

The purpose of this leaflet is to help parent/carers follow the correct procedure when making a complaint about a Kirklees school.

Listening to you

Headteachers and staff are always pleased to hear from people who appreciate the hard work going on in our schools. However, although most parents do have positive relationships with their children's schools, occasionally concerns arise.

If you have a complaint about a school, ***it is the responsibility of the school***, and not the local authority, to investigate the complaint. Each school will have a complaints procedure which will tell you who to direct your complaint to and when you could expect a response by.

Who can complain?

You may complain yourself, or you may get someone to support you. The person you choose to support you could be a friend, a family member or some other individual or group.

Where do I begin?

1. Think about the nature of your complaint and try to jot down the details. In particular write down:
 - what you are complaining about
 - when and where the incident occurred
 - who else was involved
 - whether anyone saw it happen
 - who you have spoken to already and
 - what you would like to see happen as a result of your complaint.
2. Contact the school, speak to the secretary and ask who is the best person to deal with your complaint. In a primary or special school this may be your child's class teacher or the headteacher. In a secondary school, it could be the form tutor or head of year. Ask for an appointment to meet them.
 1. If the matter cannot be resolved at this meeting, the school may need to look into the matter and carry out an investigation. This should be dealt with in an agreed timescale by the appropriate person. When all relevant facts have been established, you should receive a written response.
 2. If the school agrees your complaint is justified they will tell you what action will be taken.
 3. If you are not happy with the outcome then you should write to the Chair of Governors at school, marking the envelope 'Private and confidential'.
 4. The Chair of Governors may contact you to arrange a meeting to discuss your complaint or pass it to the Complaints Committee who will arrange a meeting where it will consider evidence from you and the headteacher. ***Both of you are entitled to be present at the meeting.*** The committee will consider two things: firstly

whether the process has been fully and fairly followed and secondly, whether or not to uphold your complaint.

7. The Complaints Committee will inform you of its decision either to:

- uphold the headteacher's decision or
- ask the headteacher to reconsider certain aspects of the decision

What if my complaint is about the headteacher?

You should contact the Chair of Governors, in writing.

What if my complaint is about the governing body or about an individual governor?

You should still contact the Chair of Governors who will investigate your concerns. If the complaint is about the Chair of Governors you should contact a member of the Complaints Committee. The school should be able to tell you their names. If you have a complaint about the governing body as a whole, you should contact the School Governor Service team on 01484 221000.

How long will it take?

Complaints should be handled quickly and most issues should be resolved in a few days. The school should complete most investigations within 20 school days but, if a complaint goes through all the stages listed above, it may take several months to resolve.

What can I expect to happen?

You should expect to be listened to so that your complaint can be understood. If your complaint needs to be investigated you should give the headteacher or the Chair of Governors enough time to do this. A reasonable amount of time to carry out an investigation would be 20 school days. You should be informed if it will take longer than this.

If the school agrees that your complaint is justified they should tell you what actions will be taken. If the school does not support your complaint, they should tell you why and you can ask for these reasons to be given to you in writing.

Who else can help me?

If you feel worried about making a complaint about a school you may involve a friend, representative or interpreter to support you. There are also agencies who might be able to help:

The Advisory Council for Education (ACE) tel: 0808 800 5793 or visit the website: www.ace-ed.org.uk/

If your child has special educational needs you might contact **KIAS** (Kirklees Information, Advice and Support Service Special Educational Needs) formally Parent Partnership 01484 225422.

You can also find information and support for parents on a wide range of issues on the following websites:

www.gov.uk/complain-about-school

What if I am not satisfied with the way the school has dealt with my complaint?

If you believe the governing body is acting unreasonably or failing to carry out its statutory duties properly you should write a letter to the Secretary of State for Education asking him to look into your complaint, enclosing copies of all correspondence you have had with the school and the Governing Body in relation to your concerns. The address is:

Ministerial and Public Communications Division
Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Further advice can be found on their website:

www.education.gov.uk

The school has a duty under the Education Act 2002 to publicise the complaints procedure. This can be done by including a summary in the school's prospectus, displaying posters or leaflets, or on the school's website. Foundation schools have their own complaints procedure, which is independent of the LA. Voluntary aided schools should ensure the involvement of the relevant diocese.

Individuals contacting the local authority regarding a school complaint will be provided with information on the procedure and encouraged to contact the school directly. The headteacher will be informed of any calls that have been made to the LA regarding a complaint about their school.

Academies

The Local Authority does not have any formal role in relation to academies with regard to complaints (unless it relates to a safeguarding issue).

Full details of the academy's complaints procedures should be available from the school.

If you believe the governing body of an academy is acting unreasonably or is failing to carry out its statutory duties properly you may contact the EFA (Education Funding Agency) who handle complaints about academies on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education on 0370 000 2288.

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure