

Sharing your concerns about your child's education: A Parents' Guide

All Saints CE Junior Academy recognises that at times things can go wrong. This guidance will help you understand how to resolve concerns you may have about your child's education.

The academy has procedures for dealing with concerns or complaints and we value any feedback about our services, including compliments and suggestions. If you are concerned about any aspect of your child's education, you should contact the Headteacher, Ms Hurd, at the academy.

As a member of the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust the academy's Local Governing Body (LGB) has delegated responsibility for the academy and for ensuring the well-being of pupils and that all pupils receive an appropriate and high standard of education.

The Headteacher is responsible for making decisions on a daily basis about the academy's internal management and organisation. So you should contact the academy if you are concerned about an issue such as:

- your child's academic progress;
- special education needs provision;
- your child's welfare;
- bullying;
- something that has happened in academy.

How do I complain to the academy?

First, we hope you will speak to the relevant member of staff as soon as you have a concern. This is likely to be the class teacher. This informal approach is nearly always the quickest and most effective way of resolving your concerns.

If you feel that your concern has not been resolved, then it is important to speak to or write to the Headteacher who will look into your concern.

If you are unhappy with the Headteacher's response you should write with your complaint to the Chair of Governors at the academy address. Mark your envelope 'FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION'.

This is how your complaint will be handled

Within 5 working days the Chair of Governors will clarify the nature of your complaint by asking you to complete a complaint form and will offer help in completing the form, if appropriate.

Within 5 working days of receiving the form the Chair will contact you and provide either

A written response to the complaint (which may include an offer of mediation)

An offer of mediation

A referral to a governors complaint panel

If mediation is agreed, the Chair of Governors will endeavour to set up the meeting within 10 working days. If that timescale is not possible you will be told the reason.

If mediation is not deemed appropriate or if it is not successful, the Chair of Governors or Clerk will set up a panel to meet within 15 working days to consider your complaint. The Clerk will provide details of the hearing and will request any further information you may wish to provide.

The complaints panel will consist of at least 3 members, usually governors but also including at least one representative of the Trust who (as far as possible) will have no prior knowledge of the events being complained of. The panel will be supported by a Clerk who will take notes during the hearing and will stay with the panel while they make their decision in case governors need to be reminded about responses to a particular question. The panel will hear the complaint impartially and make their decision without fear or favour.

Five working days before the hearing the Clerk will send to you, the complainant, the Headteacher and the three panel members, copies of all papers submitted by both sides so that there is sufficient time to read the evidence before the hearing.

At the hearing,

1. You and the Headteacher will be invited into the room where the panel is being held at the same time;
2. After introductions, you, the complainant will be invited to explain your complaint;
3. The Headteacher may question you;
4. The panel will question you;
5. The Headteacher will be invited to explain the academy's actions;
6. You, the complainant may question the Headteacher;
7. The panel will question the Headteacher;
8. The panel may ask questions at any point;
9. You, the complainant will then be invited to sum up your complaint;
10. The Headteacher will then be invited to sum up the academy's actions and response to the complaint;
11. The chair will explain that you and the Headteacher will hear from the panel within five working days;
12. Both you and the Headteacher will leave together while the panel decides on the issues;
13. The Clerk will remain with the panel.

Panel drawn from the DCAT Board.

If a complainant is still not satisfied with the panel's findings they can ask for the complaint process to be reviewed by a panel drawn from the DCAT Board. The board will seek to mediate reconciliation between the school and the complainant. This is important as the parents and the staff involved in the complaint will need to work together to rebuild a positive working home-school relationship so that the child can achieve their best at school. The DCAT panel may achieve this by one or more of the following:

- Upholding the complaints panel decision, but mediating through meetings with parents and school to broker understanding and allow reconciliation to take place.

- Over turning part, or all of the complaints panel decision. They will then work with the school and parents to broker reconciliation
- Recommending action by the school to address concerns arising from the complaint. This may involve work with individual staff members, and or updating and revising school policies and working practices.

Those involved in any complaint which has reached this final stage will need support and reassurance from the DCAT centre panel. Therefore the panel may seek to have meetings with parents and staff separately before any final panel hearing to increase the chances of positive reconciliation between the parties. This may take time and therefore no timescales have been set for this final part of the process.

Can I take my complaint further?

If, following these steps, you still feel that the academy has acted unreasonably or not followed the correct procedures, you can write to the Secretary of State for Education via <http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus/dfe>