

Chailey School

Complaints Procedure

The School welcomes feedback, both positive and negative. Where someone has a concern or complaint, the School will endeavour at all times to deal with the issues responsibly and reasonably and put things right as quickly as possible. The complaints procedure has four stages:

Stage 1

If you have concern, please talk to someone at the School, preferably the person who is most closely involved i.e. the subject teacher, form tutor, Student Support Manager, Key Stage Director, Deputy Headteacher or the Headteacher.

Concerns can usually be settled quickly and without fuss by contacting the right person in the School.

The complainant will be advised of the action to be taken to resolve an issue together with details of future monitoring as necessary.

A Governor can also be contacted, but at this stage can only give general advice, and may ask the complainant to take up their concerns with the member of staff best able to help, or the Headteacher.

If concerns cannot be sorted out in this way or the complainant is not happy with the way the situation has been dealt with then Stage 2 should be followed.

Stage 2

The complaint should be put to the Headteacher in writing. On receipt of this, a full investigation will be undertaken. If the complaint is about the Headteacher the complaint should be made directly to the Chair of Governors (see Stage 3).

The School will confirm receipt of the complaint within 5 school days and the result of the Headteacher's investigation will be given in writing within 15 school days.

The complainant will also be given the opportunity to meet with the Headteacher accompanied by a relative or friend if they so wish, to discuss their complaint. Written records of interviews with complainants and with staff or witnesses carried out in the course of the investigation should be kept by the Headteacher.

In the letter conveying the outcome, the complainant should be informed of the process for referral to the Chair of Governors if they wish to take their complaint further. Any such referral should be made within **15 school days of the date** of the Headteacher's letter.

Stage 3

The complainant can request a review of their complaint by writing to the Chair of Governors care of the School. It should be made clear why they are complaining, who they have already spoken to and what they want to happen as a result of the complaint.

The Chair of Governors will confirm receipt of the complaint within seven school days and will then investigate. The outcome of the Chair of Governors' investigation will be submitted in writing within 20 school days, this letter will include details of the next stage of the procedure.

In acknowledging any complaint, the Chair may need to explain the powers of the governing body in the matter in question and the extent to which it may or may not be possible to achieve the outcome desired by the complainant.

In the letter conveying the outcome, the complainant should be informed of the process for referral to the Governing Body Complaints Committee if they wish to take their complaint further. Any such referral should be made within **15 school days of the date of the Chair of Governors' letter**.

What you can do if you are not satisfied with the Chair of Governors' decision

Stage 4 – Review by Governing Body Complaints Committee

Complaints only rarely reach this formal level. Where, **within 15 school days of the date of the Chair of Governors' letter at Stage 3**, the Clerk to the Governors receives notification, under these procedures, he or she will arrange for a complaints committee to meet between **12 and 20 school days from receipt of the letter**. The Headteacher will also be informed immediately a complaint has been received.

The complainant will be informed of the date and time of the hearing and at that time the Clerk to the Governors will inform the complainant and the Headteacher that any written documentation they wish the committee to consider will need to be submitted in time to be circulated to committee members 5 days prior to the hearing. The complainant will be advised at that time that they may be accompanied by a relative or friend.

Notification of the hearing will also include details of the way in which the hearing will be conducted. The hearing will be minuted and copies of all relevant correspondence and notes will be kept on file by the Clerk to the Governors.

The findings of the committee will be notified to the complainant and the Headteacher in writing within 5 school days of the hearing.

What you can do if you are still not satisfied with the Governing Body Complaints Committee's decision.

Further Recourse

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Governing Body's handling of their complaint, further recourse to other agencies is available to them outside the scope of the School's own procedures. However, these agencies would be unable to take any action until the School's own procedures had been completed.

The complainant can write to:

The Secretary of State for Education

Public Communications Unit
The Secretary of State for Children, Schools & Families
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1 3BT

complaints@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Complainants have a right of appeal to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills under sections 496 or 497 of the 1996 Education Act if they believe that the School has acted unreasonably.

The Secretary of State would not take action until the School procedures had been completed.

The Local Government Ombudsman

The Local Government Ombudsman
21 Queen Anne's Gate
London
SW1H 9BU

The Ombudsman will only investigate where there has been a fault in the way the process was handled by the School. He can investigate complaints about how something has been done. This could be giving the wrong information, not dealing with letters or taking too long to do something. He cannot question what has been done just because someone does not agree with the result. The Ombudsman cannot investigate how schools and Schools are run. The Ombudsman could not do anything until the School have finished looking into the complaint.