

SPRINGDALE FIRST SCHOOL: COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURES

We all matter at Springdale.



RATIONALE

Springdale is a busy place and the vast majority of the time everything is going well but occasionally things can happen that you are not happy with.

Our aim is to work in conjunction with parents, carers and our community to achieve the best outcomes for the children of our school. We therefore welcome comments and suggestions to ensure we offer the best provision.

Springdale follows the Department of Education's Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016, for managing your concerns and complaints.

Please remember that whether you are raising or managing a concern or complaint we should all follow the following principles:

- Confidentiality should be respected
- Give and expect both courtesy and consideration
- Communication is the key to solving concerns and complaints
- Concerns and complaints will be dealt with fairly and as speedily as possible
- Keep all informed at every stage, whether it's a concern or formal complaint

Please note that a governor is responsible for monitoring records of parental concerns and complaints in order to ensure that appropriate action is taken in all cases.

CONCERNS

Sometimes you may have a concern or doubt about what we have or have not done which you consider important and are seeking reassurance. We take all concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

You should:

- Raise your concern verbally with the teacher as they may be unaware of the problem or there might have been a misunderstanding
- Explain the 'what' and the 'why' of your concern
- Discuss what you think might resolve the issue
- If you are dissatisfied with the outcome and feel the teacher cannot resolve the matter then take your concern to the Headteacher (or Deputy Headteacher).

When does a concern become a complaint?

- When a concern is strong enough to require the use of a formal procedure
- When there is a serious dissatisfaction that cannot be resolved in an informal way

If your concern has not been resolved and you still feel that it cannot be resolved in an informal way then you have the opportunity to progress to a formal complaint.



COMPLAINTS

We will always try and resolve your complaint with you so you may be invited to meet to discuss your issues with the Headteacher. However we acknowledge that there are occasions when you may wish to raise your concerns more formally and the following section sets out the stages for doing this.

Please note that we expect complaints to be made as soon as possible after an incident arises and within a 3-month period. However, we will consider exceptions to this timeframe.

Who can make a complaint?

Anyone can make a complaint about any provision that we provide as a school unless separate statutory procedures apply. Steps on how to make a complaint and how it is then managed are detailed in the Stages section.

Who do I complain to?

- It is the Headteacher (or in their absence the Deputy Headteacher) who receives and monitors formal complaints.
- If your complaint is about the Headteacher or a governor then contact the Chair of Governors
- Complaints against the Chair of Governors or any individual governor should be made in writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body.
- If about the governing body then contact the Borough of Poole's Commissioning & Improvement – People Services via www.boroughofpoole.co.uk
- Complaints for any of the following should be directed to the Borough of Poole's Children, Young People and Learning Services - admissions to schools, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, school re-organisation proposals or matters likely to require a child protection investigation

- Exclusion of children from school - further information about raising concerns can be found here: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions
- Whistleblowing – we have an internal procedure for our employees & voluntary staff. Other concerns can be raised direct with Ofsted via whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk
- Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures will invoke our school's internal grievance procedures and complainants will not be informed of the outcome of any investigation.
- If your complaint is about services provided by other providers who use our premises or facilities then please contact them direct.

How do I make a complaint?

The following stages explain how you should raise a complaint and the steps taken to resolve your complaint.

Please note the following:

- You can ask for your complaint to be withdrawn at an stage (in writing) and this will be acknowledged in writing by the Headteacher, CoG or the governor panel, whichever is appropriate at that stage.
- Should your complaint be delivered to us outside of term time then it will be deemed to have been received on the first day the school returns from its break.
- It is at the Headteacher's discretion to decide whether the gravity of an anonymous complaint warrants its investigation.

Stage 1: Formal Complaints to the Headteacher

- Formal complaints may be made in person, by telephone, or in writing (email, letter or the schools complaints form). This ensures that we comply with our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- To prevent later challenge or disagreement over what was said, notes of meetings and telephone calls will be kept and a copy of written response added to the complaints record.

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- You must make it clear that it is a formal complaint.
- The Headteacher will record the date your complaint was made/received and the progress of your complaint until the final outcome.
- If your complaint was received in writing then the Headteacher will acknowledge receipt in writing/email within 3 school days.
- The Headteacher will investigate your complaint and respond within 10 school days of the date the complaint was made/received unless exceptional circumstances exist which will be communicated to you.
- You have the right to copies of these records under the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts.
- At this stage the outcome of the investigation by the Headteacher is final.

Stage 2: Formal Complaints to the Chair of Governors (CoG)

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the Headteachers investigation (Stage 1) and feel strongly that you wish to take the matter further then you may make a formal complaint to the Chair of Governors.

- Formal complaints may be made in person, by telephone, or in writing (email, letter or the schools complaints form). This ensures that we comply with our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- The CoG will record the date your complaint was made/received and acknowledge receipt in writing/email within 5 school days.
- The CoG will advise you that a complaints panel consisting of 3 members of the Governing Body (who have not had any previous involvement in the complaint) will be convened at a date and time convenient to all parties – but within 15 school days of receipt of the complaint unless exceptional circumstances exist which will be communicated to you.
- You have the right to request an independent panel if you believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings. This will be considered but ultimately the governors make the final decision.
- Prior to the meeting you will be given information about how the meeting works and what will be expected of you.
- The complaints panel hearing will be as informal as possible.

- All parties will see written material.
- The Clerk to the Governors will minute the complaints panel hearing.
- Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give evidence.
- Following introductions you will be invited to explain your complaint, which will then be followed by your witnesses.
- The Headteacher may question both yourself and your witnesses after each of you has spoken.
- The Headteacher is then invited to explain the school's actions to date, which will be followed by the school's witnesses.
- You may question both the Headteacher and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The governor panel may ask questions at any point.
- You are then invited to sum up your complaint.
- The Headteacher is invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
- The CoG explains that both parties will be written to within 5 school days of the hearing, setting out the panel's decision(s).
- Both parties leave together whilst the panel decides on the issues.

Governor Panel can then:

- Dismiss your complaint in whole or in part;
- Uphold your complaint in whole or in part;
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- Recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur and services can be improved.

The decision of the panel is final and the matter closed. The school's complaints procedure at the end of stage 2 will have been exhausted.

What if I am still not satisfied?

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If the outcome of the governor panel does not satisfy and you believe that we have acted unreasonably then you can take your complaint to the Secretary of

State for Children, Schools & Families.

SPRINGDALE FIRST SCHOOL - COMPLAINTS FORM

Please complete and return to the Headteacher who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your Name	
Pupils Name	
Your Relationship to the Pupil	
Your Address:	
Daytime Telephone Number:	
Evening Telephone Number:	
Mobile Phone:	
Email Address:	
Details of your complaint:	

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