

St Nicholas CE VA Primary School



Information for Parents HOW TO COMMENT OR COMPLAIN

We care about what you think

We make many decisions every day that affect your children and we try hard to do our best for all the children. Your comments - either positive or negative - are helpful for future planning. You may want to talk to us about something you just want to get off your chest, but not actually make a complaint, and we will do our best to address your concern.

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 there is something you are not happy about or do not understand why we are doing something in a particular way, please contact the class teacher or other appropriate member of staff. Please speak to the inclusion co-ordinator (INCO) if your concern relates to special needs. You can do this by telephone, in person or in writing (by letter or email).

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. We hope that most complaints can be settled quickly and informally.

If the first person you talk to cannot help you, you should then speak to the Headteacher. The school office can arrange an appointment for you. If you still feel the concern has not been addressed, you can make a formal complaint.

Please do not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from being involved in the formal complaints process.

Formal complaint: stage 1

If you want to make a formal complaint, you should 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 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.

Formal complaint: stage 2

If you aren't satisfied with the response you receive from the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, you can complete a form, which is available from the school office, or write a letter addressed to the Chair of Governors via the school office or by emailing governors@stnicholasce.org. 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 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.

The Complaints Panel will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting both you and a representative on behalf of the school to a hearing or by asking both parties for written representations. The hearing may take place with both parties present or attending separately at different times. You should make sure that the Complaints 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, and a member of staff named in a complaint may choose to attend. They will also have the opportunity to be accompanied or represented. We will tell you in advance who will be attending the meeting.

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 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.

Full details of our policy can be found on the school website.

Further recourse

If you feel your complaint has not been resolved by this process, your further options are as follows.

Regarding denominational RE or collective worship:

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.

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. 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: 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