



## Policy for managing parental complaints

### Concern or Complaint?

A concern is usually informal and most are dealt with successfully by the class teacher or Headteacher. Occasionally, despite the best efforts of both parties, a concern cannot be resolved by informal discussion and it will need to be referred to the Governing Body. Under the Somerset County Council Parental Complaints Procedure, a concern becomes a formal complaint when it is made in writing to the governing body. A complaint can be defined as: “an expression of dissatisfaction about the actions or inactions of the school, which is not immediately resolved and is made by the person directly affected or by someone acting on their behalf.”

### THE PROCESS TO BE FOLLOWED

All staff and governors must be aware of the process for supporting parents who raise concerns, and aim to resolve the concern within the school if at all possible. This document is available in the information section of our school’s website –

[www.stnicholashenstridge.co.uk](http://www.stnicholashenstridge.co.uk) **Parents should be encouraged to raise any concerns with their child’s class teacher in the first instance.**

1. The issue should be raised with the appropriate member of staff who should follow the agreed school procedure (e.g. Behaviour Policy, Health and Safety Policy). A record should be made of any action taken by the school and the response made to the complaint.
2. If the complainant remains dissatisfied they should then be advised to take the complaint to the Headteacher, Mrs Shearer, who will investigate, meet with them and respond in writing (within a mutually agreed timescale).
3. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response from the Headteacher they should write to the Clerk to the Governors stating that they wish to make a formal complaint. The Clerk will issue the Governors' Review Request proforma for completion.
4. The Clerk will convene a panel of no less than 3 governors who have had no prior knowledge of the specific complaint. The date of the panel should be within 15 school days of receiving the complaint proforma. **The Chair of the Panel should contact Somerset Governor Services (01823 356609) for advice prior to holding the Panel Hearing.**

The complainant may bring a friend/relative to the panel to support them if they so wish.

5. After meeting with the parent, the panel will review and/or investigate the Headteacher's handling of/response to the complaint and decide if it was appropriate and fair. They may wish to meet with any staff or witnesses who can provide further information.
6. The panel will write a report following their investigations and send it to the complainant within 15 school days explaining their decision. With this report the complainant should be advised what to do if they are dissatisfied with the report's recommendations.
7. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the school's response, they should take the complaint to the Secretary of State as advised on the DFE website ([www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk))

'Complaints can be made to the Secretary of State, if a person believes that a governing body or Local Authority is behaving "unreasonably", or has not carried out its statutory duties (Sections 496 and 497 *Education Act 1996*). Any instruction would need to be legally enforceable (e.g. via a court order).'

## FLOWCHART Summary of Dealing with Concerns and Complaints

It is important to recognise the difference between a concern and a complaint. Usually by taking an informal concern seriously you can prevent it becoming a formal complaint.

