

COMPLAINTS POLICY

2017-2020



This policy is based upon the guidance from the NAHT (National Association of Headteachers) which is informed by local and national guidance.

Avenue Junior School Complaints Policy 2017 -18

This policy has been written with regard to the latest guidance from the DfE: 'Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016'. It is based on the NAHT guidance with additional information from the local authority. It complies with Section 29 of the Education Act 2002

All schools in Norfolk want their pupils to be healthy, happy and safe, and to achieve. They recognise that parents, guardians or carers play an important part in making this happen. Cooperation between parents, staff and governors leads to a shared sense of purpose and a good atmosphere in the school.

General Principles:

- This procedure is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school, or the services that it provides and allows the opportunity for concerns and complaints to be resolved as quickly as possible.
- An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- To enable a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, any matter raised more than 3 months after the event, being complained of, will not be considered.

Raising a concern or complaint

Informal Stage

It is normally appropriate to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned. This may be by letter, by telephone or in person by appointment, requested via the school office. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information and it is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved by this informal stage.

It is important for parents to recognise that schools are busy organisations and that it may not be possible to offer an appointment straight away.

The parties involved should be encouraged to offer their view of what would be a realistic resolution to the problem.

It is in everyone's interest, particularly the child or children, for concerns and complaints to be sorted out quickly and smoothly.

In the case of serious concerns it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Head Teacher (or to the Chair of the governing body, if the complaint is about the Head Teacher).

If you are uncertain about who to contact, please seek advice from the school office or the Clerk to the governing body.

If everyone involved is unable to resolve the issue then it may be necessary to ask for information or support from a Children's Services Representative. The issue that is the focus of the complaint will determine the person contacted. The headteacher, member of the leadership team, deputy headteacher or assistant headteacher should know who to ring or the Customer Service Centre will be able to offer information on 0344 800 8020 or e- mail:information@norfolk.gov.uk

There is a request form (Appendix 1) to support you in requesting a meeting.

Formal Stage

If your concern or complaint is not resolved at the informal stage you may choose to put the complaint in writing and pass it to the Head Teacher, who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately. If the complaint is about the Head Teacher, your complaint should be passed to the Clerk to the governing body, for the attention of the Chair of the governing body.

A Complaint Form is provided for this purpose (Appendix 2).

You should include details which might assist the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents.

It is very important that you include a clear statement of the actions that you would like the school to take to resolve your concern. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed.

Please pass the completed form, in a sealed envelope to the school office. The envelope should be addressed to the Head Teacher, or to the Clerk to the governing body, as appropriate.

The Head Teacher (or Chair) may invite you to a meeting to clarify your concerns and to explore the possibility of an informal resolution. If you accept that invitation, you may be accompanied by a friend, if you wish, to assist you in explaining the nature of your concerns.

It is possible that your complaint will be resolved through a meeting with the Head Teacher (or Chair). If not, arrangements will be made for the matter to be fully investigated, using the appropriate procedure. In any case you should learn in writing, usually within 5 days of the school receiving your formal complaint, of how the school intends to proceed. This notification should include an indication of the anticipated timescale.

Any investigation will begin as soon as possible and when it has been concluded, you will be informed in writing of its conclusion.

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which the process has been followed, you may request that the governing body reviews the process followed by the school, in handling the complaint. Any such request must be made in writing to the clerk to the governing body, within 10 school days of receiving notice of the outcome, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure. The procedure described below will be followed. A Review Request form is provided for your convenience. (Appendix 3).

Review Process

Any review of the process followed by the school will be conducted by a panel of three members of the governing body. This will usually take place within 10 school days of receipt of your request.

The review will normally be conducted through a consideration of written submissions, but reasonable requests to make oral representations should be considered sympathetically.

Once a Governor's Complaints Panel has heard a complaint, and it is clear that correct procedures have been followed, that specific complaint cannot be reopened. If a request is received in this respect, the chair of governors should inform the complainant that the matter is closed.

The Governors' Complaints Panel will write to all concerned within 10 school days to explain their decision and suggest a resolution to the problem, if appropriate. The decision of the Governor's Complaints Panel is final. The decision of the Governors' Complaints Panel will not be investigated. If, however, the complainant feels that the School and Governors have not followed the school's complaints procedure correctly, he/she can contact a Children's Services Officer for assistance. In this case he/she should ring Customer Services on 0344 800 8020 who will arrange for an officer to get back to him/her.

Any complaints concerning the conduct of school staff will be handled in accordance with the school's internal disciplinary procedures. The details of such an investigation will remain confidential.

For any complaint that relates to the behaviour of a pupil, the investigation will be carried out under the school's pupil conduct and disciplinary procedures. This means that the detail of the procedure and its outcome must remain confidential to the school and the parents of the child concerned.

Some complaints regarding admissions, the curriculum or special educational needs are covered by statutory regulations. The headteacher or deputy headteacher can give information about these issues or advice can be sought from the Customer Service Centre on 0344 800 8020 or e-mail: information@norfolk.gov.uk

Taking your complaint further

If you believe that your school's governing body is acting 'unreasonably' you can complain in writing to the Secretary of State for Education

Telephone 0370 000 2288

Online: www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

Letter: DfE, School Complaints Unit, 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD.

Appendix 1

Avenue Junior School: Meeting Request Form

I wish to meet [*name of teacher*] to discuss the following matter:

Your name:

Relationship with school (e.g. parent of a pupil on the school roll):

Pupil's name (if relevant to the matter to be discussed)

Your Address:

Telephone numbers

Daytime: Evening:

e-mail address:

Signed

Date

[Please complete this form and return it to the school office]

School use:

Date Form received: Date response sent:

Received by: Response sent by:

You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.
Number of Additional pages attached =

Signature:

Date:

School use:

Date Form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

Complaint referred to:			
Date:			

Avenue Junior School Complaint Review Request Form

Please complete this form and return it to Head Teacher (or Clerk to the governing body), who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name:

Your Address:

Telephone numbers:

Daytime: Evening:

E-mail address:

<p>Dear Sir</p> <p>I submitted a formal complaint to the school on and am dissatisfied by the procedure that has been followed.</p> <p>My complaint was submitted to and I received a response from on</p> <p>I have attached copies of my formal complaint and of the response(s) from the school.</p> <p>I am dissatisfied with the way in which the procedure was carried out, because:</p>
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You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of Additional pages attached =

Signature:

Date:

School use

Date Form received:

Received by:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Acknowledgement sent by:

Request referred to:			
Date:			