

Vallis First School Complaints Procedure

Introduction

As a school we believe in creating a partnership with parents to ensure that all the children at Vallis First School are happy and successful in their time at the school. The school will aim to provide as many opportunities as we can to keep you informed about your child's progress and to involve you in the life of the school - with parents' evenings in the autumn and spring terms and a written report in the summer term. Family Learning events which usually happen at least once a term will give you opportunities to see your child at work and work alongside them. Parents are invited into school for our Harvest Assembly and Christmas Performances as well as Sports Days and other events such as our Big Sing. We try to have at least one Parents' Forum a year focussing on an aspect of school life usually requested by parents through surveys. Parents are also welcome to meet with teachers informally at the end of the day or to request a meeting or telephone call to discuss a concern through contacting the School Office, emailing or telephoning. We aim to deal with questions and concerns quickly and helpfully.

Sometimes parents and schools do have a misunderstanding, but these can often be sorted out by talking to the right person. Most concerns can be settled without too much trouble by discussing things with the class teacher or a member of the Senior Management Team. Whatever the issue, it is always important to try and find an answer, especially if you are seriously concerned about your child's future at the school.

The complaints process

It is best to raise any concerns early on, before they grow into a problem or complaint. Always start by arranging to discuss an issue with the class teacher. They can look into your concerns and take any action that may be necessary to put things right and make improvements.

If you have talked to your child's teacher but the situation is not resolved, the class teacher may suggest that you talk to the Headteacher, or you can also ask for an appointment with the Headteacher. It will help to give the school some days and times when you are available to help them find the soonest possible appointment for both parties. If the matter is urgent and the Headteacher is not available the Deputy Headteacher or a member of the Senior Management Team will meet with you initially to hear your concerns and see if they can help or to take some information to pass onto the Headteacher.

Before attending the meeting, it would be useful to put down your concerns in writing so that both you and the school can spend the meeting time looking for a solution to the problem. If your child has special educational needs you may want to speak to the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator at the school in the first instance. If your worries are not addressed or you would appreciate some support then you can contact 'Somerset Parent Partnership' to talk about your concerns (01823 355578). When attending the appointment, you may take a friend or family member with you if you wish.

What happens next?

A meeting between a Headteacher and a parent might result in both parties agreeing on two or three specific things or actions which need to happen for the problem to be resolved. A timescale for these things to happen will usually also be agreed.

If, having met with the Headteacher you are still unhappy, you can ask the Governing Body of the school to hold a Governor Review. This is a formal complaints process.

To go through this process you will first need to write to the Clerk of Governors, stating that you wish to make a formal complaint. Remember to make it clear what it is that you are complaining about and what you would like the governors to do.

A Governor Review starts with a formal meeting between a panel of two governors, one of whom will be the Chair or the Vice Chair of Governors, and you (and a friend or family member if desired). The meeting is to discuss your complaint and agree the points which you would like the Governors to investigate. A timescale will be agreed for the investigation to be completed. Following the meeting the Governors will investigate the points discussed and provide a written response within the agreed time. If the investigation is likely to take some time then the governors will write with an update after two weeks to keep parents informed.

If you are still unhappy after having received the written decision made by the Governors' panel, then you may raise your complaint with the Secretary of State for Education. Details can be found on the website for the Department of Education.

Somerset County Council will not be able to investigate your complaint - the Education Act 2011 removed the duty on Local Authorities in England in relation to parental complaints about schools.

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