

	School Based Complaints		
	Last Reviewed: May 2018 (ALG)	Next Review: May 2020	

1. Why do we have a School Based Complaints Procedure?

- 1.1 The Education Act 2002 requires the Governing Body to adopt and publicise a complaints procedure for parents. This includes complaints about any community facilities or services that the school provides.
- 1.2 Previous legislation still applies. In particular, 1991 SEN Information Regulations require governing bodies of schools to publicise their complaint procedures in relation to SEN and the 1996 Education Act requires the Education Funding Agency ("EFA") to establish procedures for disputes between schools and parents about SEN provision.
- 1.3 There also remain specific requirements in relation to the National Curriculum, collective worship and religious education under the 1996 Education Act.

2. How we operate

Each day Sandringham School makes many decisions and tries hard to do the best for all the children. We have normal channels of communication with various members of staff at the school for issues relating to the development of your child. The most common point of contact is with your child's tutor. However, you may wish to raise something more general or you may have been dissatisfied with how we have dealt with something. You may want to talk to us about a particular aspect of this school, though not actually make a complaint - you just want to get something 'off your chest'. If you are dissatisfied about the way your child is being treated, or any actions or lack of action by us, please feel free to contact us using the details listed in this policy. Whatever it is, we like to hear from you and your comments are always helpful for future planning.

Our promise to you

- Your complaint will be dealt with honestly, politely and in confidence
- Your complaint will be looked into thoroughly and fairly
- If your complaint is urgent we will endeavour to deal with it more quickly
- We will keep you up to date with progress at each stage
- You will get an apology if we have made a mistake
- You will be told what we are going to do to put things right
- You will get a full and clear written reply to formal complaints within 28 school days of a hearing

3. How has our procedure been developed?

- 3.1 To ensure we are consistent with all other Hertfordshire Schools, the Governing Body has agreed to adopt the latest available recommended Hertfordshire School Based Complaints Procedures (May 2018)

4. The first steps in investigating a complaint – Informal Stage

- 4.1 We seek to ensure that all parents, students, staff and other people who work at the school understand our way of working and following agreed school policies. Our aim is to ensure the best educational outcomes for young people at all time.
- 4.2 If you have a concern about something we do, or if you wish to make a complaint, **you must do this in writing by letter to the school addressed to the Headteacher**. We will acknowledge receipt of the letter by compliments slip within seven working days. We hope that most complaints can be settled quickly and informally, either by putting matters right or by giving you an explanation. We may invite you in to discuss or link you with an appropriate member of staff to move forward (e.g. SEND with the SENco).
- 4.3 We know that it can feel uncomfortable to question or challenge, but if you don't tell us what is worrying you we cannot explain what we are doing or try to put it right.



- 4.4 If the first person you talk to cannot help you then you should seek advice from one of the other senior staff at the school.

Key staff to contact are:

Alan Gray (Headteacher) – normally reserved for first formal stage
Caroline Creaby (Deputy Headteacher)
Fergal Moane (Deputy Headteacher)
Joanna Cavanagh (Assistant Headteacher)
Stuart Kemp (Assistant Headteacher)
Claire Oakes (Assistant Headteacher)
Karen Paul (Assistant Headteacher)
Julia Shaw (Business manager)

- 4.5 A full investigation of the facts surrounding the complaint will be made and the Headteacher (or other member of senior staff) will decide on appropriate action (if any) to take. We will seek to resolve issues as far as possible by discussion with the Headteacher (or other member of senior staff), once the facts are known.

5. What if it is still not possible to sort things out? – First formal stage

- 5.1 You should be able to sort out your worries but sometimes this is not possible. In this case there is a next step.
- 5.2 **Request a meeting with the Headteacher** who will investigate your complaint further and aim to inform you of the outcome **within 10 school days**.

If your first contact is with individual Governors, they will advise you to take up your concerns with the appropriate member of staff or Headteacher. A Governor should not be made aware of a potential complaint as they may be required to sit on a Panel in the event of a formal hearing (Stage Two) and should be impartial.

If your complaint is about the Headteacher, you should **write (by letter) to the Chair of Governors**. If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) you might find it helpful to talk to our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) or your child's named Special Needs Officer at the Local Authority. The SEND Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS – formerly Parent Partnership) may also be able to help you.

6. If this has still not resolved the issue – Second formal stage

- 6.1 If you remain dissatisfied following Stage 1 and wish to take your complaint further, you will be asked to complete our complaint form addressed to the Chair of Governors. (see appendix i). In the form you should:
- Make it clear why you are complaining.
 - Say who you have spoken to already.
 - Explain what you want to happen as a result of your complaint.
- 6.2 The Chair of Governors will arrange for your complaint to be considered and investigated under the arrangements approved by the Governing Body. The Chair will respond in writing to the complaint or, depending upon the nature of the complaint, convene a Panel of Governors to consider the same. If the Chair of Governors or another Governor has been involved in discussions to help settle the disagreement at Stage 1, s/he should arrange for another Governor to take charge of the investigation. The Governor in charge of investigating the complaint may ask to meet you to discuss your concerns.
- 6.3 You should make sure that the Governors' Complaint Panel is provided with any written information or evidence you intend to use in a formal hearing. You may bring a friend, representative or interpreter to any meeting if you wish. The Chair of the Panel may invite any person who may help establish the facts of the complaint. The Chair should tell you who this person is before the meeting. If any member of staff is required by the Governing Body to attend a meeting they will have the opportunity to be accompanied or represented as they wish. A member of staff named in a complaint may also choose to attend a meeting, even if not required to do so by the Governors. They may be represented. If this happens, we will inform you in advance.



- 6.4 When the Panel has fully investigated your complaint, the Chair of the Panel or the Governor in charge of the investigation will write to you to tell you the findings. These findings will be reported to the Governing Body. The Chair of Governors will then write to you confirming the outcome of your complaint and any agreed actions to be taken. Our Governing Body will aim to deal with your complaint **within 28 school days**.
- 6.5 In exceptional cases, where you are still unhappy with the outcome of the Governors' Complaint Panel, the Chair of Governors will convene a second Complaint Panel with at least one external member to reconsider the case.
- 6.6 Most complaints are the responsibility of the governing body of the school and will be resolved by them. A small number of complaints cannot be resolved by this process.

7. Is there a third stage in making a complaint?

- 7.1 The decision of the Governors' Complaints Panel is final.
- 7.2 The decision of the Governors' Complaints Panel will not be investigated. If, however, the complainant feels that the Academy and Governors have not followed the Academy's complaints procedure correctly, he/she can contact the EFA. Complaints about Academies will be investigated by the Academies Directorate in the EFA in consultation with the Legal and Governance Team. If you want advice once you have received the final response from the Governing Body you could contact the CAU Complaints Helpline on 01992 588542.
- 7.3 Complaints about Academies should be made in writing to the Academies Central Unit (Academies Complaints), Education Funding Agency, Earlsdon Park, 53-55 Butts Road, Coventry CV1 3BH or by e-mail to enquiries@EFA.gov.uk
- 7.4 The EFA will investigate complaints about:
- Undue delay or non-compliance with published complaints procedures;
 - Allegations that the Academy has acted unlawfully or failed to comply with a contractual duty imposed on it under its Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State or any other legal obligation.
- 7.5 In the case of complaints about **Special Educational Needs**, you may complain further to the Local Authority. This should be done by writing to the Children's Services Complaints Manager at County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford.
- 7.6 You can complain to the Secretary of State at the Department for Education:
- The Secretary of State
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT
Website: www.education.gov.uk
Telephone: 0370 000 2288
- 7.7 It should be noted however that if you wish to pursue these routes, you must do so within **20 working days** of receiving the written outcome of the hearing into your complaint. After **20 working days** neither the school nor the EFA is under any obligation to investigate or progress your complaint any further.

8. Timescale for complaints

- 8.1 The governors will accept complaints up to a period not exceeding 3 months after your child has formally left the school and is off roll. Any complaints after this period will not be considered.



Useful contacts

Advisory Centre for Education

Education Advice & Training
72 Durnsford Road
London
N11 2EJ
Web: www.ace-ed.org.uk
Phone: **0300 0115 142**

POhWER

Hertlands House
Primett Road
Stevenage
SG1 3EE
Web: www.pohwer.net
Phone: **0300 456 2370**

Children's Legal Centre

Riverside Office Centre
Century House North
North Station Road
Colchester
Essex
CO1 1RE
Web: www.childrenslegalcentre.com
Phone: **0345 345 4345**

National Youth Advocacy Service p (NYAS)

Egerton House
Tower Road
Birkenhead
Wirral
CH41 1FN
Web: www.nyas.net
Phone: **0345 345 4345**

SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs & Disability Information Advice Support Service – formerly Parent Partnership)

Registry Office Block
CHR102
County Hall
Hertford
SG13 8DF
Web: www.hertsdirect.org/parentpartnership
Email: parent.partnership@hertfordshire.gov.uk
Phone: **01992 555847**



(appendix i)

Formal Complaint Form – Stage 2

Name of Student:		
Tutor Group:		
Name of Parent/Carer:		
Address:		
Contact Tel. No:		
E-mail Address:		
What is it you want to complain about?		
Have you raised your issue with the school? If so, who did you speak to and when? (Informal stage)		
Have you complained to the Headteacher? (Stage 1)	Yes (inc. date)	No
When did you do this?	Date:	
What happened when you complained to the Headteacher?		
What would you like us to do to put things right?		

Signed:

Dated:

Please return the completed form to the Clerk to the Governors, Sandringham School, The Ridgeway, St. Albans, Hertfordshire AL4 9NX.