

Complaints Policy



Foljambe Primary School

General Principles

Complaints Policy

This procedure is intended to allow you to raise a concern* or complaint** relating to the school, or the services that it provides.

An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

To allow for 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.

Section A: Raising a concern

Informal Stage

It is normally appropriate to communicate directly with the member of staff or Head teacher concerned. This may be by letter, by e-mail, by telephone or in person by appointment. Many concerns can be resolved by a simple clarification or the provision of relevant information and it is anticipated that most concerns will be resolved within 5 school days at this informal stage.

In the case of serious concerns it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Chair of the Local Governing Body.

If you are uncertain about who to contact, please seek advice from the school office or the Clerk to the Local Governing Body.

It is at this informal stage that the school will take the concerns expressed seriously and hope to resolve the issue in an informal way. The school will aim to discuss ways of resolving the issue with the parent/carer concerned and ask the complainant what actions they think will help positively resolve the issue at hand.

*A concern is defined as an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered too important for which reassurances are sought.

**A complaint is defined as a concern that has not been resolved.

Section B: Raising a complaint

1. Formal Stage

If your concern is not resolved at the informal stage you must put the complaint in writing and pass it to the Head teacher, (or to the Clerk to the Local Governing Body, for the attention of the Chair of Governors) who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately. A Complaint Form is provided to assist you (attached).

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 Head Teacher or to the Clerk to the Local Governing Body, as appropriate.

The Head Teacher may invite you to a meeting to clarify your concerns and to seek 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 and/or the Chair of the Local Governing Body. If not arrangements will be made for the matter to be investigated, using the appropriate procedures. In any case you should learn in writing, usually within a maximum of 3 school 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 moving forward.

Any investigation will begin as soon as possible and when it has been concluded, you will be informed in writing of its conclusion within a maximum of 10 school days. However, if the investigation is likely to take longer than expected, you will be kept well informed at every stage.

2. Review Process (Complaints Review Panel)

Any such request for a review must be made in writing to the Clerk to the Joint Local Governing Body, within 10 school days of receiving notice of the outcome of the formal complaint stage. It must include a statement that explains the reasons why you are not happy with the outcome of the investigation.

The procedure described below will be followed.

Any review of the process followed by the school will be conducted by the Complaints Review Panel. This will usually take place within 20 school days of the receipt of your request and all parties will be given a minimum of 5 school days' notice of the meeting.

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

1. The Complaints Review Panel will be made up of; 2 members of the Local Governing Body (who were not involved in the initial investigation into the complaint) and 1 independent member (a Director of the Academy Trust board) who is independent of the day-to-day management and running of the school.

2. Once again, you may be accompanied by a friend, if you wish, to assist you in explaining the nature of your complaint.

3. All parties will receive relevant written evidence from the complainant prior to the Complaints Review Panel meeting.

4. The complainant will have the opportunity to explain their complaint, the reasons why they are unhappy and what they think will help resolve their complaint.

5. The panel will then invite representatives of the school (usually the person that has investigated the complaint) to make a response in full to the complainant.

6. You, and the school representative[s], will be informed in writing of the Complaints Review Panel outcome, usually within 10 school days of the panel meeting.

7. The matter will then be closed as far as the school is concerned.

If you believe that the Joint Local Governing Body has acted illegally or arbitrarily in handling the complaint, then you may make representations to the Educational Funding Agency (via telephone to DFE: 0370 000 2288).

Recording a formal complaint

At the formal stage of the process a written record will be kept of the complaint, along with summaries of discussions with staff. All records relating to the complaint will be kept confidential and will be kept only for monitoring purposes and submission to relevant authorities, if and when requested.