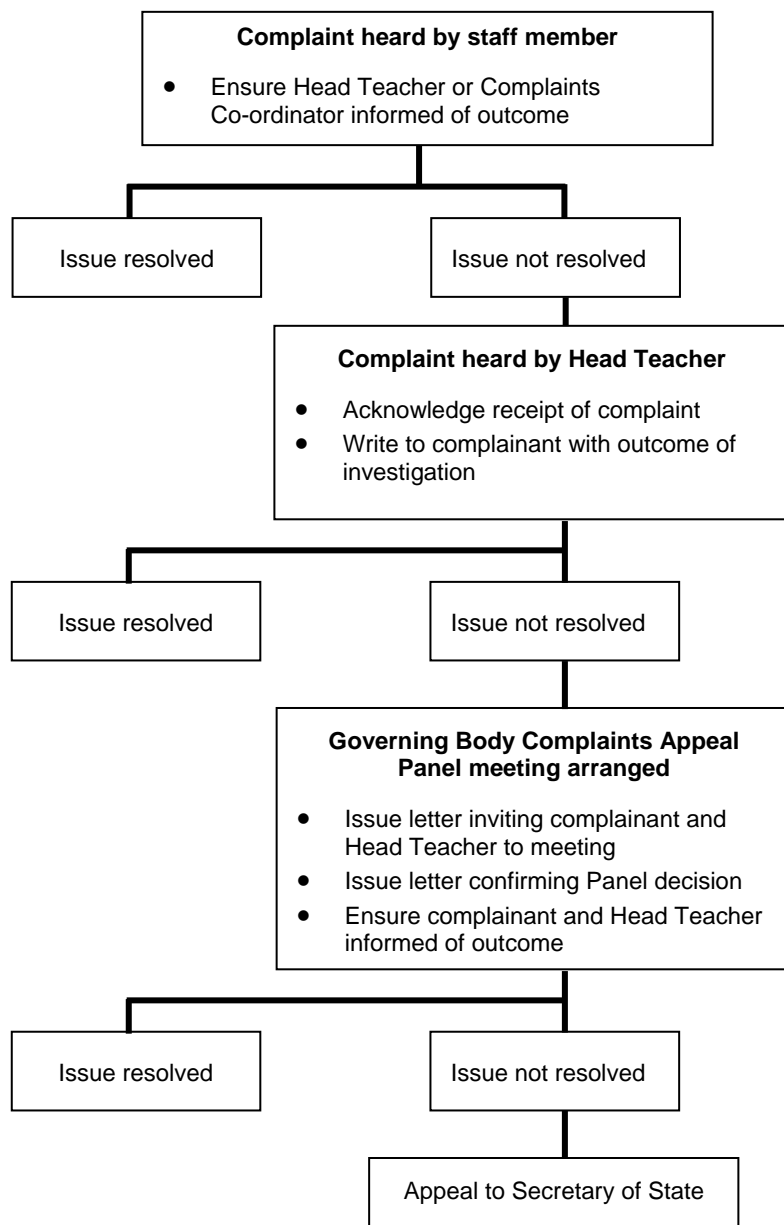


School Complaints Procedure : Flowchart



School Complaints : Information for Parents and Carers

Why do we need a procedure?

Most concerns raised by parents and carers about school matters are handled quickly by school staff without the need for formal procedures. However, not all concerns can be resolved in this way and, under section 29 of the Education Act 2002, Governing Bodies of all maintained schools and nursery schools must have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school, and any community facilities or services that the school provides. It is an important legal principle that the particular procedure used, and the resolution of each complaint, are the responsibility of each individual Governing Body and not the Local Authority. The Governing Body must, however, have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Education.

The Local Authority (LA) has recommended that Bromley LA Maintained Schools adopt the model procedure published by the Department for Education 2011. The procedure, which was adapted for local use and is summarised in this leaflet, is available in full on the Council's website (www.bromley.gov.uk). It is important to note that not all complaints fall within the remit of the Governing Body's complaints procedure, and that matters of staff grievance or discipline are dealt with under separate arrangements.

What to do if you have a complaint

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The experience of the first contact between the complainant and the school can be crucial in determining whether the complaint will become more serious. To that end, any member of the school staff should be able to deal with a complaint. Some larger schools may wish to appoint a Complaints Co-ordinator to assist with hearing complaints at the first stage.

Stage 1: Complaint heard by staff member

The Headteacher or Complaints Co-ordinator should receive any complaint in the first instance. Normally the parent would be directed to take the complaint to the member of staff involved.

Where the approach is made to a Governor, he or she should refer the complainant to the Headteacher or Complaints Co-ordinator. Most complaints will be resolved at this stage.

Stage 2: Complaint heard by Head Teacher

The complainant may be dissatisfied with the way the complaint was handled at Stage 1. The Headteacher should investigate the complaint, review all the information and discuss the findings, together with any recommendations or apology, with the complainant. As almost all complaints concern the day-to-day management of the school, few matters should need to go further.

Stage 3: Complaint heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, he/she should write to the Chair of Governors, within 14 school days, giving details of the complaint. Sometimes the Chair will be able to diffuse the situation at this point, by speaking with or writing to the complainant and reassuring him or her that the school has taken the complaint seriously. Should, however, this prove not to be the case, the Chair, or a nominated Governor, will convene a Governing Body Complaints Appeal Panel, normally within 21 school days, to which the complainant and Headteacher will be invited. The Panel can:

- 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.

The Panel's decision. The Chair of the Panel should ensure that the complainant and the Headteacher are notified of the Panel's decision, in writing, within a set deadline which is publicised in the school's procedure. The letter needs to explain that any further appeal should be addressed to the Secretary of State for Education:

Tel: 0370 000 2288
Email: info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk
Letter: Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street,
London, SW1P 3BT.
Web site: www.education.gov.uk

The Local Authority has no role in reviewing any school's complaints procedures or in investigating individual complaints.