

Complaints Procedure – Summary for Parents/Carers

If you have a concern or complaint

We would like you to tell us about it. We welcome suggestions for improving our work in school. Be assured that no matter what you want to tell us, our support and respect for you and your child in school will not be affected in any way. Please tell us of your concern as soon as possible. It is difficult for us to investigate properly an incident or problem that happened some time ago.

What to do first

Most concerns and complaints can be sorted out quickly by speaking with your child's class teacher.

If you have a complaint that you feel should be looked at by the Executive Headteacher in the first instance you can contact her straight away if you prefer. It is usually best to discuss the problem face to face. You may need an appointment to do this and can make one by ringing or calling into the school office. You can take a friend or relative to the appointment with you if you would like to.

All staff will make every effort to resolve your problem informally. They will make sure that they understand what you feel went wrong, and they will explain their own actions to you. They will ask what you would like the school to do to put things right. Of course, this does not mean that in every case they will come round to your point of view but it will help both you and the school to understand both sides of the issue. It may also help to prevent a similar problem arising again.

What to do next

If you are not satisfied with the teacher's initial response to your questions or concerns (or with the Executive Headteacher's initial reaction if she has already been involved) you can make a formal complaint to the Executive Headteacher. This should be made in writing, using the form included in the published Complaints procedure.

If your complaint is about an action of the Executive Headteacher personally, then you should refer it to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. You can contact him via the Clerk to Trustees (email: clerk@elmleaschoolstrust.com)

You may also find it helpful at this stage to have a copy of the full statement of the Trusts' Complaints Procedures as this explains in detail what procedures are followed. This is available from either Elmlea Infant or Elmlea Junior school office or on the schools' websites.

The Executive Headteacher will ask to meet you to discuss the problem. Again, you may take a friend or someone else with you if you wish. The Executive Headteacher will conduct a full investigation of the complaint and may interview any members of staff or pupils involved. You will receive a written response to your complaint.

If you are still unhappy

The problem will normally be solved before it reaches this stage. However, if you are still not satisfied you may wish to contact the Chair of the Board of Trustees to ask for a referral of your complaint to a Board of Trustees Complaints Panel. It will then be heard by a group of three trustees who have no previous knowledge of the problem and so will be given a fresh assessment. You may be invited to attend and speak to the panel at a meeting that the Executive Headteacher will also attend. The Trust Complaints Procedures explains how these meetings operate.

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 Department for Education. Again, there are more details about this in the Trust Complaints Procedure.