

HORNINGSHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Complaints Procedure

'Together we learn'



OUR MISSION STATEMENT STATES THAT WE

aim to provide a
Caring Community
where children can grow up confidently and happily
whilst providing opportunities to develop their potential
to the full.

Introduction

All Wiltshire schools have been self-governing for many years. This means that the Head Teacher and Governing Body are responsible for the day-to-day running of the school. This includes looking into, and responding to, complaints about the school and their methods.

Most concerns and complaints can be dealt with by talking to the child's class teacher. Talking to them early on can often prevent misunderstandings and concerns escalating or leading to complaints. We would strive in all cases to resolve any concerns informally and would urge parents to make an appointment to discuss any issues they may have. If however the complainant remain dissatisfied and feel that their concern is not resolved or wish to take the matter further then procedures will need to be followed using this complaints procedure.

This document will explain how the complaints procedure works and how to make a complaint.

Nominated Complaints Coordinator: Clerk to the Governors

Stage One: Complaint Heard by Staff Member

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. All staff is aware of the procedures for dealing with a complaint and will endeavour to ensure that it is dealt with fairly and if possible informally.

In most cases matters should be discussed with the Class Teacher first. If for some reason this would prove difficult then another member of staff could be approached.

Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels too compromised to deal with a complaint, the Complaints Coordinator may consider referring you to another staff member to ensure that the complaint is dealt with objectively and impartially.

If the complaint concerns the Headteacher, then the Complaints Coordinator should be contacted and they will refer the complainant to the Chair of Governors.

Whilst the Governors are always available to hear any concerns, they will, if approached at this early stage, advise the complainant of the procedure and refer them to the Class Teacher or if necessary the Complaints Coordinator. This is in case they are needed to sit on a panel at a later stage of the procedure if the matter is not able to be resolved.

At this stage a member of staff hopefully will have resolved the issue and will notify the Complaints Coordinator of the outcome.

Stage Two: Complaint Heard by Headteacher

If the complainant is still dissatisfied then the complaint should be made to the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing and investigate the matter. The complainant should notify the Headteacher if they are dissatisfied with the way the complaint was handled at stage one as well as pursuing their initial complaint. The Headteacher may delegate the task of collating the information to another staff member but not the decision on the action to be taken.

The Headteacher will meet and/or put in writing the outcome of the investigation and inform the Complaints Coordinator accordingly.

Stage Three: Complaint Heard by the Complaints Panel

If the matter has still not been resolved, the complainant will need to write to the Chair of Governors giving details of the complaint. The Chair will then convene a Complaints Panel who will investigate the complaint and hold an appeal hearing, to which the complainant will be invited to attend.

Please note that individual complaints would not be heard by the whole Governing Body at any stage, as this could compromise the impartiality of any panel set up for a disciplinary hearing against a member of staff following a serious complaint.

The Complaints Panel

The Complaints Panel would be made up of a number of nominated members of the Governing Body with delegated powers. They will convene at this stage to hear complaints or individual appeals and make recommendations on any action as a result of the complaint.

To ensure that it is both independent and impartial no governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it or if they have a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings.

The Chair of the Complaints Panel will check that the correct procedure has been followed so far and then notify the clerk to arrange a panel meeting if a hearing is appropriate.

Appeal Hearing

The Governors' appeal hearing is the last school-based stage of the complaints process, and is not convened to merely rubber-stamp previous decisions.

The Purpose of the Hearing

The aim of the hearing, which needs to be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. However, it has to be recognised the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that his or her complaint has been taken seriously.

Complaints Panel will consider:

- dismissing the complaint in whole or in part;
- upholding the complaint in whole or in part;
- appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- recommending changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

The clerk will:

- set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible;
- collate any written material and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing;
- meet and welcome the parties as they arrive at the hearing;
- record the proceedings;
- notify all parties of the panel's decision

Format of the Hearing:

The hearing is conducted in an informal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy. Each party has the opportunity of putting their case forward without interruption and ask questions. Any written material will be seen by all parties and the key facts will be noted and all issues addressed.

- After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses.
- The headteacher may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The headteacher is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses.
- The complainant may question both the headteacher and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The panel may ask questions at any point.
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
- The headteacher is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.

- The chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within a set time scale.

Notification of the Panel's Decision: The chair of the panel will ensure that the complainant is notified of the panel's decision, in writing, with the panel's response within five working days of the hearing. The letter will explain if there are any further rights of appeal and, if so, to whom they need to be addressed. The Complaints Coordinator will be notified of the outcome.

