

St Nicholas CE VA Primary School



Information for Parents HOW TO COMMENT OR COMPLAIN

We care about what you think

Each day this school makes many decisions and tries hard to do the best for all the children. Your comments - either positive or negative - are helpful for future planning. 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 at the back of this document.

Our aims in handling complaints

- 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 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.

How to make a complaint

In the first instance – informal stage

If you have a concern about anything we do, or if you wish to make a complaint, you can do this by telephone, in person or in writing (by letter or email). We hope that most complaints can be settled quickly and informally, either by putting matters right or by giving you an explanation. If there is something you are not happy about, or you do not understand why we are doing something in a particular way, please come in and discuss it with the class teacher or other appropriate member of staff. Please speak to the inclusion co-ordinator (INCO), Mrs Broekhuis, if it is about special needs.

We know that it can feel uncomfortable to question or challenge something, but if you do not tell us what is worrying you we cannot explain what we are doing or try to put it right.

If the first person you talk to cannot help you, you should then speak to the Headteacher. Make an appointment with the school secretary to make sure the Headteacher is available. You should be able to sort out your worries but sometimes this is not possible. In this case there is a next step.

First – formal stage

Request a meeting with the Headteacher who will investigate your complaint and aim to inform you of the outcome within 10 school days (2 weeks).

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 2) and should be impartial.

If your complaint is about the Headteacher, you should write to the Chair of Governors via school or email governors@stnicholasce.org. 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 Inclusion Co-ordinator or your child's named Special Needs Officer at the Local Authority. The SEND Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) may also be able to help you.

Second – formal stage

If you remain dissatisfied following Stage 1 and wish to take your complaint further, you will be asked to complete a form, which is available from the school office, or write a letter addressed to the Chair of Governors. (The school secretary can tell you who this is, or Governor details are available on the school website). In the letter you should:

- Make it clear why you are complaining.
- Say who you have already spoken to.
- Explain what you want to happen as a result of your complaint.

The Chair of Governors will then arrange for your complaint to be investigated and considered under the arrangements approved by the Governing Body. This is likely to involve a Panel of Governors. 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.

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.

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. We aim to convene a Panel hearing within 20 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 request and notify you of the outcome within 5 school days of the hearing.

Further recourse

Most complaints are resolved by this process. Should your complaint not be resolved, your further options are as follows:

You may complain to the Diocese if it is regarding denominational RE or Collective Worship: The Diocesan Director of Education Diocesan Office Holywell Lodge, 41 Holywell Hill St Albans AL1 1HE.	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
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Email: schools@stalbans.anglican.org,
Website: www.stalbans.anglican.org.

In the case of complaints about **Special Educational Needs provision**, you may complain further to the Local Authority. This should be done by writing to the Children's Services Complaints Manager.

It should be noted however that if you wish to pursue this route, you must do so within 20 working days (4 weeks) of receiving the written outcome of the hearing into your complaint. After 20 working days (4 weeks), neither the school nor the Local Authority is under any obligation to investigate or progress your complaint any further.

Useful contacts

Chair of Governors

The school secretary will tell you who this is and pass on any written correspondence. Alternatively, email governors@stnicholasce.org.

Advisory Centre for Education

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

POhWER

Phone: 0300 456 2370
Text: send the word 'pohwer' with your name and number to 81025
Email: pohwer@pohwer.net
Skype: pohwer.advocacy:
Post: PO Box 14043,
Birmingham, B6 9BL

Children's Legal Centre

Coram Children's Legal Centre
Wellington House
4th Floor, 90-92 Butt Road
Colchester
Essex CO3 3DA

E-mail: info@coramclc.org.uk

National Youth Advocacy Service

(NYAS)
Tower House
1 Tower Road
Birkenhead
Wirral CH41 1FF

Head Office Telephone: 0151 649 8700

Email: help@nyas.net

SENDIASS

(SEND Advice Support Service)

Registry Office Block, CHR102

County Hall

Hertford SG13 8DF

Web: <https://www.hertssendiass.org.uk/home.aspx>

Email: info@hertssendiass.org.uk

Telephone: 01992 555847

Monday to Thursday 9.30am – 3pm

Friday 9.30am – 2.00pm

Family Lives (Formerly Parentline Plus)

15-17 The Broadway

Hatfield, Hertfordshire AL9 5HZ

Web: www.familylives.org.uk Phone: 0808 800 2222