



Edenham C of E Primary School

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE AND POLICY

INTRODUCTION

In this school, all members of staff are dedicated to giving all the children the best possible education and caring properly for their health, safety and welfare at all times. We are committed to working closely with parents and believe that the school and parents should work in partnership, each carrying out their particular responsibilities to help the pupils gain the most from their time at school.

If you feel that something is not going quite as you would like it to, we are doing something you are unhappy with, or not doing something you feel we should, PLEASE TELL US ABOUT IT.

In the first instance, please discuss your concern with your child's class teacher, or the particular teacher most closely concerned.

If, after doing this, you do not feel that your concern has been properly addressed, or if your concern is about a particular teacher, please discuss the matter with the Head Teacher.

If, after doing this you remain unsatisfied, you can address a formal complaint to the Governors of the school.

1. THE FIRST STEP

As a first step, if you are unhappy with anything about the school, please talk to the teacher most involved.

Usually, teachers are available for a short while after classes have finished, but to make sure that the teacher has time to listen properly to what you have to say, it may be worth telephoning the school to make an appointment.

We would hope that most concerns can be resolved in this way.

The teacher will not only try to address your concern but will report the matter to the Head so that he/she is aware of your concern and what is being done about it.

2. THE NEXT STEP

Very occasionally, it may be that your concern cannot be resolved by the teacher, or you may feel that the situation has not altered. If this is the case, you should raise the issue with the Head yourself.

It would be helpful to telephone the school and make an appointment so that the Head can set aside the time to sit down and talk through the situation carefully with you. Invariably, matters can be sorted out satisfactorily this way.

The Head Teacher, or senior member of staff in any absence of the Head, will listen to your complaint, make a note of it in school records (see Appendix 1) and will investigate the incident further if they have not done so already.

Depending on the outcome of this meeting with the Head Teacher, it may be agreed that you will then receive feedback following the investigation from the Head Teacher either in writing, or at a further meeting. Occasionally, the Head teacher may not be able to feedback further about specific actions taken or about ongoing processes involving other children.

3. TAKING MATTERS FURTHER

We would expect the vast majority, if not all, complaints to have been resolved through the stages described so far in this leaflet. In exceptional circumstances, however, this may not be the case and you may wish to pursue the matter further and more formally.

Matters relating to the internal management and organization of the school, discipline with the school and other such matter would normally be raised with the governing body. This happens so rarely, that the Governors have decided on a specific procedure for handling such issues, but the following general principles will apply:-

3.1 For complaints against the Chair of Governors or any individual governor, you should also write to the Clerk to Governors, who will initiate the correct process. The Chair of Governors would normally consider complaints against an individual governor and the Vice Chair would normally consider complaints against the Chair of Governors.

3.2 You should set out your concern, in writing, and address it to the Clerk to the Governors. The Clerk's name and address are printed at the bottom of this leaflet. Please mark the envelope 'PRIVATE and CONFIDENTIAL'. We recommend that you use the proforma in Appendix 2.

If for some reason, you do not feel that you can do that, please telephone the Clerk (the number is printed below), explain that you want to make a complaint but are unable to set it out in writing. The Clerk will produce a typewritten statement of your complaint, at your instruction, for you to sign.

3.3 The Clerk to Governors will write to acknowledge receipt of your complaint within *five school working days*. The acknowledgement letter will explain the process which is to be followed and the expected timescale for that process. Where your complaint is considered under written representations, this process may take up to twenty-eight school working days to allow for the collection of representations and evidence.

3.4 The Governors' Complaints Committee (or the relevant governor in the case of a complaint against an individual governor) will consider your complaint and write to advise you of the outcome within the timescale provided by the Clerk to Governors. If, at any stage of the process, we believe we are unable to meet the timescales which have been provided to you, we will contact you to inform you of the reasons for any delay and to provide you with a new timescale for the conclusion of that part of the process.

4. External Appeal:

The decision of the Governors' Complaints Committee is normally final; however, if you are dissatisfied with their response, you may be able to take your complaint to an external body.

For certain complaints about schools maintained by the Local Authority, complainants can write to the Secretary of State for Education. You must do this in writing, either by post to:

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

Or, by using the online School Complaints form. This can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>

You should be aware that the School Complaints Unit (SCU) will usually only consider a complaint once the school's internal processes have been exhausted. The SCU will examine whether the complaints policy and any other relevant policies were followed in accordance with the provisions set out. The SCU will also examine whether the school's policies adhere to education legislation. The SCU will not reinvestigate the substance of the complaint. Please note that, unless your complaint is about the governors' response or lack of response, your complaint will generally have to be considered first by the governing body of the school

This policy was updated in January 2016. It will be reviewed every four years or, either in the light of statutory changes to process or in response to a specific incident. Next review date; January 2018.

