



If any person, including a Governor, has a specific complaint concerning the RE curriculum or collective worship at Southcote Primary School this procedure will apply. Complaints about other matters are dealt with under separate procedures.

Advice for parents making a complaint can be obtained from

- The Advisory Centre for Education www.ace-ed.org.uk Tel: 0207 704 3370
- Reading Borough Council's parent helpline. Tel: 0118 9373748
- Parent Partnership (For parents of children with Special Educational Needs). Tel: 0118 9399821

1. STAGE 1 - Informal Resolution

Any complaint must first be raised with the class teacher concerned to clarify the situation and to try to reach an early mutually acceptable resolution. A complainant should receive a response to a complaint within five working days of receipt of the complaint at stage 1.

2. STAGE 2 - Professional Investigation

Should the complainant be dissatisfied with the resolution proposed at stage 1 they may ask for a Professional Investigation of their complaint. The Head or another senior member of staff would normally conduct the Professional Investigation. A complainant should receive an acknowledgement of their request for an escalation to stage 2 within 5 working days giving an indication of when the investigation will be complete and when the complainant should receive a full response. In any case the complainant should have a full response within 15 working days. In circumstances where the case is so complex that the investigation is going to take longer the complainant should be kept fully informed of progress in the case.

To escalate to this stage the complainant must write to the Head giving details of the complaint and the reasons why they are dissatisfied with the stage 1 resolution.

3. STAGE 3 - Review by the Governing Body

Should the complainant remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the Professional Investigation stage they have the right to request a review by a panel of Governors.

To escalate to this stage the complainant must write to the Chair of the Governing Body at the school address requesting the review and giving their reasons for being dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2. The process for resolving the complaint will be shared with the complainant and a time scale no longer than 20 working days will be agreed to bring the complaint before the Governing Body complaints panel.

On receiving a review request the Chair will call a meeting of the Governing Body complaints panel comprising of no fewer than two governors to hear the complaint.

The panel will:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- or, decide there is insufficient evidence to make a decision

The panel may also:

- recommend appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- recommend a review of the relevant school systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.

The decision of the Governing Body complaints panel will be final in most cases. The main exceptions are exclusions, curriculum and statutory admissions where separate procedures are available

Governing Body panel procedure:

- a. It is important that the appeal hearing is independent and impartial and that it is seen to be so.
- b. No governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- c. In deciding the make-up of the panel, governors need to try and ensure that it is a cross-section of the categories of governor and sensitive to the issues of race, gender and religious affiliation.
- d. The aim of the hearing, which needs to be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant.
- e. However, it has to be recognised the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour.
- f. The governors sitting on the panel need to be aware of the complaints procedure.
- g. The hearing is as informal as possible.
- h. Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.
- i. After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses.
- j. The Head may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- k. The Head is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses.
- l. The complainant may question both the Head and witnesses after each has spoken.
- m. The panel may ask questions at any point.
- n. The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
- o. The Head is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
- p. Both parties leave while the panel decides the issues.
- q. The chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within a set time scale.
- r. An effective panel will acknowledge that many complainants feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. Parents often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child. The panel chair will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible. The layout of the room will set the tone and care is needed to ensure the setting is informal and not adversarial.
- s. Extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child. Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings will ensure that the child does not feel intimidated. The panel needs to be aware of the views of the child and give them equal consideration to those of adults. Where the child's parent is the complainant, it would be helpful to give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the hearing, if any, the child needs to attend.

4. STAGE 4 - Review by the Local Authority

If a parent is unhappy with the outcome of the Governing Body review, or if the Governing Body is unable to reach a decision, the Chair of the panel should contact the Local Authority. A representative of the Local Authority will review the provision in question against statutory guidance and report findings and/or recommendations to the complainant, Headteacher and Governing Body.

If a parent is still dissatisfied after the school complaints procedure has been exhausted they can contact:

- The DfE
- The Local Government Ombudsman
- Ofsted

Signed	HEADTEACHER: L Telling
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Date	5 th May 2015
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Approved by Governors	5 th May 2015
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