



Trust Complaints / Concerns Policy and Procedure: A guide for parents, carers and members of the public

Introduction

Most members of the community have a positive relationship with schools but sometimes things go wrong. It is important that you raise your concerns as soon as you can. By taking positive steps early on, we are more likely to be able to sort out your complaint.

All complaints are taken seriously and we have procedures in place for dealing with them. In most cases we hope to be able to resolve your complaints/concerns at an early stage.

This policy and procedure comply with guidance from the Department of Education (DfE) and the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and comply with The Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014 section 7. This policy is available on the schools website.

This Policy and Procedure applies to most general complaints we are likely to receive from parents. The process (Appendix 1) is intended to assist in the handling of these complaints.

This Policy is not intended to cover those aspects of school life for which there are specific statutory requirements as detailed below:

1. Allegations of child abuse will be referred for investigation to MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub).
2. Allegations or complaints about the conduct of staff will be investigated and dealt with through the Disciplinary procedure.
3. Complaints regarding staff competence will be dealt with via the Capability Procedures.
4. Allegations and complaints regarding contracted staff, will be reported to the contract manager (if a child protection issue is raised this will also be reported to MASH).

Concerns and Complaints

All concerns and complaints are taken seriously by the school, however, pupils and parents need to be clear about whether they need to address a concern or make a complaint.

Concerns are always dealt with seriously and will be addressed via the processes outlined below:

Curriculum Issues (attainment, progress etc.)	Pastoral Issues (behaviour, emotional issues, medical etc.)
<p>Contact the relevant teacher via the school phone number on 01709 531867 or via e-mail to sitwelljunior@rotherham.school Or speak with the relevant teacher at parents afternoon/evening. If the issue cannot be resolved by the teacher, the parent can refer the issue to the year group leader/ senior leader within the school.</p> <p>If the issue cannot be resolved by the teacher, the parent can refer the issue to the Head Teacher.</p>	<p>At Sitwell Junior School contact your child's class teacher 01709 531867 or via email sitwelljunior@rotherham.school</p>

Formal procedures will need to be invoked when initial attempts to resolve an issue are unsuccessful and the person raising a concern remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further as a **complaint**.

Complaints are always taken seriously and will be addressed through the procedure outlined in Appendix 1.

STAGE 1 - Concern / Complaint heard by staff member

It is in everyone's interest that concerns/complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The first point of contact for raising a concern or making a complaint will usually be to the class teacher for curriculum and pastoral issues.

If the complaint is about a senior member of staff you can refer directly to the Headteacher or if it is about the Headteacher you can either speak with the Headteacher or refer your complaint directly to the Chair of Governors, Peter Sheldon. His contact details are available at the main office.

Give consideration to exactly what the concern is and what you feel would put the situation right. Once you have spoken about your concerns give the person handling the situation an opportunity to resolve it.

If you continue to be dissatisfied you can request that your complaint be considered at Stage 2.

STAGE 2 - Referral to the Head of Year or appropriate Senior Member of Staff

A member of staff or parent can seek referral to the Head of Year or senior member of staff should a concern not be resolved at stage one. Sitwell Junior School aims to ensure that most concerns / complaints are resolved satisfactorily at either stage 1 or 2.

STAGE 3 - Complaint heard by Headteacher (or other Senior Staff)

At this stage it would be helpful to put your complaint in writing or complete the school's complaint form (copy attached at Appendix 2). As well as complaint details and desired outcomes it is also helpful to include information about what you have already done about your complaint e.g. who you have spoken to about it and what happened as a result.

The Headteacher or senior staff member will acknowledge the complaint orally or in writing within 5 working days. All effort will be made to respond to a complainant within 10 working days, if for any reason it is considered that this will not be possible the Headteacher will advise you.

STAGE 4 - Complaint heard by Vice Chair of the Governing Body

The next stage of the complaints procedure should the complainant remain dissatisfied is to address the complaint to the Vice Chair of the Governing Body (or designated Governor). They should acknowledge the complaint, orally or in writing within 5 working days and invite you to meet with him/her and the Headteacher (where appropriate) to find a way forward.

A full written response to your complaint will be given.

STAGE 5 - Complaint heard by Governor Panel including an independent Advisor

You need to write to the Chair of Governors advising of your wish to escalate the complaint within two weeks of receiving your response if you are still dissatisfied with the outcome. The Chair, or a nominated governor, will convene a Governing Body complaints panel which will include the Chair of Governors, another governor (not involved previously) and an independent Advisor, who will not be either an employee of the school or a governor of the school and may be from another school or educational setting. This will usually be within 20 working days of receiving the complaint. You will be invited to attend the panel to discuss your complaint.

The chair of the panel needs to ensure that you are notified of the panel's decision, in writing, with the panel's response; this is usually within 15 school days.

If you remain dissatisfied:

If you feel that we have not complied with our complaints procedure you can refer your complaint to The Local Government Ombudsman or The Secretary of State for Education and Skills, however they will usually not consider a complaint unless the school has been given an opportunity to respond. You can also get advice relating to SEN issues from Rotherham Parent Partnership Service for support on 01709 823627

CONTACTS

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Telephone number: 0870 0002288

Local Government Ombudsman
The Commission for Local Administration in England
Beverley House
17 Shipton Road
York
YO30 5FZ

Telephone number: 01904 663200

Appendix 1

Sitwell Junior School's Concerns / Complaint Procedure

STAGE 1 INFORMAL	Expression of concern to relevant member of staff			
	▼			
	Satisfactory outcome reached?	Yes	▶	No further action
	No			
	▼			
STAGE 2 INFORMAL	Concern referred by parent / staff to Head of Year or Senior Member of Staff			
	▼			
	Satisfactory outcome reached?	Yes	▶	No further action
	No			
	▼			
STAGE 3 HEADTEACHER	Complainant makes a complaint to the Headteacher			
	▼			
	Investigation conducted and reported to the complainant			
	▼			
	Satisfactory outcome reached?	Yes	▶	No further action
	No			
	▼			
STAGE 4 VICE CHAIR OF GOVERNOR'S	Complainant meets with the Vice Chair of Governors and the Headteacher			
	▼			
	Investigation conducted and reported to the complainant			
	▼			
	Satisfactory outcome reached?	Yes	▶	No further action
	No			
	▼			
STAGE 5 GOVERNOR PANEL WITH INDEPENDENT ADVISOR	Complainant makes formal complaint to the Governing Body Complaints Panel			
	▼			
	Panel meeting of Governors, Complainant and Headteacher			
	▼			
	Satisfactory outcome reached?	Yes	▶	No further action
	No			
NEXT STAGES: BEYOND THE SCHOOL	Complainant refers to the Local Government Ombudsman or The Secretary of State for Education and Skills. Or, seeks advice relating to SEN issues from Rotherham Parent Partnership Service			

Sitwell Junior School Concern / Complaint Form

Please complete and return by email to sitwelljunior@rotherham.school
A senior member of staff will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:

Pupil's name:

Your relationship to the pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Day time telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give details of your concern / complaint.

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your concern / complaint. (Who did you speak to and what was the response)?

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Concern / Complaint referred to:

Date:

Action taken:

Date:

What Stage is the Concern / Complaint at:

Stage 1

Date:

Stage 2

Date:

Stage 3

Date:

Stage 4

Date:

Stage 5

Date:

Next Stages:

Date:

(Beyond the school)

Notes