Clerk to the Governors:
Mrs. G.M.Stanford
Edenham CE Primary School
School Lane
Edenham
Bourne
Lincs
PE10 0LP

governors@edenham.lincs.sch.uk

Tel: 01778 591224

Policy Ratified: February 2016

Signed Chair of Governors; Mrs C North

Signed Head teacher; Mrs K Radford-Rea

Appendix 1

Record of Meeting to Discuss Informal Complaint/ Concern Raised

To be used by HT/ SLT as record of meeting. Copied to parents/ carers/ other

Parent's/ carer's/ other Name;	
Pupil's Name (if relevant);	
Relationship to Child (if relevant);	
Address;	Contact Telephone Number;
	Email Address;
Please give details of concern raised (including date of meeting/ telephone discussion/ letter etc);	
Summary of Response from HT/ SLT	
Any further actions agreed by HT/ SLT + Parents/ carers/ other?	

Any other docs attached? If so, please give details.

HT/ SLT Signature:

Date sent to Parents/ Carers:

Parent's Response (to be completed and returned to school);

Are you satisfied that your concern was treated seriously? YES / NO / Not Sure

Was any information shared useful or reassuring? YES / NO / Not Sure

Are you satisfied that the actions agreed in discussion were appropriate? YES / NO / Not Sure

Any further comments?

Do you require a copy of this document for your own records? YES / NO

Signed;

Date;

Complaint Form

Your Name;	
Your Child's Name (if relevant);	
Your Relationship to Child (if relevant);	
Address;	Contact Telephone Number;
	Email Address;
Please give details of your complaint;	
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak to and what was the response)?	
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?	

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official Use – Clerk to GB/ Chair/ Vice Chair/ HT

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

APPENDIX 3

COMPLAINTS ABOUT MAINTAINED SCHOOLS – MODEL LETTERS provided by LCC

Letter 1- Written Representations – Maintained Schools

(Sample letter of acknowledgement from Clerk to Governors to Complainant)

Dear

Reference: Your complaint against (Name of school)

I write to acknowledge your letter dated (insert date) and to confirm that your letter is being considered under our school complaints procedure.

The Governors' Complaints Committee will now be convened to consider your complaint and, in line with the Local Authority's guidance, their adjudication will proceed by way of written representations.

Your letter has been forwarded to the Headteacher, who will have 7 working days in which to provide a response.

The Headteacher's response will then be sent to you for your further comments, any response to be provided within 7 working days.

Finally, your further comments/response will go to the Headteacher who has 7 working days in which to respond.

A copy of the Headteacher's final response will be sent to you for information only. No further submissions or responses will be considered except in exceptional circumstances. All the responses will then be put before the Complaints Committee for consideration.

For the avoidance of doubt, all communication should be through me, as the Clerk to Governors; neither party should send responses to the other directly.

I will forward the Headteacher's first response to you in due course.

Yours sincerely

Clerk to the GB

Letter 2 - Written Representations – Maintained Schools

(Sample covering letter from Clerk to Governors to Complainant when forwarding Headteacher's 1st response)

Dear

Reference: Your complaint against (Name of school)

I write further to my letter dated (insert date).

As detailed in my previous letter, please find enclosed a copy of the Headteacher's response for your information and further comment.

Should you wish to submit any comments and/or provide further supporting evidence to support your complaint, you have 7 working days from receipt of this letter to provide these. Please address your envelope to the Clerk to Governors, care of the school address.

If a submission is received from you within 7 working days, then the Headteacher will have 7 working days in which to provide a further response. If no response is received from you, then the Committee will consider your complaint based on the information submitted.

I look forward to receiving your additional comments by (enter date of 7th working day from their receipt of your letter).

Yours sincerely

Clerk to the GB

Letter 3 - Written Representations – Maintained Schools

(Sample covering letter from Clerk to Governors to Complainant when forwarding Headteacher's 2nd/final response)

Dear

Reference: Your complaint against (Name of school)

I write to acknowledge receipt of your additional comments / supporting evidence, received on (insert date).

As detailed in my previous correspondence, I now enclose a copy of the Headteacher's final response to your additional comments. This is provided for information purposes only and no further contributions will be accepted except in the most exceptional of circumstances.

All the papers concerning your complaint will now be put before the Committee for consideration. It is anticipated the meeting will take place on /during the week commencing (insert date).

The Committee will write to inform you of the outcome of your complaint within five working days of this meeting having taken place.

Yours sincerely

Clerk to the GB

Letter 4 – Invitation to a Hearing – Maintained Schools

(Sample letter from the Clerk to Governors inviting the Complainant to a hearing)

Dear

Reference: Your complaint against (Name of school)

I write to acknowledge your letter dated (insert date) and to confirm that your letter is being considered under our school complaints procedure.

