the complaint, state why you are dissatisfied with the response, and what outcome you hope to achieve.

The Chair or a governor delegated by him or her will investigate your complaint. This may include meeting with you. You may be accompanied at any meeting by a friend but you must tell the Chair in advance that you will be accompanied. The Chair, or the designated governor, will then write to you with the outcome of their investigations.

Formal Complaint Stage Two Timescale

The Chair or designated governor will send an acknowledgement within 5 working days of receiving the request.

The Chair or designated governor will write to the complainant within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint and advise him/her of the outcome of the investigations in writing.

THE THIRD STAGE.

If I am still not satisfied is there anything else that I can do?

You can write to the Clerk to the Governing Board at the school and ask that your complaint be considered by the Complaints Panel of the Governing Board. The Panel will not include any governor who was involved in the prior investigation of the complaint or anyone who has prior knowledge of the complaint. This is why it is very important that you follow the procedure carefully and **do not involve other governors** in the complaint before this stage. Occasionally it may be difficult to fill the panel with governors from the school and the school governing board may decide to use external governors from another school to ensure that complainants receive a fair hearing. This will be the decision of the governing board.

The Clerk to the Governing Board will arrange a hearing by the Panel and you will be invited to attend the hearing (with a friend if you would like) to explain your complaint.

The Clerk will write to you and make sure that you are kept fully informed and guide you through the procedure.

After the hearing, the Chair of the Panel will write to you and let you know the Panel's decision.

Formal Complaint Stage Three Timescale

The Clerk will acknowledge the request within 5 working days of receiving the request. The Clerk will set up a panel hearing within 20 working days.

At least 7 working days prior to the meeting the clerk will:

- ✓ notify all parties of the date, time and place of the hearing;
- ✓ provide all parties with a copy of any written representations submitted;
- ✓ provide all parties with details of the format of the hearing;
- ✓ ask the parties whether they have any particular needs for the meeting e.g. induction loop, translator etc;
- ✓ confirm who will be in attendance at the hearing or whether they wish to rely upon written submissions.

Within 5 working days following the hearing the clerk shall:

- ✓ inform all the parties concerned in writing of the decision(s) of the Panel;

I am making a complaint about a governor what should I do?

Write to the Clerk of the governing Board. Explain the issue and what resolution you are seeking. If the complaint is about an individual governor the Chair, or a designated governor if it is about the Chair, will investigate the issue and write to you with the findings. If after this stage you are still seeking a resolution you will need to write the Clerk again and request a third stage panel appeal. This will be conducted as above.

The time scales are as above.

If your complaint is about the full governing Board please write to the Clerk as above. The Clerk will liaise with the Local Authority to resolve the issue. The Local Authority (LA) will assist the school in the resolution of your complaint. This will normally consist of an investigation by a third party and if necessary a panel of governors made up of governors from other schools.

The time scales are as above.

If I am still not satisfied is there anything else that I can do?

Once the Panel has made its decision then that is the final step in the school's Complaints Procedure. If you feel that the governing Board has acted or intends to act unreasonably or that it has failed to discharge its duties then you can write to the Department for Education, 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate, Manchester M1 2WD.



It will help us if you use this form to make your complaint but please write a letter if you prefer, covering all the points on the form. Please continue your answers on a separate sheet if there is not enough space on this form. When you have filled in the form, send it to The Headteacher or Chair of the Governing Board (**insert name and address of school**) if you need any help completing this form please contact the school.

We will only process your personal data in order to respond to your complaints. In general it will be used for administrative and statistical purposes.

Your name Mr Ms Mrs Miss Other

First name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Surname (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Your address

Postcode

Daytime tel. no. Mobile tel. no.

Email address

Do you have any special requirements, for example if English is not your first language, disabilities?

Have you contacted the school about this matter before? Yes No

If yes, who did you contact, when and how?

Have you received a reply?

Yes No

If so, when was this?

Please explain your complaint and how would you like to see the matter resolved?
Please use additional sheets if required.

What action, if any have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? (Who did you speak to and what was the response?)

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Please use additional sheets if required.

If you have any documents to support your complaint, please send them with this form. Please tick the box if you would like them returned to you.

We will send an acknowledgement within 5 working days of receiving your communication and will tell you what is happening. If a further response is required, this should reach you within 20 working days.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Complaint reference

Date Received

Acknowledgement sent

Substantive reply sent