

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 within 28 working days (five and a half weeks).

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) 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 – formerly Parent Partnership) 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, or email governors@stnicholasce.org. (The school secretary can tell you who this is, or Governor details are available on the [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. Our Governing Body will aim to deal with your complaint within 28 school days (5 1/2 weeks).

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:

The Diocesan Director of Education Diocesan Office

Holywell Lodge, 41 Holywell Hill

St Albans AL1 1HE

Email: schools@stalbans.anglican.org

Website: www.stalbans.anglican.org

Telephone: 01727 818170

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

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. Or email governors@stnicholasce.org. Governor details are also available on the [website](#).

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
(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

Family Lives (Formerly Parentline Plus)

15-17 The Broadway

Hatfield

Hertfordshire

AL9 5HZ

Web: www.familylives.org.uk

Phone: 0808 800 2222

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