The Governors' Complaints Committee has been convened to consider your complaint and the Committee has decided that their adjudication will proceed by way of an oral hearing.

For this purpose, you are invited to attend the meeting of the Complaints' Committee at (time) on (date) at (place).

At this meeting you will be given the opportunity to present your case to the Complaints Committee. The Headteacher will also attend to present the school's case. You will present your complaint first and the Headteacher and the Committee may then ask you questions. The Headteacher will then present the school's case and both you and the Committee may then ask the Headteacher questions. You will then both be given an opportunity to present a brief summary of your respective positions and after this you will both leave the hearing. The Committee will write to you within five school working days to inform you of their decision.

You may bring a representative with you to the meeting if you wish. If you do intend to bring a representative, please notify me so that I can make necessary arrangements.

If you have any written evidence which you intend to use to support your complaint, please forward copies to me by (date) so that these can be shared with the Complaints Committee and the Headteacher in advance of the meeting. Meanwhile, I am enclosing the Headteacher's supporting documents for your information. Please note that if materials are presented for the first time at the hearing itself, the meeting may have to be adjourned to allow the other party time to consider it.

For the avoidance of doubt, all communication should be through me, as the Clerk to Governors; neither party should send responses to the other directly.

Please confirm your attendance by (date).

Yours sincerely

(Clerk to Governors is the signatory)

Letter 5 – Written Representations Decision Letter – Maintained Schools

(Sample decision letter from Chair of the Governors' Complaints Committee to Complainant - to be used as a model only, **not** verbatim)

Dear

Reference: Your Complaint against (Name of School)

I write further to your letter dated xx/xx/xx, which outlined in detail your complaint regarding the (Name of school).

I confirm that the Governors take any complaint extremely seriously and a complaints committee comprised of three governors was convened in order to fully consider this matter.

The Committee also wish to take this opportunity to thank both yourself and the school for providing detailed paperwork. The Committee thoroughly considered all the documentation submitted and spent some considerable time discussing your complaints before reaching a decision.

To assist with the adjudication and for the purpose of clarity for all concerned, the Committee thought it best to assess each complaint against headings broadly stipulated in your original written complaint. Where it is meaningful and helpful to do so, the complaints have been grouped under a common heading.

1. (Use appropriate heading to summarise the relevant element of the complaint)

Briefly outline this element of the complaint

Summarise your findings in relation to this element of the complaint

Clearly state whether this element is upheld, dismissed or upheld in part.

Identify any recommendations for the Governing Body

Please see the following sample:

1. Failure to address bullying

The Committee considered your complaint that the school had failed to take any action when you reported that XXX was being bullied by an older child within the school.

The Committee carefully reviewed all of the documentation relating to this issue and found that the school had taken numerous actions, both to deal with the behaviour of the perpetrator and to safeguard your child. We note that the Headteacher met with you and provided detailed information as to the safeguarding measures, but refused to discuss the sanctions applied to the perpetrator. The Committee recognise that this has caused you considerable frustration. Whilst the Committee would concur with the Headteacher's view that it is not appropriate to share confidential details relating to a child for whom you have no parental responsibility, we feel that a timely assurance that sanctions had been applied in line with our behaviour policy may have provided you with the necessary confidence that matters were being dealt with appropriately.

The Committee cannot uphold your complaint that the school failed to address the bullying of your child. However, we do recommend a review of the school's practice in keeping parents informed of actions taken in response to reports of bullying.

(All final decision letters must include details of a complainant's right to refer a complaint to the Department for Education)

Right of Appeal

The Committee has reached its decision after a careful and thorough consideration of all the documents associated with your complaint and this decision letter now concludes the school's internal complaints procedure. However, should you remain dissatisfied, you may refer your complaint to the School Complaints Team within the Department for Education. Referrals must be made in writing, either by post to:

School
Department
2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate
Manchester, M1 2WD

Complaints
for

Unit
Education

Or, by using the online School Complaints form. This can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>

You should be aware that the School Complaints Unit (SCU) will examine whether the complaints policy and any other relevant policies were followed in accordance with the provisions set out. The SCU will also examine whether the school's policies adhere to education legislation. The SCU will not usually re-investigate the substance of the complaint.

(Your letter should end on a positive note.)

It remains to thank you for bringing your concerns to our attention. It is important to the effective running of any school to have a process whereby parents can raise concerns in a constructive manner. Indeed, it is through such processes that potential improvements are often identified and delivered, contributing significantly to school improvements and safety for the benefit of all.

Yours sincerely

(Signatory is usually the Chair of the Complaints Committee)