

Leaffield C of E Primary School



Parent Guide to Making a Complaint

(Annex to Complaints Policy and Procedure)

March 2021

Making a Complaint

Leafield C of E School recognises with regret that at times things can go wrong. This guidance will help you understand how to resolve concerns you may have about your child's education.

The school has procedures for dealing with concerns or complaints and we value any feedback about our services, including compliments and suggestions. Full details of our complaints policy can be found on the school website. If you are concerned about any aspect of your child's education, you should in the first instance discuss the matter with your child's class teacher. If, following this, your concerns remain unaddressed please contact the Headteacher at the school, via the school office.

As a member of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust the school's Local Governing Body (LGB) has delegated responsibility for the school and for ensuring the well-being of pupils and that all pupils receive an appropriate and high standard of education.

The Headteacher is responsible for making decisions on a daily basis about the school's internal management and organisation. So, you should contact the school if you are concerned about an issue such as:

- your child's academic progress;
- special education needs provision;
- your child's welfare;
- bullying;
- something that has happened in school.

Below are a range of questions that have been answered to guide you through this process.

How do I complain to the school?

First, we hope you will speak to the relevant member of staff as soon as you have a concern. This is likely to be the class teacher. This informal approach is nearly always the quickest and most effective way of resolving your concerns.

If you feel that your concern has not been resolved, then it is important to speak to or write to the Headteacher who will look into your concern.

If you are unhappy with the Headteacher's response you should write with your complaint to the Chair of Governors/Clerk to the Local Governing Body at the school address. Mark your envelope 'Private and Confidential FAO Chair of Governors'.

How will my complaint be handled?

Within 5 working days the Chair of Governors will clarify the nature of your complaint by asking you to complete a complaint form and will offer help in completing the form, if appropriate.

Within 5 working days of receiving the form the Chair will decide whether mediation should be offered to help you and the Headteacher explore possible resolution.

If mediation is agreed, the Chair of Governors will endeavor to set up the meeting within 10 working days. If that timescale is not possible you will be told the reason.

If mediation is not deemed appropriate or if it is not successful, the Chair of Governors will pass the form to the Clerk within 5 school days. The Clerk will set up a panel of governors to meet within 20 school days to consider your complaint. The Clerk will provide details of the hearing and will request any further information you may wish to provide.

The complaints panel will consist of at least 3 members, usually governors but also including one member independent of the management and running of the school, who will have no prior knowledge of the events being complained of. The panel will be supported by a Clerk who will take notes during the hearing and will stay with the panel while they make their decision. The panel will hear the complaint impartially and make their decision without fear or favour.

Five working days before the hearing the Clerk will send to you, the complainant, the Headteacher and the three panel members, copies of all papers submitted by both sides so that there is sufficient time to read the evidence before the hearing.

The process at the hearing will depend on the Chair but is likely to follow the format below:

- The chair will introduce the panel members and the Clerk and outline the process to the complainant and Headteacher.
- The complainant is invited to explain their complaint
- The headteacher may question the complainant
- The panel will question the complainant
- The headteacher is invited to explain the school's actions
- The complainant may question the headteacher
- The panel will question the headteacher
- The complainant is invited to sum up their complaint
- The headteacher is invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint

Both parties will then leave the meeting, the clerk will remain with the governors whilst a decision is made. You will receive a formal outcome from the panel within five school days.

Can I take my complaint further?

For most complaints, you cannot take your complaint to the ODST. ODST will not investigate school matters on a parent's behalf. However, ODST may review the LGB panel's decision on the complaint having regard to the tests of illegality, irrationality or procedural impropriety, i.e. ODST

would review whether the LGB complaints panel has acted fairly and reasonably. It would not consider the detailed submissions put as evidence to the complaint panel by both parties. Any such panel would be comprised of Trustees, committee members or officers of the ODST. If, following these steps, you still feel that the school has acted unreasonably or not followed the correct procedures, you can contact the Education and Skills Funding Agency on-line at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complain-about-an-academy/complain-about-an-academy> or in writing.

Who will handle the Complaint Form?

The form can be used by any person making a complaint about the operation of the school which is not covered by an alternative specific procedure. Complaints will most often come from parents or carers but may also come from pupils/students or members of the public, e.g. school neighbours.

Anyone completing a complaint form should be aware that help in completing it is available from the school. A member of school staff who is familiar with the process will be nominated to give help.

If it is appropriate for a member of staff to investigate this complaint, it should be returned to the Headteacher.

If it is appropriate that it should be dealt with by a Governor, it should be returned to the Clerk to the Governors at the school.

What questions will appear on the school's Complaint Form?

1. Please give details of your complaint:
2. What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? (Who did you speak to and what was the response?)
3. Your relationship to the school, e.g. parent, carer, neighbour, member of public.
4. What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?
5. Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

You will be able to sign and date the form.

The form should be given/posted to the School Office, FAO the School Business Manager who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

You will be asked to provide:

Your name:

Address:

Postcode:

Daytime telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

If applicable, name of child(ren) at school:

The school will note the following on your complaint form on receipt:

Date of acknowledgement sent:

By Whom:

Complaint referred to:

Leaffield C of E Primary School

Complaint Form*

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By Whom:
Complaint referred to:

This form can be used by any person making a complaint about the operation of the school which is not covered by an alternative specific procedure. Complaints will most often come from parents or carers but may also come from pupils/students or members of the public, e.g. school neighbours.

Anyone receiving this form should be advised verbally that help in completing it is available from the school. A member of school staff who is familiar with the process should be nominated to give help.

If it is appropriate for a member of staff to look into this complaint, it should be returned to the Headteacher.

If it is appropriate that it should be dealt with by a Governor, it should be returned to the Clerk to the Governors at the school.

Please complete and return to the School Business Manager who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken:

Your name:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Daytime telephone number:	
Evening telephone number:	
If applicable, name of child(ren) at school:	

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.

Signed:

Date:

*This form is the same form as Annex 1 of ODST Complaints Policy in Leaffield C of E format.
 Updated 11.03.21 HT