

Brighton & Hove Parents' and Carers' Brief Guide to School Complaints



(This guidance should be read alongside the School Complaints Policy)

Most concerns and complaints can be sorted out quickly by speaking to your child's class teacher.

All school staff will make every effort to resolve your problem informally. They will make sure that they understand what may have gone wrong and explain their actions to you. They will ask what you would like them to do to put things right. Of course this does not mean that in every case they will come round to your point of view, but it will help both you and the school to understand everything about the issue. It may also help to prevent a similar issue arising again.

All schools are required by law to have and publish a complaints policy and you can ask for a copy from the school office. Many schools will have a copy on their website.

If you have a concern about the school you must follow the complaints process in the order set out below:

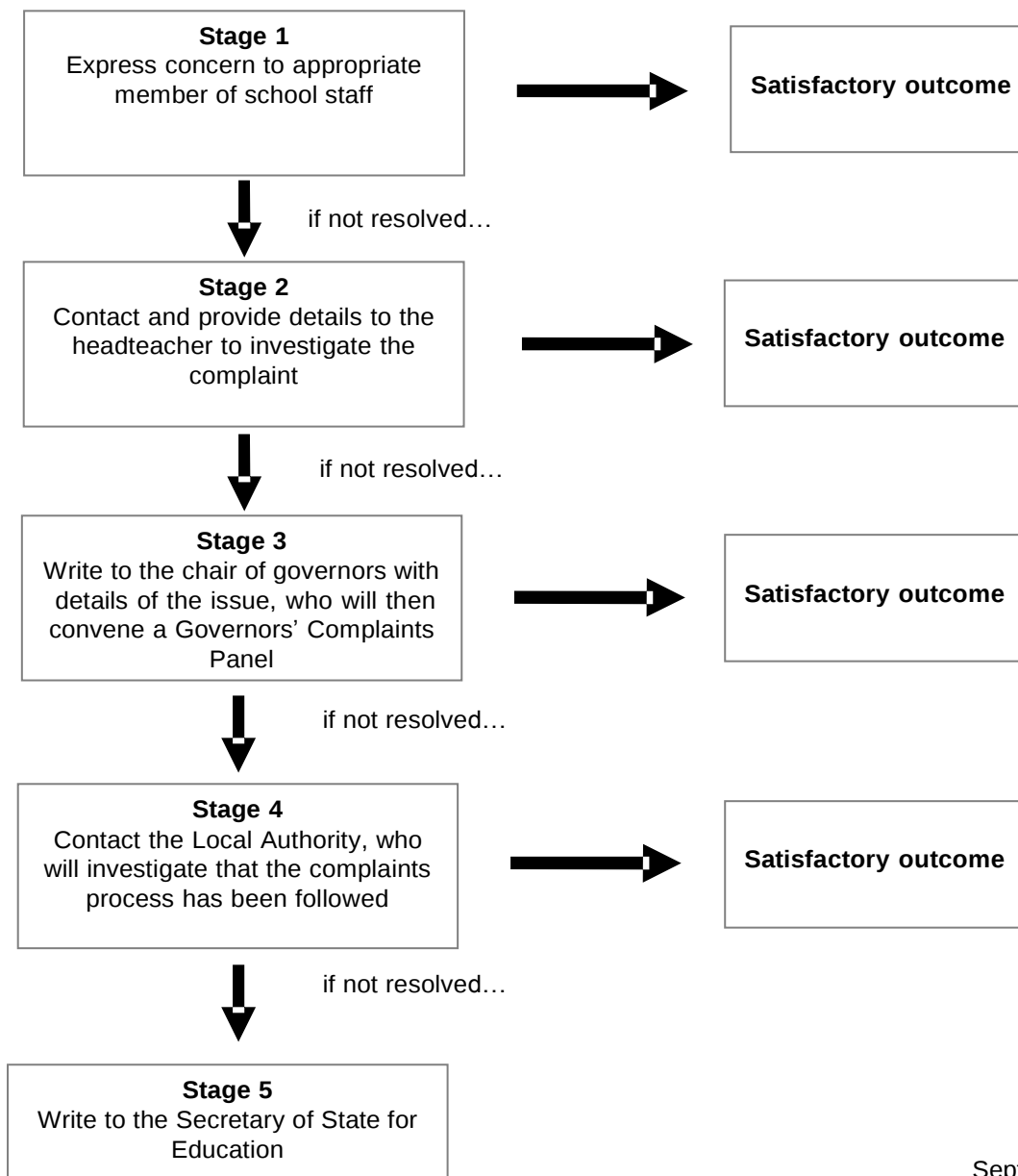
- Go to the school and speak to someone who knows about the issue and could help you. Aim to do this as soon as possible. This could be the class teacher (early years / primary) or subject/form teacher (secondary). The member of staff will try to explain and put things right, if that is appropriate. Or they may recommend a more appropriate person to help you.
- If you are not happy with their response try and speak to a senior member of staff or a year tutor.
- If you are still not happy make an appointment to speak to the headteacher.

If the issue is still not resolved, write a formal letter/email with attachments of complaint to the headteacher. You will need to clearly outline your concerns and explain what you are specifically complaining about. We suggest you keep a copy of this letter. The headteacher will ask to meet you to discuss the problem.

- You may take a friend or someone else with you if you wish. The headteacher is required to conduct a full investigation of your complaint and may interview people and/or pupils involved.
- You should receive a written response to acknowledge your complaint within five school working days (this does not include holidays). The school's letter to you will explain the timescale for completing the investigation. Once the investigation has been completed and shared, where appropriate, with parent/carers the issue will normally be resolved at this stage.
- If you are still not satisfied that your complaint has been resolved, you should write to the chair of governors at the school and ask that the issue raised in your letter of complaint be reviewed and considered by the Governors' Complaints Panel. It will be heard by a panel of three governors who have no previous knowledge of the complaint, so they will be able to give it an objective and final assessment. You will be invited to attend and speak to the panel at a meeting at which the headteacher will also be present. It will be set out in the complaints procedure how these meetings will operate.
- Usually most complaints are settled, but in exceptional cases it may be possible to refer the issue to the local authority (Brighton & Hove City Council), who will only check that the complaints procedure has been followed correctly. After the local authority it can be referred to the Secretary of State for Education. Again it is likely they will check that procedure has been followed correctly and not revisit the decision of the panel.
- If you have a complaint about the headteacher personally then you should refer this, confidentially, directly to the chair of governors through the school office. The chair of governors will make arrangements to investigate your complaint.

Overview of the School Complaints Process

Model Complaints Procedure



Stage 1

Discuss your concerns with your child/young person's class teacher or another appropriate member of staff. Most concerns are able to be resolved satisfactorily at this stage.

Stage 2

Contact the headteacher by arranging an appointment to see him or her or put your concerns in writing. The headteacher or their representative will investigate your concerns and respond.

Stage 3

If the headteacher is unable to resolve the issue to your satisfaction you may write to the chair of governors at the school. The chair will arrange a panel of governors to be formed to hear your complaint. The chair of the panel will contact you with the arrangements.

Stage 4

If you are not satisfied by the outcome of the Governors' Panel you may contact the local authority who will investigate if the process has been carried out appropriately. The local authority will let you know the outcome of the investigation.

Stage 5

If you are not satisfied after Stage 4 you may contact the Secretary of State for Education.

Please refer to the School Complaints Policy for further details about raising a concern or complaint in the school and also what is not covered by this complaints process.