

CHILD PROTECTION: MAKING A COMPLAINT

1. Anyone who wishes to register a complaint that they feel that the School is failing to meet its statutory duties in relation to Child Protection should, in the first instance, write to the Principal making clear exactly what the complaint is and the basis on which it is made.
2. The Principal will attempt to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant within 7 days of receiving the complaint.
3. If the complaint is not resolved, the Principal will inform the Warden of the Board of Governors, who shall appoint a tribunal, which will consist of three members drawn from the Board, to consider the complaint further. The tribunal shall give due consideration to the complaint and shall seek to resolve the matter or matters concerned. The tribunal will be heard in private except where, exceptionally, the Board determines otherwise.
4. The complainant may, if he or she wishes, make an oral presentation to the tribunal to supplement the written complaint. At any such hearing the complainant may choose to be accompanied by a friend or in an exceptional case a representative. Likewise, the respondent may nominate a friend or in an exceptional case a representative to make an oral presentation. The chair of a complaints tribunal will determine the order of the oral presentations and its procedure generally. The tribunal's procedure will be informal as far as possible. The tribunal will also be responsible, through its chair, for directing any investigation into the complaint which it considers necessary at any stage.
5. All complaints will be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible. The length of the period required will vary with the gravity and complexity of the complaint and the urgency with which it needs to be settled. However, all complaints should be settled within a period which is reasonable in all the circumstances. Complaints considered to be urgent should be identified as such by the complainant in the first instance. The Principal and the Board will also consider whether any complaint is urgent and, if so, it shall be given priority. If it becomes clear that the investigation will take some time, the complainant should be informed. In all circumstances, the complainant should receive, as a matter of courtesy, a communication from the tribunal at least once every four weeks indicating the tribunal's progress to date on the complaint.
6. Consideration of a complaint will be directed towards establishing whether the School authorities (including the Board of Governors) are carrying out their statutory functions reasonably and within the law and meeting their obligations so far as practicable; or whether this is not the case, and some remedial action is required. In considering these questions it may be necessary to examine whether:
 - the Board of Governors' Safeguarding and Child Protection policy is consistent with its legal obligations; and
 - its actions, and those of the School's staff, are consistent with this policy;
7. If the complaint is outside the scope of the legal obligations of the School and the Board of Governors, the complainant should be advised about any other appropriate steps which he or she can take to seek to resolve their complaint.
8. The Board should designate an officer to be secretary of a complaints tribunal and provide such other secretariat services as may be required.
9. When the complaint has been fully investigated and considered the tribunal will notify all parties of its determination in writing, giving:

- an explanation of the conclusion, the reasons for it, and any action taken or proposed to be taken;
 - details of any requirements on the part of the School to take particular actions to resolve the complaint; and
 - details of any further recourse available.
10. In the event that the complaint cannot be resolved by the tribunal, the complaint shall be brought to the attention of the full Board of Governors who shall consider the nature of the complaint.
11. If the matter cannot be resolved by the full Board of Governors, the complaint may be referred by the Board to the Department of Education.