



**GOVERNORS
FOR SCHOOLS**

Handling parental concerns & investigations

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Aims of today's session:

By the end of the session you will be able to:

- Reflect on best practice, when responding to parental concerns and complaints
- To understand the role and function of conducting an investigation
- To provide you with a platform to ask questions, raise issues and share good practice

New DfE Guidance

Guidance

Best practice guidance for school complaints procedures 2019

Updated 11 January 2019

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Introduction

In accordance with [Section 29\(1\) of the Education Act 2002](#), all maintained schools and maintained nursery schools must have and publish procedures to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides, for which there are no separate (statutory) procedures.

We have produced this guidance to:

- share and encourage best practice
- help schools avoid common pitfalls

Focus on improved practice:

- DfE model complaints policy;
- expanded audience for raising a concern or complaint;
- share and encourage good practice;
- help school avoid common pitfalls;
- suggests reduced two-stage complaints process – school then governing body/board

DfE Expectations;

- a specific complaints procedure *tailored to school needs*;
- published on school web site;
- simple to understand and use;
- enabling a full and fair investigation;
- respect for confidentiality;
- effective response and appropriate redress
- informs improvements

Concern v Complaint

- A 'concern' may be treated as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.
- A complaint may be generally recognised as 'an expression or statement of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

Poll #1

Positive Culture

- Policies and protocols
- Informative and easy to navigate website
- Welcoming environment
- Clarity about who to contact if 'worried'
- Communication methods – newsletters, emails, texts, Parentmail etc.
- Parent, staff and pupil surveys
- Feedback outcomes – you said we did

Concerns:

- Managed by school, in accordance with policy
- Make use of any LA support services/commissioned services for managing complaints
- Establish with the complainant, what they believe will resolve the issue
- Investigates the issues and responds to the complainant
- Reports to the board in general terms

Out of Scope

Some areas have their own statutory process and are *not* covered by school/trust complaint procedures:

- Admissions
- SEND statutory assessments
- Exclusions
- Whistleblowing
- Staff grievance

Board Investigation

- The process:
- Formal complaint received
- Governor assigned to investigate
- Meets with the complainant and reviews expectations (make notes)
- Scrutiny of documentation and interviews with staff/pupil as appropriate
- Prepares a report for the governor panel

Poll #2

The Hearing

The process:

- Formal governor panel – within agreed timescales
- An independent governor is best practice in maintained school and mandatory for academies
- Reviews the evidence
- Reaches a conclusion

Serious and Persistent Complaints

- Dissatisfied complainant tries to open the same issue again
- ‘procedure completed and the matter is now closed’
- Further correspondence may be deemed ‘serial’ or ‘persistent’ and you may choose not to respond
- School may refuse to accept correspondence from ‘vexatious’ complainants

Any questions



What you need to know, when you need to know it



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