

Q6. What will happen next?

Normally, a small panel of governors who have not been involved with your concern/complaint before, will meet to consider your concern/complaint. You will also be invited to meet the panel to present your case in person.

The panel of governors will then review and/or investigate the Principal's handling of/response to your concern/ complaint and decide if it was appropriate and fair.

The panel will write to you to explain its decision.

Q7. What do I do if I am still unhappy?

If you are still unhappy you may ask the Academies Division of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) whether your complaint is one that can be investigated by them. To do this you need to write to them at Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road, Darlington, DL3 9BG within 10 school days of receipt of the panel's letter.

If the DCSF investigates your complaint, its role is only to look at the way it has been handled i.e. whether the complaints procedure has been followed correctly. It cannot investigate the original complaint.

If you still unhappy you may contact Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) or the Ombudsman.

Remember the whole process exists so that everyone's views can be heard. The aim is that the complaint should be dealt with properly and fairly. Communications with the Academy are welcome and the latter stages of this complaints procedure are rarely used but remain part of the process.



Concerns and Complaints about the Academy: A Guide for Parents and Carers

This leaflet aims to help you in approaching the Academy when you feel you have a problem.

This process has been developed to enable the Academy and parents/carers to work together to resolve issues.



Information can be made available in other languages, or other formats such as Braille or Audio Tape, on request. Please ask a member of our staff for more information, or if you need any other help or advice. They can arrange to speak to you in your own language if you need them to.

Introduction

The Academy will aim to provide as many opportunities to keep you informed and involved in your child's progress as it possibly can. Co-operation between parents, staff and governors leads to a shared sense of purpose and good atmosphere in the Academy.

However, we recognise that there are times when things may go wrong, when concerns and differences of opinion can develop. These can usually be resolved by speaking to the right person.

Q1. What should I do if I have a concern/complaint about the Academy?

The first step to resolving any concern or complaint is to discuss the issue with the Academy. It is important to be clear about the issue that you want to discuss before approaching the Academy.

Although you may want a decision or situation to change, it is best for all parties if the discussions can end on a positive note with no bad feelings. Talking with Academy staff can help you to understand how they see the situation and give you the chance to say what it looks like to you.

While some schools can see parents who just "pop in", this is not generally possible. If you have a concern, make an appointment so you have enough time to talk things through.

Q2. Whom should I contact?

This will depend on the situation. Often the class teacher will be able to deal with the matter. More serious issues will require a senior member of staff or the Principal. There should always be a discussion in the hope of solving difficulties informally.

Q3. What if I am still unhappy?

Ask for an appointment with the Vice Principal or Principal.

It may help to give the Academy some days/times when you are available to help find the earliest possible appointment for both parties.

Before attending the meeting, it would be useful to put down your concerns in writing as both you and the Academy can spend the meeting time looking for a solution to the problem.

Q4. What should I expect to happen as a result of the meeting?

After the meeting the Vice Principal/Principal may need to undertake further information gathering to inform his/her decisions and help achieve a resolution. If this is the case he/she will write to you outlining how the information gathering will be progressed and giving details of any action to be taken.

Q5. What if I feel the Principal hasn't answered my question or investigated my concern?

If you are still unhappy, you may, if you wish, ask the Academy's Governing Body to consider your concern/complaint. This is a formal process.

You will need to write to the Chair of Governors, stating that you wish to make a formal complaint. Remember to make it clear what it is that you are complaining about and what you would like the governors to do.