



Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Children & Learning

How to Raise Concerns about Schools

Foreword

This leaflet gives information about how you should raise concerns and make complaints about any issues that may affect your children at school.

Southend schools value the generally good relations they enjoy with parents / carers and the local community. These good relations are based on mutual respect and a willingness to listen to other points of view. Unfortunately, however, occasionally it is necessary for parents / carers to be able to express concerns and make complaints to schools. The purpose of this leaflet is to assist you in trying to deal with these issues as it is obviously in the best interest of all parties that any complaints and concerns expressed are resolved as quickly as possible.

We hope that the contents of this leaflet are self explanatory. If, however, you require any clarification or help please contact the school concerned.

School Complaints Procedures

- **Can concerns that I raise be dealt with informally?**

Where a concern is brought to the school's attention it can almost always be resolved by personal contact with a class teacher or a member of the school's office staff. Sometimes, however, an issue is more complex and will take more than one discussion to resolve.

- **If my concern cannot be dealt with informally what can I do next?**

If the issue cannot be resolved to your satisfaction on an informal basis then you should write to the headteacher detailing your complaint. The headteacher should acknowledge your letter and give you a brief explanation of the schools complaints procedure and a target date for providing a response.

If you have received a response from the headteacher and you remain dissatisfied you should write to the Chair of the Governing Body at the school.

Each school governing body has a complaints committee who have the responsibility to hear and make a decision about formal complaints which have not been resolved either at the informal stage or following an investigation by the headteacher.

If you remain dissatisfied you should write to the Secretary of State for Education.

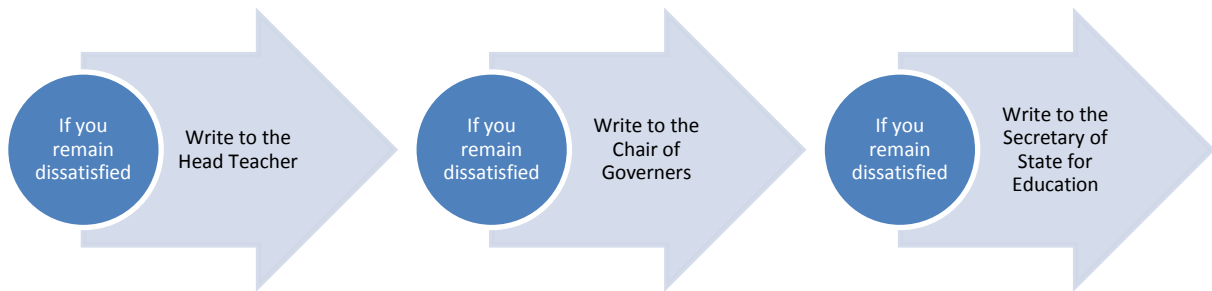
The Secretary of State may contact the governing body for more information in order to consider the complaint. These powers relate to community, foundation and voluntary aided schools.

Ofsted may also consider complaints where they affect the school as a whole e.g.

- the school is not providing a good enough education
- the pupils are not achieving as much as they should, or their different needs are not being met
- the school is not well led and managed, or is wasting money
- the pupils' personal development and wellbeing are being neglected

Summary of School Complaints Process:

If you have spoken to a member of school staff and you remain dissatisfied you should:



Further contact details:

The Secretary of State can be contacted as follows:

Department for Education
Castle View House
East Lane
Runcorn
Cheshire
WA7 2GJ
Telephone: 0370 000 2288
Typetalk: 18001 0370 000 2288
Fax: 01928 738 248
Website: www.education.gov.uk

Ofsted

You can contact Ofsted by calling its helpdesk from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday on 08456 404045 or by email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Staff on its helpdesk will discuss your concerns with you and advise you whether or not to put your complaint in writing. To make a formal complaint you can write to:

Enquiries
National Business Unit
Ofsted
Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

For more information visit:

www.ofsted.gov.uk/schools/for-parents-and-carers/how-complain

Independent schools

If your complaint is about an independent or boarding school you should follow its complaints procedure through the governing body. If you are still dissatisfied after this, you can pursue matters relating to your contract with the school through the courts. If your complaint is that the school is not complying with legal regulations governing independent schools, you can contact the Department for Education public enquiries on 0370 000 2288 from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, or at registrationenquiries@education.gsi.gov.uk.

Further independent advice about complaints procedures may be obtained from:

ACE Education Advice & ACE Education Training
36 Nicholay Road
London. N19 3EZ
Website: www.ace-ed.org.uk