

Northhill C of E VA Lower School

A School Policy for Resolving Complaints

PREFACE

From time to time, as parents, you may have concerns associated with your children at school. Most of these will resolve themselves, but occasionally you may wish to contact the school for help and advice.

The focus of our complaints procedure is to arrive at a solution which is agreeable to all parties.

The complaints process is divided into the following 3 stages:

- A Informal concern
- B Formal complaint
- C Formal hearing

AN INFORMAL CONCERN

On many occasions these can be resolved immediately by speaking to your child's class teacher. It may be necessary to make an appointment to speak with them at a time convenient to both of you.

Please let the teacher know the nature of your concern when making an appointment so they investigate further on your behalf.

The purpose of the meeting should be to establish a solution or to agree a plan of action to resolve the concern.

If, despite the discussions with the class teacher you still have unresolved concerns, you should make an appointment with the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will make further investigations on your behalf and suggest a workable solution.

If, after a period of time, you feel the issue is still unresolved, you may wish to consider making a formal complaint.

FORMAL COMPLAINT

A copy of the complaints form is available from the school office.

When you have completed the form it should be sent to the Headteacher who will contact you within two school days to acknowledge receipt and explain the process.

The Headteacher may appoint a senior member of staff to investigate your complaint fully and written records will be kept of all meetings, telephone conversations etc.

Once the appointed person is satisfied that the relevant facts have been established they may call a meeting with yourself and the Headteacher, if this is thought appropriate.

Following this meeting you will be sent a written response including a full explanation of the decision and reasons for it.

In the unlikely event that this process does not alleviate your initial concerns you may wish to consider writing to the Chair of the Governing Body, requesting a formal hearing. This must be done within ten days of the formal complaint procedure.

FORMAL HEARING

On receiving a written complaint the Chair of the Governing Body will contact you within five school days to acknowledge receipt. The Governing Body will explain the hearing procedure and agree a suitable date and time for this to take place. A written copy of the hearing procedure is in Appendix 3.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE HEADTEACHER

If the complaint is against the Headteacher this should be expressed, in writing, to the Chair of the Governing Body who will respond within five school days to acknowledge receipt.

The Chair will conduct a preliminary enquiry, which may result in a formal hearing. They will explain the hearing procedure and agree a suitable date and time for this to take place.

- APPENDIX 1: Governors' guide to dealing with complaints**
- APPENDIX 2: School complaints form**
- APPENDIX 3: The formal hearing procedure**

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body

Tudor Fox
Chair of Governors

Northhill C of E VA Lower School

**PROCEDURES FOR GOVERNORS
WHEN HANDLING COMPLAINTS**

1. PREFACE

- 1.1 Occasionally parents may make contact with a School Governor to resolve a concern.
- 1.2 Individual complaints should not be raised as issues at Governors' meetings unless the meeting is part of the school's complaints procedure.
- 1.3 In the case of a complaint leading to possible disciplinary or legal action against the Headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body must be contacted directly. Under such circumstances the Chair has a responsibility to discuss this immediately with the Headteacher.
- 1.4 Governors may be approached in the following ways:
 - Verbal approach
 - Written approach

And are asked to respond:

2. VERBAL APPROACH

- 2.1 Governors approached by a complainant should make every effort to remain neutral in their response and encourage the complainant to speak to either the class teacher or the Headteacher to resolve their concerns.

3. WRITTEN APPROACH

- 3.1 Governors receiving written complaints should advise the Headteacher, without delay. Please advise the parent that you have done this.

When dealing with initial complaints Governors should do all they can to remain neutral and encourage parents to discuss their concerns with the class teacher or Headteacher – as appropriate.

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Complaints Form

When completed please hand this in at the school office in a sealed envelope marked "confidential" for the attention of the Headteacher

Name, address and telephone number of person/s wishing to make an official complaint:

Name/s of children at Northhill	Date of Birth	Class	Teacher

Details of your complaint:

If you need more space please continue on a separate piece of paper and attach it to this form.

What has been done to resolve your complaint: (prior to completing this form)

What do you feel could be done to resolve this situation?

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date:

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THE FORMAL HEARING

PREFACE

The aim of a formal hearing is to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. The complaints committee consists of a Chair plus two other school Governors. The Chair should ensure that the proceedings are as informal as possible, but for the sake of clarity, minutes will be taken and a procedure followed.

Both parties will have prior access to papers relating to the complaint and may be accompanied by a friend.

CONDUCT OF THE HEARING

- The Chair will welcome the complainant and introduce all individuals and explain the procedure.
- The complainant will be invited to explain the complaint.
- The complainant may be questioned by the complaints committee on the subject of the complaint.
- The subject will be asked to make a statement in response to the complaint.
- The subject may be questioned by the complaints committee and the complainant.
- Either party may call witnesses subject to the approval of the Chair.
- The subject and the complainant will be asked to make a final statement.

The Chair will explain that the evidence will be considered and a written notification of the decision will be made within five school days. This decision will be considered as final.

The Headteacher, complainant and any witnesses will be asked to withdraw.

At this stage the committee will consider the evidence with reference to the following:

- To reach a decision on the complaint and the reasons for this
- To decide upon appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- To suggest, where appropriate, recommended changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that complaints of a similar nature are not made in the future

*In exceptional circumstances the Chairperson can reserve the right to hear both the complaint and the response to the complaint separately if, in the judgement of the Chairperson this is likely to prove the most effective way of dealing with the matter.
