

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

If a complaint has completed the local procedures and the person making the complaint remains dissatisfied, they have a right to refer their complaint to the Secretary of State for Education. However, the Secretary of State will only intervene where the governing body has acted unlawfully or unreasonably and where it is expedient or practical to do so.

The School Complaints Unit (SCU) considers complaints relating to maintained schools on behalf of the Secretary of State. The SCU will look at whether the complaints policy and other relevant statutory policies were adhered to. However, the SCU will not normally re-investigate the complaint and will not overturn the school's decision except in exceptional circumstances.

Further information can be obtained from the SCU by telephoning the National Helpline on 0370 000 2288 or by writing to the:

Department for Education  
School Complaints Unit  
2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester, M1 2WD

The Local Authority (Essex County Council) has no powers to intervene in complaints against schools.

**Remember:**

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



## Concerns & Complaints

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

*Be wise, be happy, belong*  
Jan 2019

## Voicing your concern

At Danbury Park Community Primary School we welcome feedback and enquiries from anyone about any matter relating to our school. This may be from pupils, parents, visitors and members of our community. In practice this dialogue is continuous, sometimes directly and also indirectly.

From time to time, parents and carers may have concerns or doubts about their son's or daughter's education and/or wellbeing at school and for which they would like reassurances. Quite often we just need to clarify school policy or practice. Sometimes a child 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, that is concerning you, please contact your child's class teacher in the first instance either by speaking to them at the beginning or end of the school day or by writing a brief letter. Alternatively, please telephone or call in to the school office. Then we can make an appointment at a mutually convenient time to discuss the matter.

## Dealing with your Complaint

Sometimes pupils, parents, visitors and members of our community feel that the matter is more than a concern and this becomes a complaint. A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about actions, or lack of action, taken by the school.

Our **full complaints policy and procedure** is set out in a separate document which you can view on the school website: <http://www.danburypark.essex.sch.uk/> or you can request a paper copy from the school office.

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

Some complaints need to be dealt with under different procedures.

- Admissions to schools;
- Statutory Assessment of Special Educational Needs;
- School re-organisation proposals;
- Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation;
- Exclusion of children from school;
- Whistleblowing;
- Data protection breaches.

The school will advise the correct procedure to follow if this is the case.

The majority of complaints are handled under the following general procedure. The procedure is divided into four stages:

- 🔊 **Stage 1** aims to resolve the complaint through **informal contact** at the appropriate level in school, as described above.
- 🔊 **Stage 2** is the first **formal stage**, at which complaints are referred to and considered by the Headteacher.
- 🔊 **Stage 3** is the next step once Stage 2 has been worked through and the matter has not been satisfactorily resolved. Complaints are considered by the designated governor, who has responsibility for dealing with complaints.
- 🔊 **Stage 4** involves a complaints review panel of governors who will follow a formal process to review the complaint.

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. If your concern is about a governor, this should be made to the Clerk of the Governing Body. All correspondence should be made via the school office and clearly marked *Confidential* and for the attention of the appropriate person.

## Response times

We aim to acknowledge concerns and complaints within **three working days** 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 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.