

ORCHARD LEA JUNIOR SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

POLICY



This policy applies to all staff at Orchard Lea Junior School

Date of Policy Issue/Review	30 June 2015
Name of Headteacher	
Signature of Headteacher	

Orchard Lea Junior School

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Guidance Document for Parents – What to do when things go wrong

Orchard Lea Junior School is committed to encouraging the involvement of parents in the community of the school and in their children's education. One aspect of this commitment is reflected by recognising that, from time to time, things may occur which cause parents concern and that it is important that parents or children know what steps to take in order to ensure that any problems are resolved. These notes are intended to provide guidance to help parents with this process.

Preliminary Stage

Who should I talk to?

Most concerns can be dealt with quickly and effectively through informal discussion with members of staff at school.

You are always welcome in to school by appointment to discuss any concerns or problems that have arisen and are always encouraged to talk to your child's teacher in the first instance as the teacher, having the knowledge of both your child and events in school, is often the person best placed to help.

You can expect that matters raised will be treated in confidence, but parents also need to understand that to resolve problems and find the best way forward, the teacher, or other appropriate member of staff, may have to make further enquiries. When this is the case you can expect that this will be done with care and that teachers will be sensitive to how such circumstances may affect your child. This is true for any investigation underway by the school at any time.

Sometimes you may feel that approaching your child's teacher could be awkward, especially if the matter you wish to discuss may affect a member of staff. If this is the case then you may choose to speak to another appropriate member of staff, e.g. the head teacher or the deputy head teacher.

Stage 1

If talking to your child's class teacher or other appropriate member of staff on a previous occasion does not seem to have resolved a particular problem then you should contact the head teacher. This can either be in writing or by making an appointment to speak to them. The head teacher has the responsibility for the day to day running of the school and will recognise situations like this can be difficult and sensitive. You can expect the head teacher to acknowledge your complaint within 5 days and to take the appropriate steps to follow up your concerns. They will keep a written record of their investigation and might also invite you in for a meeting to discuss your concerns further and to add any other relevant

information. After they have completed their investigations you will be informed of the outcome, with an explanation of their decision and the actions that needed to be taken to resolve your complaint, within 10 days.

If a delay is anticipated the school should keep you informed of its progress and of when you are likely to receive details of the outcome of the investigation.

Stage 2

If you are not satisfied that matters have been resolved, you should contact the Chair of Governors through the school, giving full and clear details of your complaint. The Chair will investigate after speaking to the head teacher and might request a meeting with both parties. They will try to resolve the complaint and you should expect the outcome of their investigation to be communicated to you within 10 working days.

Stage 3

I still feel that matters have not been resolved, what should I do?

It is very rare for a complaint to reach this stage but, if it does, the next step of the process will involve an independent and impartial view by a panel from the Governing Body. You should contact a member of the Governing Body, through the school, and request that your complaint proceeds to the next stage. The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of your complaint and will explain that a Panel will meet to review your complaint within 20 working days. The Panel will consist of three Governors **who have no prior involvement in the matter in question**. All relevant documents relating to the complaint will be provided to the Panel beforehand.

You will receive notification of the date that the Panel will meet 5 days in advance of the meeting. You will also be informed that you have the right to go to the meeting and to be accompanied by a friend, legal representative or interpreter. The Headteacher will also be invited to attend the meeting.

Whilst discussions at the meeting will be documented (usually by the Clerk) the meeting will be as informal as possible with the main aim being to resolve the problem raised and to achieve reconciliation between you and the school. It provides an opportunity for you to explain your complaint and concerns, for the Headteacher to explain the school's response and for all people present to seek clarification through questions and discussion. Once the discussion has ended everyone, apart from the Panel, will leave the meeting and the Panel will review matters and reach a decision.

The Panel will provide a decision on the complaint to you and the school within 15 working days.

For most complaints you cannot take your appeal further than the governing body. If you feel though that the school has acted unreasonably or not followed the the correct procedures you can write to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families.

Exceptions – Complaints about the curriculum, religious matters or charging for extras

In general, the local authority cannot investigate school matters on a parent's behalf nor can it review how the school has dealt with your complaint. However, in relation to the exceptions listed below you can ask the local authority to become involved. This will happen only once the school's own complaints procedure has been exhausted.

- The national Curriculum and how it is applied in school
- Religious education and/or worship in the school
- The way the school charges for extra things such as school trips

STAGED APPROACH TO HANDLING COMPLAINTS