Taking the matter further:

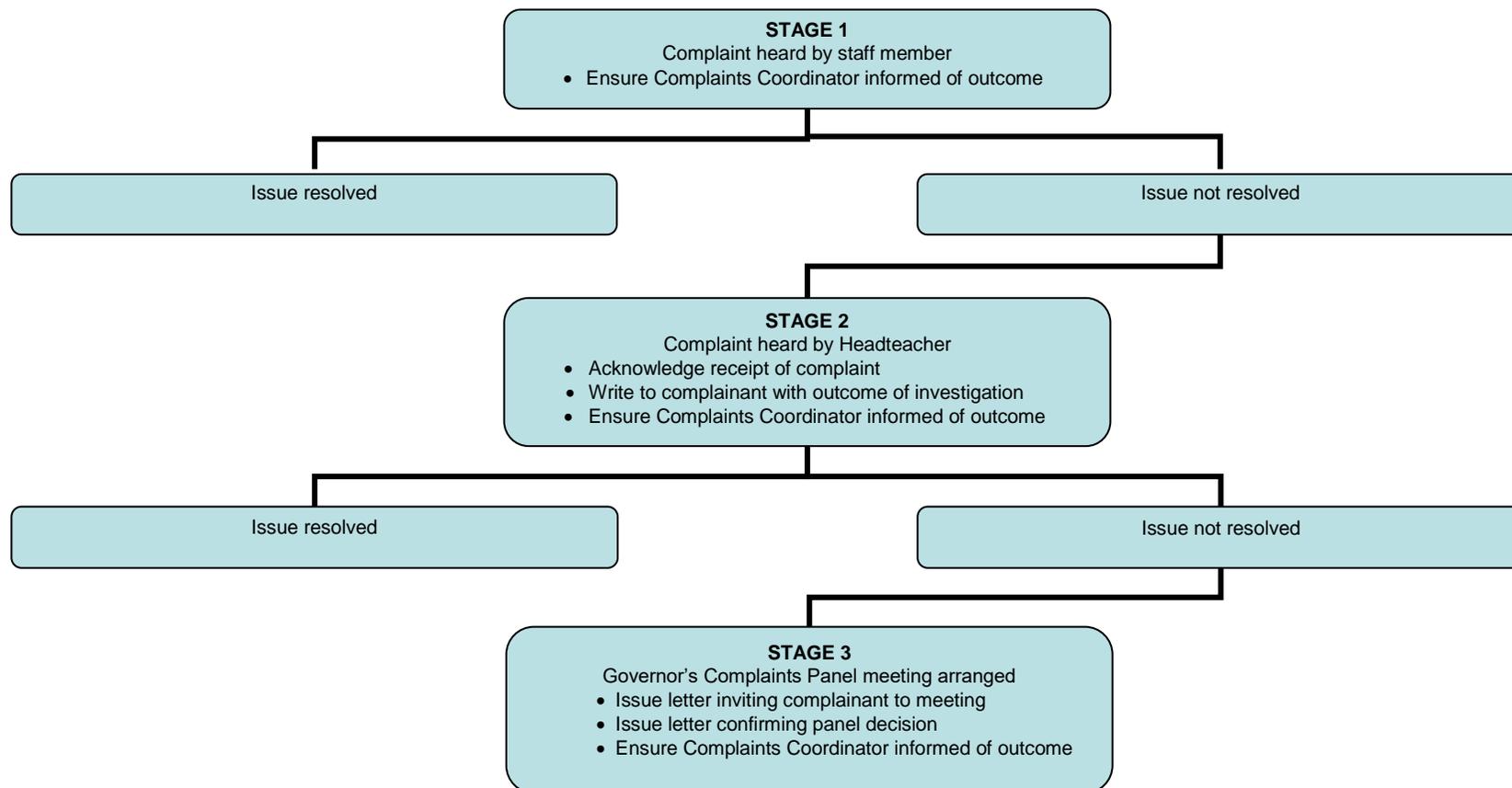
If the school's complaints procedure has been exhausted, the complainant can bring this to the attention of the Local Authority. They will investigate to ensure that the school has followed its own guidelines. However, please note that the Local Authority will only look at the process. It cannot overturn the school's decision and will not re-investigate the complaint.

Finally, if the complainant is still unhappy, they have the right to refer their complaint to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, please see the Department for Education and Skills website for more information. They will check to make sure that the school's Governing Body has acted lawfully but are unlikely to investigate the complaint.

Horningsham Primary School Complaints Procedure

Flowchart

Summary of Dealing with Complaints



Horningsham Primary School Complaints Form

Please complete this form if you wish to register a complaint over an issue not resolved and return it to the Clerk to the Governors (Complaints Coordinator) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

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

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: