

A Guide to the Law for School Governors

Chapter 4, Page 5, Paragraph 22

“There should be formal procedures in place for dealing with complaints about the school and what it provides for its pupils. For the procedure for addressing complaints about the curriculum see Chapter 6. Since 1 September 2003 governing bodies must, have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to all other aspects of the school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides (Section 29 of the Education Act 2002). The procedure must be publicised.”



THAMESVIEW SCHOOL

**Thong Lane, Gravesend,
Kent DA12 4LF**

Complaints Policy and Procedures

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

This procedure has been established in accordance with Section 39 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the Education Act 2002.

This document sets out the school's procedure for addressing complaints.

1. Please note that this procedure does NOT apply to issues concerning the curriculum, collective worship, admissions, exclusion appeals, decisions about your child's special/additional educational needs or grievances by school staff. These are the subject of separate complaints procedures. For information about these procedures, please contact the school.
2. All other complaints are handled by the school according to the procedures set out below.
3. The school's ethos is one of caring support for the students, parents and staff. As such we will always engage in constructive and respectful dialogue to resolve issues and complaints.

Principles

1. The school will give careful consideration to all complaints and will deal with them fairly and honestly.
2. We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed and aim to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding.
3. All complaints will be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible. The length of the period will vary with the gravity and complexity of the complaint and the urgency with which it needs to be settled. However, all complaints will be acknowledged in writing within five school days.
4. Our working definition of a complaint is, "**a clear statement of dissatisfaction of a service provided by the school**".

Complaints Procedure

1. Most complaints are best resolved informally. If you have any concerns about the school or the education provided, please discuss the matter with your child's Community Leader, Welfare Support Manager, Class Teacher or Subject Leader in the first instance and at the earliest opportunity.

Stage 1 – Informal

2. If you feel that a concern has not been addressed through discussion with the personnel mentioned above, or that the concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, please make an appointment to discuss it with the Head of School or Assistant Headteacher. The Head of School considers any such complaint very seriously and most complaints can be resolved at this stage.

Stage 2 – Formal

3. If the matter cannot be resolved, or your complaint is about the Headteacher or Head of School, then it may be appropriate for you to write to the Vice Chair of the Governors to make a formal complaint. Please state:
 - a. the nature of the complaint;
 - b. the steps taken to resolve it; and

- c. the action you would like to see taken to remedy your concerns.
4. The Vice Chair of Governors will review the way in which your complaint has been handled by the school. S/He will normally write to you with the outcome of this process within 15 working days of receiving the complaint.

Stage 3 – Formal

5. If you are not satisfied with the result, you may ask to refer your complaint to Stage 3 of the procedures. To do this you must write to the Chair of Governors within 15 working days of receiving the outcome from the Vice Chair of Governors (see Stage 2 above). At this stage, a panel of governors (including the Chairman of the Governing Body) will meet to consider the complaint and to make a final decision about it on behalf of the Governing Body. The panel will consist of governors who have no detailed prior knowledge of the complaint, or connection with the complainant. This meeting will normally take place within 20 working days of your request.
6. You will have the opportunity to submit written evidence on the complaint prior to the meeting of the panel, and also to attend part of the meeting accompanied by a friend/partner if so-wished, to put your case. The Headteacher or Head of School will be given the same opportunities. The panel will write to you with its conclusion within five working days of the meeting.
7. The decision of the panel is final. If you are still not satisfied by the way your complaint has been dealt with, you may wish to refer it to the Secretary of State for Education.

Anonymous Complaints

The expectation is that the name and contact details of the complainant must be included with a complaint. However it is acknowledged that anonymous complaints may be received from time to time.

Complaints received from anonymous sources will be recorded but not investigated unless the complaint relates to safeguarding. In cases related to safeguarding the matter will be investigated, however it will not be possible to provide feedback to the complainant or to establish if they are satisfied with the way the complaint has been handled.

Serious or Persistent Complainants

If a complainant attempts to reopen an issue or a closely related issue that has already been dealt with under this complaints procedure, the Chair of Governors may write to the complainant to inform him/her that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter closed. Further, that continued correspondence is vexatious and the school will not respond to any further correspondence on this issue or a closely related issue.

In exceptional circumstances, where in the opinion of the Chair of Governors, acting reasonably at all times, he/she considers that the volume of complaints by an individual are excessive so as to impose a disproportionate burden on the staff and Governors at the school, the Chair of Governors will inform the complainant that the actions of the complainant are vexatious and the school will not engage in further correspondence with the complainant on matters raised.

Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body monitors the complaints procedure in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Headteacher logs all formal complaints received by the school and records how

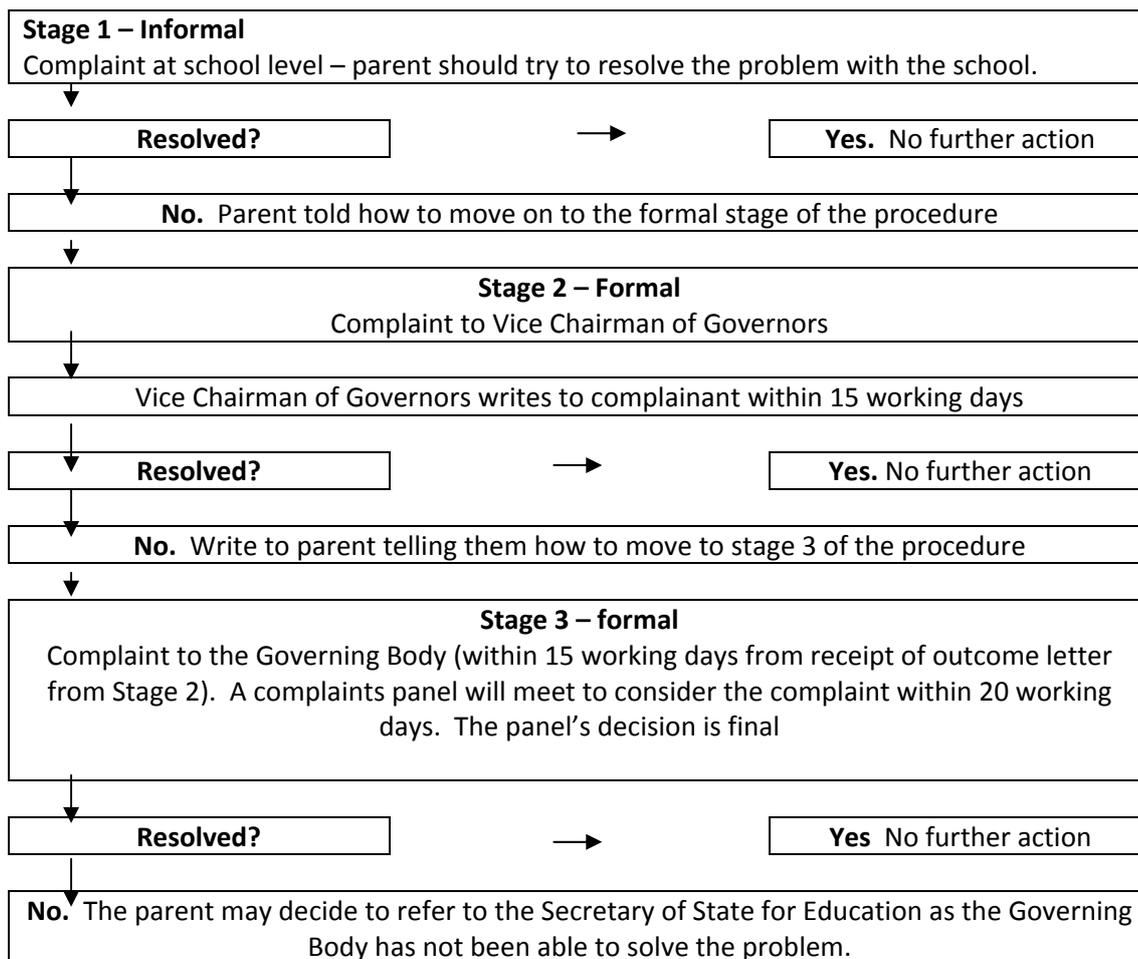
they were resolved. Governors examine this log on an annual basis and consider the need for any changes to the procedure.

Availability

A copy of this procedure is on the school website and is available to all parents on request.

Thamesview School

FLOWCHART SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

This policy was agreed and adopted at a Governors’ Meeting held on _____ (date)

Signed: _____ (Governor)

Signed: _____ (Headteacher)

The policy will be formally reviewed in _____ (date)

APPENDIX A

Sample Letter

Dear

We are in receipt of your complaint regarding Please be assured that your complaint is being taken seriously and has been passed to for further investigation. We will be in touch with you shortly when we have further information for you.

Yours sincerely

H Ingham
Headteacher