



The Quercus Federation

Complaints Policy

Hurst Green Church of England Primary School and Nursery

This policy was adopted on September 2018

This policy is due for review on September 2019

Signed (Chair of Governors)

Signed (Head of School)

Date:



- **At Hurst Green CE School we encourage openness and honesty.**
- **We deal with any concern or complaint helpfully and reasonably.**
- **We try to put things right as quickly as possible.**

All concerns or complaints need to be taken up with the school itself.

The local education authority would not usually get involved in a complaint about a school unless the school had completed its own procedures first.

This complaints procedure is for general complaints. The school follows other procedures for complaints or appeals about the curriculum, special educational needs provision, exclusions and admissions.

These procedures are defined by the LA. Staff disciplinary action, child protection issues or criminal investigation will also need to be handled differently. We shall tell you which is the right process when you discuss your concern with us.

The complaints procedure has four stages. You will be told what to do at the end of each stage if you wish to take your complaint further.

Stage 1

If there is a concern about the school, this needs to be brought to the attention of a member of staff at the school, preferably the person who is most closely involved.

If a complaint or concern is initially put to a governor, they can only provide general advice and will recommend the complaint or concern should be taken up with the member of staff best able to help, or with the Head Teacher.

Most concerns can usually be settled quickly and without fuss by contacting the right person in the school. This could be a Class Teacher, another member of staff or the Executive Head/Head of School.

Stage 2

If a concern cannot be sorted out in this way or the person with the complaint or concern is not happy with the way it has been dealt with stage 2 of the complaints procedure is applied:

The complaint or concern is brought to the attention of the Executive Head/Head of School in writing, who will investigate the complaint.

If the complaint is about the Executive Head/Head of School the complaint should be brought directly to the chair of governors (see Stage 3).

The school will inform the complainant that it has received the complaint within 5 school days and will be given the results of the Executive Head/Head of School's investigation in writing within 15 school days.



Stage 3

If the complaint has still not been resolved satisfactorily, stage 3 of the complaints procedure may be applied:

The written complaint is brought to the attention of the chair of governors.

The complainant must make it clear why they are complaining, what has happened at previous stages and what they want to happen as a result of the complaint.

The chair of governors will let the complainant know that the complaint has been received within 7 school days and will then investigate it.

The outcome of the chair of governors' investigation will be sent to the complainant in writing within 20 school days.

Stage 4

If the complainant is still not satisfied after receiving the chair of governor's report, they can ask to have the complaint referred to a complaints committee of the governing body at stage 4:

The complainant is to write to the clerk to the governors care of the school stating exactly why they are not satisfied with the chair of governors' findings and ask that a complaints committee be set up to look at the complaint.

The committee will meet between 12 and 20 school days after the clerk to the governors receives the letter.

The complainant will be told in advance about the process and what will happen at the meeting of the committee.

The complainant will be invited to attend and bring a relative or friend to support them if they want to. The complainant will be told in writing about the committee's findings within 5 school days from the date of the meeting.

What to do if the complainant is still not satisfied with the governing body's decision

If the complainant feels that their complaint was not handled fairly according to the school's own complaints procedure they can ask the local education authority to investigate:

They should write to the LA's complaints officer at this address.

Education Department,
East Sussex County Council
PO Box 4,
County Hall
St. Anne's Crescent,
Lewes
East Sussex, BN7 1SO

The complainant should explain their complaint and say why they think the school did not follow its complaints procedure properly, providing evidence where possible to support their view.

The Department's complaints officer will let the complainant know that he has received the letter within 10 working days. The complaints officer will look at the evidence and then decide if they should investigate. They cannot do anything until the school itself has finished considering the complaint.

The complaints officer will investigate whether the school had dealt with the complaint properly according to its own procedures. The complaints officer will not investigate the original complaint all over again. The LA cannot make the school come to a different judgement on your case if the governing body has considered the complaint in a reasonable way.

The complaints officer will inform the complainant of the outcome of their investigation in writing. If they conclude that the school did not follow its procedures properly, the matter will be referred back to the chair of the governing body. The governing body should then re-investigate the complaint.



If the complainant believes that the LA has acted unreasonably they may appeal to the Secretary of State for Education:

The Secretary of State for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P3BT

The Secretary of State could step in if a governing body or a LA had not carried out its legal duty or had acted unreasonably. The Secretary of State would not do anything until the school and the LA had finished looking into the complaint.

If the complainant feels that there has been a fault in the way their complaint has been dealt with, they can take this to the Local Government Ombudsman:

The Local Government Ombudsman
21 Queen Anne's Gate
London
SW1H 9BU

The Ombudsman will only investigate where there has been a fault in the way the process was handled by the school or LA.

They can investigate complaints about how something has been done. This could be giving the wrong information, not dealing with letters or taking too long to do something.

They cannot question what has been done just because someone does not agree with the result. The Ombudsman cannot investigate how schools and colleges are run.

The Ombudsman could not do anything until the school and the LA have finished looking into your complaint.