



Complaints procedure overview

Schools are responsible for resolving their own complaints. If you are unhappy about something that has happened at Maria Fidelis School, you have the right to make us aware of your concerns.

This document is designed to give you a brief overview of our complaints procedure. A full copy of the procedure can be found on our website and this will explain the procedures that the school follows in more detail.

Whilst there may be exceptions and/or variations, the general process is as follows and if you are not sure how or who to contact at any stage, please do as at the school office.

Stage 1: Talk to the member of staff concerned.

Most concerns and complaints from parents/carers can be sorted out quickly by speaking to the teacher, tutor or Head of Year. Please do not try to see the teacher during the school teaching day when they are taking or preparing lessons. You may need an appointment and you can take a friend or relative with you if you wish. Similarly, complaints about any other school service should initially be addressed to the appropriate member of staff, e.g. Premises Manager, Admin Manager, etc. All staff will make every effort to resolve your problem informally, make sure that they understand what you feel went wrong, explain their own actions to you and ask what you would like the school to do to put things right.

Whilst we may not come round to your point of view in every case, it will help both you and us to understand both sides of the issue in question. It may also help to prevent a similar problem arising again.

Stage 2: Complain to the Headteacher

If you are dissatisfied with the member of staff's response, you can make a complaint to the Headteacher. You should contact the Headteacher first but if you want to make a formal complaint, this should be made in writing. Please contact the school office if you need assistance with this.

The Headteacher may ask to meet you for a discussion of the problem. Again, you can take a friend or someone else with you if you wish. The Headteacher will arrange an investigation of the complaint and any members of staff or pupils involved may be interviewed. You will receive a written response to your complaint.

If your complaint is about an action or decision of the Headteacher, then you should refer it to the Chair of School Governors. (See below)

Stage 3: Contact the Chair of Governors

The problem will normally be resolved by this stage but if you are still not satisfied you may wish to contact the Chair of Governors to ask for a review or referral of your complaint to a School Governors' Complaints Panel.

You can contact the Chair via letter and your correspondence should be handed to the school office in a sealed envelope marked 'private and confidential' and 'for the attention of the Chair of School Governors'.

Your complaint may then be heard by a group of three governors who have no previous knowledge of the problem and so will be able to give it a fresh assessment.

You will be invited to attend and speak to the panel at a meeting, which the Headteacher will also attend. The school's complaint procedure explains how these meetings operate in more detail.

Further action

Complaints about school problems are almost always settled within schools but in exceptional cases it may be possible to refer the problem to an outside body, such as the Secretary of State for Education, once the 3 stage process is completed.

Other complaints

Some education matters have their own complaints or appeals procedure such as curriculum, admissions, etc.

If your complaint is about something for which the Local Authority's Children, Schools & Families department is responsible (such as Special Educational Needs appeals or Education Welfare), you should contact their complaints unit for advice instead.