

Denton Community Primary School & Nursery



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Denton CP School aims to deliver a good education and provide a safe and stimulating environment for your child. However, problems sometimes occur and as a parent, you may need to know how to take forward a query or complaint. **Wherever possible, we will respond to all complaints within five working days** (and no later than within 28 days of the complaint being received).

This leaflet explains how the school's Complaints Procedure works, what steps you should take to obtain an answer to your complaint, and who will deal with your complaint.

If you are unhappy with the school

1. School staff, school governors and the LA want to promote an open and positive relationship between school staff and parents. This should include keeping you informed of your child's progress and explaining school policies and national education policy and practice. However, things may go wrong, resulting in you wishing to discuss problems or make a complaint.
2. Some queries or complaints can be dealt with at school, by staff or perhaps by the governing body. Others may need to be referred to the Education Officer or elsewhere. In all but a very few cases, the school should be your first point of contact. This leaflet tells you how your complaint should be taken forward and whom to contact.
3. There are special procedures, which apply to certain types of complaint. These include complaints about the school's delivery of the National Curriculum, Statements of Special Educational Need, admission to or exclusion from the school and some matters related to staff conduct. The school will be able to advise you about how to take forward your complaint, and whether a special procedure applies to it.

4. Complaints and queries are most easily resolved if they are taken forward as soon as possible after the event. Formal complaint procedures will not cover complaints about events which occurred more than three months before unless there are very special circumstances.
5. More detailed information about how to take forward a complaint or query can be obtained from the school. If you do not wish to discuss your complaint or query with the school staff, you can contact the Education Department. The Address is:

The Director of Education
School Government Administration
PO Box 4
St. Anne's Crescent
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 1SG

Where to start

6. Most queries and complaints can be resolved informally by discussing the matter with a member of staff. This might be the class teacher or, in more serious circumstances, the headteacher. The person dealing with your query will try to provide you with an answer as quickly as possible.
7. In some cases, the headteacher may refer you directly to the LA and will tell you whom to contact. This may occur where the query relates to an issue outside the control of the school, or is subject to a special complaint or appeals procedure as mentioned at 3. If there are no special procedures to follow, the next stage of complaint will be to the governing body if it has not been possible to resolve your complaint informally.

The Governing Body

8. The Governing body is made up of parents, a teacher and representatives of the community and the LA. It is responsible for the management of resources and the formulation of various policies within the school. Governors have acquired broader responsibilities in recent years and many queries and complaints may refer to issues for which the governors have specific responsibilities.

9. If you have not been satisfied with the response of the headteacher or staff to your complaint or query, you should write to the Clerk to the Governing Body. This should take the form of a letter, and you should keep a copy of the letter. The governors will inform you how they propose to investigate your complaint, and if this is arranged, you should be given at least 3 days notice of the meeting.

The Local Authority

10. Should you be unhappy with the decision or action taken by the headteacher and the governing body, you can take your complaint to the LA. You should write to the Director of Education at the address shown in paragraph 5. Receipt of your complaint will be acknowledged, and you will be informed what will happen next. The complaint will normally be answered within three weeks; although it may take longer if the matter is particularly complex or additional correspondence is involved. If there is a delay, you should be kept informed.
11. A meeting with a representative of County Hall, possibly involving school staff, may be appropriate at this stage. If so, every effort will be made to make it at a time and date convenient to you. You will be informed of the result of the meeting in writing to confirm whatever decisions or actions have been taken.

Where else?

12. Use of the Local Education Authority's complaints procedure does not preclude parents from taking their complaints to others, such as their Local County Councillor or Member of Parliament. Where you are dissatisfied with the LEA's decision, you can write to the Secretary of State, DCSF, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, Westminster, London, SW1P 3BT enclosing copies of earlier papers and correspondence.

If you are unhappy with the actions of the LEA itself, rather than the school, you can complain to the Commission for Local Administration (the Ombudsman). The Ombudsman cannot investigate internal matters in schools but can investigate complaints about the LEA alleging 'maladministration', which means bias, neglect or unjustifiable delay. The Education Department at County Hall can give you further information about taking a complaint to the Ombudsman.