

Upshire Primary Foundation School



Complaints Procedure and Policy 2005

Footsteps to
the Future

Introduction

We believe that our school provides a good education for all our children, and that the headteacher and other staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are complaints by parents. The following policy sets out the procedure that the school follows in such cases.

If any parent is unhappy with the education that their child is receiving, or has any concern relating to the school, we encourage that person to talk to the child's class teacher immediately.

We deal with all complaints in accordance with procedures set out by the LEA. If the school cannot resolve any complaint itself, those concerned can ask the LEA to intervene.

All parents have the right, as a last resort, to appeal to the Secretary of State for Education, if they still feel that their complaint has not been properly addressed.

Compliments

These are always welcome and very encouraging to teachers and staff. The school encourages feedback or opinions from pupils and parents. In practice this dialogue is continuous, sometimes directly and also indirectly, for example, through the Parents Association. It may not always be possible to act immediately but pupils and the school always benefit so please don't hold back.

1. We value good home/school relations and will, therefore, do everything we can to establish and maintain them. This includes seeking to resolve any concerns or complaints promptly, and to the satisfaction of all concerned.
2. We welcome feedback on what parents feel we do well, or not so well, as a school. We will consider carefully all feedback, whether positive or negative, and will review our policies and practices accordingly.
3. We will treat all concerns and complaints seriously and courteously and will advise parents and others of the school's procedures for dealing

with their concerns. In return, we expect parents and other complainants to behave respectfully towards all members of the school community. In particular, any disagreement with the school should not be expressed inappropriately or in front of pupils.

4. All school staff, teaching and non-teaching; and members of the Governing Body, will receive a copy of this policy statement and will be familiar with the school's procedures for dealing with parental concerns and complaints, to which they will have access as required.
5. The school's procedures will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary.
6. Staff and governors will receive training in handling parental concerns and complaints as appropriate. This may be on an individual basis; or as a group activity for all staff; or for specific groups, such as the office staff or members of the Governing Body.
7. Whilst we will seek to resolve concerns and complaints to the satisfaction of all parties, it may not be possible to achieve this in every case. We will, therefore, use our option to close a complaint before all the stages of the school's procedures have been exhausted, if this appears to be appropriate.
8. The Government and the Local Education Authority (the LEA - Essex County Council) advocate resolution of parental concerns and complaints at school level wherever possible, in the interests of maintaining good home/school relations. The role of the LEA in advising parents and schools on the handling of concerns and complaints is set out in the school's procedures.

Concerns

It is natural that parents may, occasionally, be concerned about an aspect of their child's education or welfare at school. This could include issues concerning the school's approach to aspects of the curriculum, homework, behavioural problems or any other issue.

The school welcomes enquiries from parents about any matter. Teachers and staff will explain the school practices, policies, and how they affect the pupils. The vast majority of concerns will be handled by the class

teacher or by the subject co-ordinator if this is more helpful. If in doubt, keep asking until you are completely satisfied as all staff are eager to help.

The usual format is to speak to the child's class teacher in the first instance, or to contact the school office to arrange an appointment to discuss your concern with whoever you wish. At all times the staff will help to resolve a problem. If occasionally parents feel they must state their concern formally, this too is not a problem. The school has defined procedures for handling complaints so don't be embarrassed if you feel an issue warrants more attention.

Complaints

The procedure is again to speak to the child's class teacher in the first instance, or contact the school office to arrange an appointment to discuss your complaint with whoever you wish.

The school's policy is to follow the Local Education Authority guidelines when handling concerns and complaints. The LEA Parent Complaint Guide is filed in the Parents Information folder and also by the school office. Just ask if you would like advice or a copy of it. It would be unusual to deviate from these procedures but the school always retains discretion in these matters.

In summary, the Local Education Authority procedure is divided into four stages:

Stage 1 aims to resolve the concern through informal contact at the appropriate level in school.

Stage 2 is the first formal stage where the headteacher or a designated governor, who has responsibility for dealing with complaints, considers written complaints.

Stage 3 is the next step once Stage 2 is complete. It involves a complaints review panel of governors.

Stage 4 is the Final Review stage where the Local Education Authority will review and comment on the way the school has dealt with the complaint.

In the infrequent event these procedures need referring to, please look in the file or ask the school office. All staff are familiar with the guidelines and have a duty to help parents needing advice. Please don't feel you are making a fuss. These procedures have been carefully compiled and their reference, however rare, is routine to help pupils, parents and the school.