



Hopping Hill Primary School Complaints Procedures

Sometimes things happen which make children or parents unhappy. It is important that parents/carers feel able to raise concerns. In most cases, concerns and complaints can be resolved by talking to staff at the school. Sometimes parents may wish to raise a more formal complaint.

To ensure you receive an effective response to your complaint, it will be helpful if you:

- co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint;
- express the complaint in full as early as possible;
- respond promptly to request for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint;
- ask for assistance if needed;
- treat all those involved in the complaint, with respect.

Typically, there are three main stages involved in raising concerns or making a complaint.

Stage 1 - Initial approach

It is important that parents contact the school first with their concerns and talk to a teacher or a senior leader. Most problems can be sorted out in this way easily and informally.

Stage 2 - Raise a formal complaint

If you are still unhappy the next stage is to raise a formal complaint by writing to:

- the Head Teacher
- or Chair of the Governing Body if you have already spoken to the Head Teacher

The Head Teacher (or nominated member of staff), or the Chair of Governors will investigate your complaint. Governor contact details are available in the school office. After they have looked into the issue, you may be asked to meet with the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors or you may get a letter explaining the school's response. If the complaint is about the Head Teacher, then the Chair of Governors should be contacted.

Stage 3 - Appeal to Governors

If you are still unhappy after raising the complaint in Stage 2, you would need to inform the Chair of Governors in writing and request a hearing. You will be given the opportunity for your complaint to be heard by a panel of governors.

You will be asked to meet with the panel and explain your case. The panel will listen to you and the Head Teacher and will inform you in writing of their decision.

If the Chair of Governors receives a letter of complaint, he/she will inform the governing board that a complaint has been received and that it has been passed to the panel to deal with. No further information about the complaint will be shared with other governors.

The Appeal Hearing

- a) The appeal hearing is independent and impartial.
- b) The aim of the hearing will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant
- c) The Chair of the Panel will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible.
- d) The Chair of the Panel will be nominated by the Chair of Governors and is responsible for ensuring that both complainant and Head Teacher are given a fair hearing and that the panel arrives at its judgment without fear or favour.

Remit of the panel

The complaints panel can

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure problems of a similar nature do not recur.

It may:

- Consider and, if appropriate, criticise the way in which an operational decision was communicated but cannot overturn the decision itself
- Consider the thoroughness with which the Head Teacher investigated a complaint about a member of staff but cannot expect the Head Teacher to provide details about confidential discussions with that staff member.
- Consider the manner in which a complaint about any decision was addressed and ask for the decision to be reviewed but cannot expect the Head Teacher to have changed the decision
- Consider and, if appropriate, identify limitations in a policy or procedures but cannot make changes to the policy. It can, however, recommend that the policy be reviewed by the Governing Body.
- Consider whether it should recommend that the Governing Body offer appropriate redress

Timescales for dealing with your complaint

Ideally, complaints should be dealt with quickly, but if your complaint is complicated or requires detailed investigation, it may take longer to sort out. The school will let you know how a complaint is being addressed and when you can expect to hear from them.

Where you have been through the school's internal complaints procedures and are still unhappy with the outcome or decision from the governing body, you cannot take your complaint to the local authority. The local authority cannot investigate school matters on a parent's behalf nor can it review how the school has dealt with your complaint. If you are not satisfied with the way your complaint has been handled, you can write to:

Department for Education School Complaints Unit 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD

We would advise parents that, unless the school is shown to have behaved unreasonably or not to have followed their own procedures, there is likely to be little further action that can be taken, as governing bodies are empowered to deal with many issues without reference to either the Local Authority or the Secretary of State.

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Hopping Hill Primary School other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs • School re-organisation proposals 	<p>Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Children First Northamptonshire (NCC)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation 	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion of children from school* 	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions.</p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistleblowing 	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus.</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff grievances 	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff conduct 	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities 	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Curriculum - content 	<p>Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus</p>