



Concerns & Complaints

**What to do if you're worried about your
child's progress or wellbeing
at school**



Voicing your concern

From time to time, parents and carers may have concerns about their son or daughter's education and/or wellbeing at school. Quite often this is due to a misunderstanding about School policy or practice. Sometimes the student may be behaving unusually at home or at school and/or expressing their own concerns. Whatever the situation, we would encourage you, and/or your child, to **talk to us about it at the earliest opportunity** so that we can help sort out the problem.

If it's your child's academic progress or an issue around your child's wellbeing (for example, bullying or other anxiety), that you wish to speak to us about, please make an appointment, through the School Office, 01245 472682, or in person, to see the appropriate **teacher or Pastoral Care Manager** in the first instance.

Dealing with your concern or complaint

Our full complaints procedure is set out in a separate document which you can view on the School website:

www.st-michaels-jun.essex.sch.uk or you can request a copy from the School Office or at Reception. There is also a Complaints Policy document which you can access in the same way.

This leaflet is a summary of how the procedure operates so that you have a quick overview of how we can help you.

The majority of concerns from parents, carers and others are handled under the following general procedure:

The procedure is divided into three stages:

Stage 1 aims to resolve the concern through informal contact at the appropriate level in School, as described above.

Stage 2 is the first **formal stage**, at which written complaints are considered by the Headteacher.

Stage 3 is the next stage once Stage 2 has been worked through. It involves the **Chair of Governors** or, if the Chair feels it would be helpful, a **complaints review panel** of governors.

Usually, concerns and complaints are resolved either at Stage 1 or Stage 2. The Chair of Governors has the discretion to offer, or agree to, a **Stage 3** complaints review panel if it's felt that this will help move things forward. Because it's a time-consuming process to set up and run, however, a review panel is **not an automatic right** for complainants.

Please note that this procedure doesn't include complaints about the **personal conduct** of members of the School staff, teaching or non-teaching, as these are handled under confidential arrangements in line with employment law. If you're concerned about the conduct of any member of staff other than the Headteacher, you should write to the Headteacher. If your concern is about the personal conduct of the Headteacher, please write to the Chair of Governors c/o the School.

Response times

We aim to acknowledge concerns and complaints within **24 hours** of receipt and to respond fully, or with a holding reply, **within 10 working days**. It is not usually possible to deal with complaints during school holiday periods when the School Office is closed.

The aim throughout is to resolve any concerns, anxieties, misunderstandings or complaints as soon as possible in the interests of all concerned, but especially for the good of your son or daughter.

What happens if you're not happy with the outcome?

At present, there is no appeal against a Governing Body's decision on complaints. The Local Authority (Essex County Council) has no powers to intervene in general complaints against schools. Similarly, Ofsted does not deal with individual parents' issues. However, the Government is proposing to set up national arrangements, which will give complainants an appeals route if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint at school level.

In the meantime, a complaint may be made to the Secretary of State for Education **if a person believes that a governing body or is acting "unreasonably," or is failing to carry out its statutory duties properly.**

Please bear in mind, however, that the Secretary of State will expect you to have gone through the school's complaints procedures **before** contacting the Department for Education.

You should set out fully the concerns and reasons why the complaint is being submitted, enclosing all previous correspondence relevant to the complaint:

The Secretary of State for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
LONDON
SW1P 3BT

**Remember: It's good to talk first –
we're here to listen!**