



**STOKE-ON-TRENT
PARENT PARTNERSHIP**

Making a complaint

This leaflet explains the how parents can make a complaint to their child's school, governing body or the Local Authority about issues that they are unhappy with.

There are a variety of situations that may result in parents wishing to make a complaint. These include issues with:

- the curriculum
- a particular member of staff
- your child's special educational needs
- bullying

Parents who wish to make a complaint about their child's school should firstly ask for a copy of the school's complaints policy. This may be available to download from the school's website. Complaints policies will differ from school to school but the process will generally be the same.

Step 1

Speak to your child's class teacher (primary school) or head of year (secondary school) about your concerns.

If your complaint is about the class teacher, arrange a chance to speak to the head teacher.

If your complaint is concerning your child's special educational needs, you should ask to speak to the school Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO).

If your complaint is regarding the head teacher, you should contact the governing body (see **Step 3**)

Step 2

If you are still unhappy you should write a letter of complaint to the head teacher, giving details of the incident that you are concerned about. You should also list the actions that you have already taken in an effort to resolve the situation (meeting with the class teacher etc).

It is advisable to keep a copy of your letter and to ask for a written response to your complaint. You may wish to ask for a face-to-face meeting to discuss your complaint and possible resolutions.

A model letter of complaint is available to download on our website:

<http://www.parent-partnership-stoke.co.uk/publications/model-letters>

Step 3

If you are still unhappy with the response from the head teacher you can complain to the governing body.

You are entitled to a list of the school's governors and should ask for an address to send your letter of complaint to. This may be included in the school's complaints policy. Again you should keep a copy of your letter.

The chair of governors will usually call a 'complaints appeal panel' hearing, where a group of governors will hear the complaint and come to one of the following conclusions:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

Step 4

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome you can complain to the Local Authority or Diocesan Body (for Church of England or Roman Catholic schools).

Step 5

If you feel that the governing body and Local Authority have acted unreasonably with regard to your complaint, you can complain to the Secretary of State at the following address:

The Secretary of State
Department for Children, Schools and Families
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT.

You should include details of all the actions that you have taken so far and the responses that you have received. You could also include copies of all letters that you have sent and received concerning your complaint.

Step 6

Parents can, in certain situations, make a complaint about a school to Ofsted. Ofsted will not investigate complaints regarding an individual pupil but will consider complaints if your concern affects the school as a whole. Examples of issues that Ofsted may investigate include:

- 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 well-being are being neglected.

You can make a complaint in writing to the following address:

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

You can also complain online at the following web address:

<http://live.ofsted.gov.uk/onlinecomplaints>

If your complaint is regarding your child's special educational needs the Stoke-on-Trent Parent Partnership Service can support you in resolving the situation. Please contact 01782 234701 for more information.

Useful weblinks

Guidance on making a complaint from the Government's information website

www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/YourChildsWelfareAtSchool/DG_4016106

Guidance on making a complaint to Ofsted

www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/complaints-ofsted-about-schools-guidance-for-parents

Model letter to Head teacher

Your Address

Date

Re: Child's name

Dear [head teacher's name],

As the parent of [child's name] I wish to make a formal complaint about the following [incidents/ issues].

- [insert as much detail about the incident/ issue as you can].

I have already tried to resolve the issue by [insert details of action you've already taken, people you've already spoken to etc].

I hope to receive a written response from you in the very near future and would also like to request a face to face meeting with you to discuss [my/our] concerns further.

Yours Sincerely,

[Your name]

Model letter to the Governing Body

Your Address

Date

Re: Child's name

Dear [insert the name of the Chair of Governors],

As the parent of [child's name] I wish to make you aware of the following [incidents/issues].

- [insert as much detail about the incident/issue as you can].

I have already tried to resolve the issue by [insert details of action you've already taken, people you've already spoken to etc]. This has not produced a satisfactory resolution and I would therefore like to register a formal complaint with the Governing Body.

I await a written response to my complaint, informing me of the next stage in your complaints procedures.

Yours Sincerely,

[Your name]

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