

Higham Ferrers Nursery and Infant School



A Guide for Parents and Carers

Raising Concerns and Resolving Problems at Your Child's school.

School Staff and Governors at Higham Ferrers Nursery and Infant School are committed to maintaining a positive partnership with parents. Sometimes things happen which make children or parents unhappy. In most cases, concerns and complaints can be resolved by talking to staff at the school. However, sometimes parents may wish to raise a more formal complaint and this guide outlines how to do this.

Q: How do I make a complaint?

A: You can make a complaint about our school in a number of ways:

- speak to a member of staff
- arrange a meeting with the Headteacher
- send a letter, e-mail or a fax to the school
- fill in the form at the end of this document and hand it in to a member of our school's office staff.

Q: What can I make a complaint about?

A: You can make a complaint about anything the school is responsible for.

Q: What will happen when I make a complaint?

A: The Complaints Procedure:

Our complaints procedure has an informal stage and 3 formal stages. The procedure also gives you the opportunity to ask the Local Authority to look at how we have investigated your complaint.

Informal Stage

In the past we have found that most complaints can be dealt with through an informal discussion with the right member of staff in school. In light of this we would always advise you to talk your complaint over with someone at school before making the complaint formal. This would normally be your child's Class Teacher and you should do this as soon as you have a concern or complaint. However if this does not resolve your complaint, you can then take it to Stage 1 of the formal procedure.

Formal Stage

Stage 1 - Initial Approach

Stage 1 of the Complaints Procedure is to make your complaint to a Teacher or the Headteacher of the school. You can do this in writing or by making an appointment to see the Teacher or Headteacher in person (please note that the Headteacher is very busy and is unlikely that he/she will be able to see you without an appointment). The Headteacher will investigate your complaint by talking to the relevant members of staff within the school or where necessary by talking to pupils. Once the investigation is complete the Headteacher will contact you with an outcome. The outcome will usually be given to you in writing; however it may also be given by telephone or in person.

If your complaint is about the Headteacher you should go straight to Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure.

Stage 2

If you are not happy with the outcome of the investigation at Stage 1 you can take your complaint to Stage 2 of the procedure. At Stage 2 you would need to put your complaint in writing to the Headteacher, or if you have already spoken to the Headteacher, to the Chair of Governors (the Chair of Governors can be contacted by writing to school and addressing your letter 'For the attention of the Chair of Governors'). At this stage you should give full details of your complaint and where possible details of the outcome of the investigation at Stage 1.

As in Stage 1 the Headteacher (or nominated member of staff) or the Chair of Governors will investigate your complaint by talking to the relevant people in school. They will then contact you with an outcome.

Stage 3 – Appeal to Governors

If after Stage 2 you are still not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint you can move to Stage 3 of the procedure. At Stage 3 your complaint would be heard by a panel or committee of school governors. These Governors would have no previous knowledge of your complaint.

To make sure that complaints are heard fairly at Stage 3 we would ask you not to discuss your complaint with school Governors before the complaints procedure has been followed.

At Stage 3 you would be invited to attend a meeting with the panel of Governors. This would be your opportunity to give details of your complaint and say why you think the outcome offered by the Headteacher and/or Chair of Governors is not satisfactory.

Please note that the panel will only hear details of your original complaint. It is therefore important that you only talk about things mentioned at Stage 1 and do not talk about things that might have happened since then. If you do mention something different the panel may ask the Headteacher or Chair of Governors to consider your complaint again taking into consideration the new information.

The Governors will hear your complaint and then talk about what they think should happen next. If the Governors agree that the outcome given by the Headteacher and/or chair of Governors is satisfactory you cannot take your complaint any further in school. However, if you feel that the school has acted illegally you can take your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education. If the Governors do not agree with the outcome of the complaint, they will talk to the Headteacher and/or Chair of Governors about what to do next.

It is important to note that some decisions that are made in school are the responsibility of the Headteacher. This means that even if the Chair of Governors or the panel does not agree with the Headteacher's decision, they cannot do anything to change it.

This is the final stage of the formal Complaints Procedure. However, you can contact the Local authority if you feel that school have not followed the correct procedure when dealing with your complaint. The Local authority can look at how we have investigated your complaint and tell us whether this was done right or not. However the Local authority cannot make us re-investigate a complaint and cannot investigate the complaint itself.

Q: How long will it take for my complaint to be investigated?

A: We will try and investigate your complaint and give you an outcome within 28 days of you contacting us. However, depending on the nature of your complaint it may take longer than this. We will always deal with complaints as quickly as we can.

Other types of complaints

The following types of complaints about education are dealt with in different ways. There are special arrangements under the Education Acts if you want to appeal or complain about:

- admission to schools,
- exclusion from schools,
- school re-organisation proposals,
- religious education and collective worship,
- national curriculum issues.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Advisory Centre For Education	0808 800 5793
Children's Legal Centre	01206 873820
Department for Education and Skills	020 7925 5000
Local support for Racial Equality/Incidents Senior Education Officer	01604 237464/587442
NSPCC Child Protection (including bullying)	0808 800 5000
Parent Partnership Service (PIP)	01604 671888
Special Needs Involving Parents (SNIP)	01604 636111

Complaints about County Council Services are dealt with under the County Council’s Corporate Complaints Procedure. You should first of all contact the relevant line manager.

Complaints Form

Please fill in this form if you wish to make a complaint about our school.
When you have completed it please send it or hand it in to school for the attention of the Headteacher.

Your name:

Mr/Mrs/Miss:

Your child's name:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone No.

Have you already discussed this with a member of staff? Yes No

If so when and who was it?

PTO

Please use the space below to tell us about your complaint. (Please use additional sheets if necessary).

Signed:

Date: