

Last review: 15 September 2020
Review date: September 2021
Signed By:
Approval Committee: Governing Body



GILLINGHAM SCHOOL

Hardings Lane, Gillingham

Dorset SP8 4QP

Complaints Policy

Parental Concerns

What if I have concerns about aspects of my child's education?

Guidance for Parents

Gillingham School has excellent relationships with its parents. From time to time however you may have a concern about some aspect of your child's education. Gillingham School will always look into these concerns - most things are resolved by informal discussion with school staff, however, for those rare occasions when we cannot agree on a resolution, this leaflet answers some of the most commonly asked questions.

Q. How should I complain?

A. Firstly talk to us - most issues of concern are quickly resolved – they often reflect a lack of communication, a misunderstanding, or a genuine error made in good faith and without intent to harm or offend.

If you are unable to resolve matters readily, please ask that your concern be taken up by a more senior member of staff, who will investigate and mediate.

As a last resort, in the event that we are unable to reach a resolution, you may wish to make your complaint formal – this should be addressed in writing to the headteacher, stating the nature of the complaint and the steps you have already taken to seek a resolution.

Please note that, in line with Local Authority advice, anonymous complaints will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances such as a child protection concern.

Q. Who should I contact at the school?

A. At Gillingham School the reception staff will be able to advise you about who to contact in the first instance. This may be your child's Tutor, Head of Year, subject teacher or subject head of department, or a staff member organising an event or activity. In the case of serious concerns you may be advised to contact a member of senior staff.

If you make your initial contact by telephone, please remember that most school staff are in classes and meetings for much of the day, so may not immediately be able to take your call. In an emergency, please let reception staff know that you must speak to someone immediately and they will seek an alternative colleague for you.

Should you wish to meet with a member of staff to discuss the matter you will need to make an appointment to ensure that relevant staff are available and have any necessary information to hand.

If you are contacting the school in writing, you may wish to send a copy to the headteacher for information, however it is only if you wish to make a formal complaint that your letter must be addressed to the headteacher.

Please note that, in line with Local Authority advice, investigation under this procedure into spurious complaints and those brought by vexatious complainants will be terminated. This will require the agreement of 3 senior members of staff and/or governors.

Q. What do I do if I have a concern about my child's education?

A. You should discuss your concern with the relevant staff at the school.

Q. What if my concern is to do with an individual employee of the school?

A. If your concern is to do with the conduct or competence of an individual employee it will be looked into by the school. If necessary it will be referred to the headteacher and dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedures. If you are making a serious allegation against a member of staff it cannot be dealt with under the school's complaints procedure, and should be addressed immediately to the headteacher or a deputy.

Q. What if my complaint is to do with admissions, school curriculum, exclusions or special educational needs?

A. There are separate statutory complaints procedures for dealing with such a complaint if it cannot be dealt with under the school's complaints procedure. Dorset Local Authority telephone numbers for guidance if you wish to make a complaint relating to these areas are as follows :-

Admissions :-	01305 224200
Curriculum :-	01305 254022
Exclusions :-	01305 225134
Special Educational Needs :-	01305 224888

Q. What if my complaint is about the way the school is run, its policies or procedures, and/or their effect on my child?

A. Your complaint should in the first instance be addressed to a senior member of staff.

Q. What if my child is no longer on the school roll?

A. The school will set aside your complaint and take no further action under the General Complaints Policy. If your complaint was formal, the head teacher or Chair of Governors will write to you closing the matter on behalf of the school.

Q. What if I take my child off the school roll during the time my complaint is being considered?

A. The school will set aside your complaint and take no further action under the General Complaints Policy. If your complaint was formal, the head teacher or Chair of Governors will write to you closing the matter on behalf of the school.

Q. Should I contact a school governor?

A. The governors will advise you to raise your concern with the head teacher. Only if the headteacher and other staff have been unable to reach a satisfactory resolution with you can Governors become directly involved. In this case you should address your complaint to the Chair of Governors (via the school office), who will arrange for a review of the process to be carried out.

Q. Should I contact the Local Authority?

A. The Local Authority will advise you to raise your concern with the head teacher.

Q. What if my concern remains unresolved?

A. What happens next depends on the nature of your concern. Provided your child is still on the school roll there are formal procedures dependent on the nature of the concern.

We hope you find this guidance leaflet helpful. It has been based upon a model leaflet produced by Dorset Local Authorities Children's Services Directorate.