



Lincoln Christ's Hospital School

Complaints Procedure

Link member of staff:	Martin Mckeown
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Introduction

In our school all staff are dedicated to giving each child the best possible education while caring properly for their health, safety and welfare at all times. We are committed to working in partnership with parents and our community, with each of us carrying out our own particular responsibilities to help pupils gain the most from their time in school.

If you feel that something is not going quite as you would like, or we are doing something you are unhappy about, or we are not doing something you feel we should, please tell us about it.

Parent Complaint

Informal approach

- The first step:

Please arrange to discuss any concerns with your child's Progress Leader, or with the particular teacher concerned. We hope that most problems can be sorted out this way.

- The second step:

If, after speaking to your child's teacher, you do not feel that your complaint has been properly dealt with, or if your concern is about the conduct of a particular teacher, then you should discuss the matter with the Progress Leader. If you are then still unhappy about the situation, you should raise the matter with a senior member of staff, where possible this should be the Line Manager of the person whom the complaint is made. In almost all cases we can sort things out satisfactorily this way.

Formal approach

If the second step has not produced a satisfactory resolution, you should make a formal written complaint to the Headteacher, unless the complaint is about the conduct of the Headteacher you should also contact the Chair of Governors. You should then receive a written response. Alternatively, you can contact the Headteacher's PA who will arrange to take notes of your formal complaint.

The Headteacher or appropriate person will attempt to deal with any complaint as quickly as possible. The Academy will acknowledge a complaint either in writing or orally within 48 hours and respond to a complaint within 5 working days. If it is not possible to meet these deadlines, then the complainant will be informed when they will receive a response.

Community Complaint

Formal approach

- All complaints or concerns regarding staff, students or operational matters should be put in writing for the attention of the Headteacher. Alternatively, you can contact the Headteacher's PA who will arrange to take notes of your formal complaint. Complaints may also be completed and submitted via email to education@lchs.uk. You should then receive a written response within 5 working days.

- If your complaint is about the conduct of the Headteacher, or if you are dissatisfied with the Headteacher's response to your formal letter of complaint, then you will need to contact the Governors.

- Taking matters further:

You should send written details of your complaint, with any correspondence and evidence to support your complaint, to the Clerk to the Governors at the school address. If, for some reason, you do not feel able to do so, you should contact the Clerk, via the school, who will record your complaint as a statement for you to sign.

The governors will investigate your complaint and write to advise you of the outcome.

- The final stage:

The decision of the Governors is final; however, if you are dissatisfied with the governors' response, you can take your complaint to a final stage, to the Secretary of State's Office, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT. However, unless your complaint is about the Governors response, what you have said will have to be considered first by the governing body of the school.

Governors Complaints Procedure

Panel Hearing

If a parent or a member of the community is not satisfied with the response from the Headteacher regarding their complaint, or if their complaint is about the Headteacher, then they are entitled to take their complaint to the Governing Body.

- All complaints to the Governing Body must be in writing and should include full details of the complaint, enclosing any supporting evidence. This should be sent to the Clerk to the Governors, care of the school. The Clerk will then ensure the complaints process is started as soon as practicable (a complainant can request that the Clerk to the Governors write down the complaint on their behalf where writing a letter is difficult).
- A minimum of three governors will be selected to form a complaints committee to investigate and consider the complaint. The Chair of Governors will not be on this committee. The Governing Body will always try to find impartial Governors whenever possible. The panel will also include at least one person who is completely independent of the management and running of the school.
- Occasionally, this might not be possible. However, the Governing Body will always try to find impartial governors.
- Once the complaints committee has been formed, they will then decide how they wish to investigate the complaint.

- The Governors will receive written representation from both the complainant and the Headteacher and will decide on how appropriate a hearing is to resolve the matter. In this instance the complainant may be accompanied at the panel hearing if they wish.
- The Clerk to the Governors will write to the complainant, outlining the procedure.
- The complaint will be forwarded to the Headteacher who will then have 7 days in which to respond.
- That response will then, in turn, be sent to the complainant for comment, with any further responses to be provided within 7 days.
- Finally, that response will go to the Headteacher who has 7 days in which to respond to the clerk.
- A copy of the Headteacher's final response will be sent to the complainant, with the advice that it is only for their information and that any further response from the parent will not be considered except in exceptional circumstances.
- All the responses are then put before the complaints committee for consideration.
- For the avoidance of doubt, all communication will be through the Clerk to the Governors. Neither party will send their response to the other directly.
- The complaints committee will take a robust approach and not simply endorse the decision of the Headteacher without any consideration of the evidence.
- The complaints committee must have all the evidence they feel is to make their decision. If they are not satisfied and require further evidence from either party, they will adjourn and request that information. The complaints committee will only make their decision if they are satisfied they have sufficient evidence to do so.
- The decision of the complaints committee should be given to the complainant in writing within five working days of the decision. Providing the procedures as laid down in the complaints policy are followed then there is no right of appeal following this decision.
- The decision letter should outline the nature of the complaint together with the factors taken into consideration and the decision of the complaints committee. There will therefore be no need for minutes to include any other information.
- Under the Data Protection Act, parents can request to have sight of all documents relating to their complaint.
- A written record of all complaints are kept confidential.

It is important that the complaint and the investigation papers will not be attached to the child's file as they do not relate to the child. However, we keep a central register of complaints received.

FORMAL COMPLAINT TO GOVERNORS

This action should only be taken once the Headteacher has responded in writing to a formal complaint OR if the complaint is about the Headteacher.

