

Complaints Procedure



The school treats all concerns and complaints seriously; our aim is to learn from these and take action to improve the school.

There are three features to the school's Complaints Procedure, and these are

- Stage 1: the opportunity to resolve the complaint informally
- Stage 2: the complainant is heard by the Headteacher
- Stage 3: the complaint is heard by the Governing Body complaints appeals panel

Safeguarding Complaints

Do not use this Procedure if your concern or complaint relates to safeguarding; those types of complaints must be reported to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, Margaret Castro, or to Gemma McCutcheon, the school's Designated Safeguarding Deputy.

Safeguarding complaints about the Headteacher or the Proprietor must be reported to the Designated Officer at Northumberland County Council. His name is Adam Hall, telephone: 01670 623979, email: adam.hall01@northumberland.gov.uk.

You may also make complaints to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (Telephone: 01670 623980).

Stage 1

If you have a concern or a complaint about any aspect of the school's service, we encourage you to tell us as soon as possible. It may help if you speak straight away to the person/ people directly involved as they may be able to put matters right immediately without any need for further action. Where this is not appropriate, please speak to another member of staff not directly involved in the matter.

In all instances, the member of staff that you speak to will consider your complaint seriously and propose a solution within 2 working days. Hopefully, you will be satisfied with the outcome of this but if you are not, you are advised to move to Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure as described below.

Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, you are required to lodge the complaint with Mr Fairbairn, the school's Headteacher. This will need to be followed by a full written account of the details of your complaint within 5 working days*.

We will need to know:

- What the complaint is about
- Who and/ or what it involves
- Relevant dates, times and location.

In every case:

- You will receive confirmation within 1 working day that your complaint has been lodged.
- You will receive notification of how long the complaint will take to investigate (this is usually 10 working days or less from receipt of the written account).
- Your complaint will be investigated thoroughly (this normally involves others being interviewed and asked questions).
- You will receive a full written copy of the findings of the investigation once it has ended by the next working day.

**If you are unable to meet any timescales, please inform us immediately so that we can agree a new date.*

- If you are not satisfied with the response to the written complaint, the next stage in the Complaints Procedure is a panel hearing.

Stage 3

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, you are required to notify Ms Timlin the school Proprietor or Mr Fox, the Chair of the school's governing body that you wish to request a panel hearing. This needs to be within 2 working days.

A panel will then be convened for a hearing (usually within 5 working days). The panel will include:

- you (the complainant) and, if you are a parent/ guardian, you may be accompanied if you wish
- at least 3 people not directly involved in the complaint
- 1 person independent of the management and running of the school.

The panel will make findings and recommendations, and ensure that you, the Headteacher, the Proprietor and where relevant the person(s) complained about, are informed of any findings and recommendations.

If you (the complainant) believes that the Governing Body has acted unreasonably, a complaint can be made to the Secretary of State for Education. Further details are available on the DfE website. Ofsted has powers to investigate certain complaints from parents/ guardians which may prompt an inspection of the school. This includes concerns and complaints relating to child protection and safeguarding.

Please note

All complaints will be investigated, properly considered, and the findings and recommendations will be made known to the Headteacher, the Proprietor, the Chair of Governors, the complainant and, where relevant, those about whom a complaint has been made.

Written records will be kept of all formal complaints and their outcomes, including what action was taken as a result of a complaint, if any.

All correspondence, statements and records of complaints are confidential. However, they will be made available to inspectors or to the Secretary of State for Education on request.

**If you are unable to meet any timescales, please inform us immediately so that we can agree a new date.*