

Marshlands Primary School



Complaints Guidance

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Complaints Procedure (to be read alongside LA complaints policy)

General Principles

This procedure is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school or the services it provides. To allow for a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, any matters raised more than 3 months after the event being complained off, will generally not be considered unless in exceptional circumstances.

Definition of a complaint (as opposed to a concern)

The DfE (January 2016) define a complaint as:

An expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action.

The DfE also advise that Schools need to be clear about the difference between a concern (managed at the informal stage) and a complaint.

A concern may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought' (DfE definition).

Raising a complaint

At Marshlands Primary School, we pride ourselves on the relationships that we have with our parents. The headteacher is available every morning at the school gates and all teaching staff are available before and after school. We believe this provides excellent lines of communication.

Informal Stage (stage 1)

It is normally appropriate to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned. This may be in letter, telephone or in person. To do this you can contact the school office to arrange an appointment with the person concerned and discuss the problem.

Many complaints can be quickly resolved with simple clarification or the provision of extra information and it is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved within the informal stage.

If you are uncertain about who to contact, please seek advice from the school office. In the case of serious concerns, it may be appropriate to address them directly to the headteacher (or to the chair of governing body, if the complaint is about the headteacher)

If a verbal complaint is made to a member of the governing body the complainant will be advised to contact the headteacher in the first instance. If they are unwilling to contact the headteacher, they will be advised to put their complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors.

Formal Stage (stage 2)

If your complaint is not resolved at the informal stage, you should take it up with the headteacher, who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately. Again this may be done through a letter, telephone call or in person. If the complaint is about the headteacher, your complaint should be passed to the chair of governors.

A complaint form is provided to assist you. You should include details which might assist the investigation; such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events and copies of relevant documents. It is very important that you include a clear statement of the actions you would like the school to take to resolve your complaint. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed. This form should be addressed to the head teacher or chair of governors as appropriate.

The headteacher or chair may invite you in to a meeting to clarify your concerns and to explore the possibility of an informal resolution and it is possible that your complaint will be resolved through this meeting.

(Stage 3)

In a very small number of cases, the matter may not be resolved even with the involvement of the headteacher. When this happens the complaint will be passed to the school's governing body. The chair of the governing body will then contact you .

If you do not discuss the matter with the Headteacher, it is not normally possible to proceed further with the official complaints procedure. In this circumstance, you should also put your complaint in writing, stating the reasons why you have not discussed it with the Headteacher, and send it to the Chair of Governors.

If the complaint cannot be resolved by the involvement of the Chair of Governors, you can ask for the complaint to be considered by the Governing Body Complaints Committee. You will then be informed in writing of the outcome.

The local authority does not investigate complaints directly. If a complaint is made either in writing or verbally to the director of children, family and adult services or to any officer of the local authority, the Governing Body of the school is made aware of the complaint and is requested to deal with it through the adopted procedure.

If you are not satisfied with the process of the investigation, you can make this known to the director of children, family and adult services. (This is not the case if you are unhappy about the outcome.)

However, further action can only be taken if it can be demonstrated that the agreed procedure has not been followed, or if the Governing Body has not correctly exercised its functions.

Ultimately, you can complain to the Secretary of State in the Department for Children, Schools and Families under Section 496 of the Education Act 1996 if you feel the Governing Body or the local authority has not reasonably exercised its functions.

Marshlands Primary School Complaint Form (Stage 2)

Please complete this form and return it to the headteacher (or chair of governors) who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your Name	
Relationship with school (e.g parent)	
Pupil's name (if relevant to your complaint)	
Your address	
Contact number	
Please give concise details of your complaint (including dates, names of witnesses etc) to allow the matter to be fully investigated. You may continue on a separate sheet or attach additional documents if you wish.	
Number of additional pages attached	
What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint (i.e who have you spoken with or written to? What was the outcome?)	
What actions do you feel may resolve the problem at this stage?	

Signature.....

Date.....

School Use:

Date form received	
Received by	
Date acknowledgement sent	
Acknowledgement sent by	

Complaint referred to:			
Date:			

Marshlands Primary School Complaint Form to Committee (Stage 3)

Please complete this form and return it to the headteacher (or chair of governors) who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your Name	
Your address	
Contact number	
Dear..... I submitted a formal complaint to the school on..... and I am dissatisfied with the outcome. My complaint was submitted to..... and I received a response from..... on I have attached copies of my formal complaint and of the response/s from the school. I am dissatisfied with the outcome because: You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.	
Number of additional pages attached	
What actions do you feel may resolve the problem at this stage?	

Signature..... Date.....

School Use:

Date form received	
Received by	
Date acknowledgement sent	
Acknowledgement sent by	

Request referred to:			
Date:			