Highshore School
Complaints Policy

How we will deal with your concerns

Highshore School [http://highshoreschool.co.uk](http://highshoreschool.co.uk) Tel: 0207 708 6790

HOW TO COMMENT OR COMPLAIN

We care about what you think

Each day this school makes many decisions and tries hard to do the best for all the children. Your comments - either positive or negative - are helpful for future planning.

You may want to talk to us about a particular aspect of this school, though not actually make a complaint - you just want to get something ‘off your chest’.

If you are unhappy about the way your child is being treated, or any actions or lack of action by us, please feel free to contact us using the details listed above.

You can expect

- Your complaint will be dealt with honestly, politely and in confidence.
- Your complaint will be looked into thoroughly and fairly.
- We will keep you up to date with progress at each stage.
- You will get an apology if we have made a mistake.
- You will be told what we are going to do to put things right.
- You will get a full and clear written reply to formal complaints promptly.

Highshore School

Communication, self-help skills, independence
Website: [http://highshoreschool.co.uk](http://highshoreschool.co.uk)
Email: general@highshore.southwark.sch.uk
Telephone: 0207 708 6790
How to make a complaint

In the first instance – informal stage

If you have a concern about anything we do, or if you wish to make a complaint, you can do this by telephone, in person or in writing (by letter or email). We hope that most complaints can be settled quickly and informally, either by putting matters right or by giving you an explanation. If there is something you are not happy about, or you don’t understand why we are doing something in a particular way, please come in and discuss it with the Headteacher.

The Headteacher can be contacted at: headteacher@highshore.southwark.sch.uk

We know that it can feel uncomfortable to question or challenge something, but if you don’t tell us what is worrying you we cannot explain what we are doing or try to put it right. You should be able to sort out your worries but sometimes this is not possible. In this case there is a next step.

First - formal stage

Request a meeting with the Headteacher who will investigate your complaint and aim to inform you of the outcome within 10 school days (2 weeks).

If your first contact is with individual Governors, they will advise you to take up your concerns with the appropriate member of staff or Headteacher. A Governor should not be made aware of a potential complaint as they may be required to sit on a Panel in the event of a formal hearing (Stage Two) and should be impartial.

If your complaint is about the Headteacher, you should write to the Chair of Governors.

Second - formal stage

If you remain dissatisfied following Stage 1 and wish to take your complaint further, you will be asked to complete a form or write a letter addressed to the Chair of Governors. In the letter you should:

- Make it clear why you are complaining.
- Say who you have spoken to already.
- Explain what you want to happen as a result of your complaint.

The Chair of Governors will arrange for your complaint to be considered and investigated under the arrangements approved by the Governing Body. This is likely to involve a Panel of Governors. If the Chair of Governors or another Governor has been involved in discussions to help settle the disagreement at Stage 1, s/he should arrange for another Governor to take charge of the investigation. The Governor in charge of investigating the complaint may ask to meet you to discuss your concerns.

You should make sure that the Governors' Complaint Panel is provided with any written information or evidence you intend to use in a formal hearing. You may bring a friend, representative or interpreter to any meeting if you wish. The Chair of the Panel may invite any person who may help establish the facts of the complaint. The Chair should tell you who this person is before the meeting. If any member of staff is required by the Governing Body to attend a meeting they will have the opportunity to be accompanied or represented as they wish. A member of staff named in a complaint may also choose to attend a
meeting, even if not required to do so by the Governors. They may be represented. If this happens, we will inform you in advance.

When the Panel has fully investigated your complaint, the Chair of the Panel or the Governor in charge of the investigation will write to you to tell you the findings. These findings will be reported to the Governing Body. The Chair of Governors will then write to you confirming the outcome of your complaint and any agreed actions to be taken. Our Governing Body will aim to deal with your complaint within 28 school days (5½ weeks).

Further recourse

Most complaints are resolved by this process. Should your complaint not be resolved, your further options are as follows:

- You may complain to Southwark Education Authority which should be in writing to the Children’s Services Complaints Manager via sscomplaints@southwark.gov.uk.

It should be noted however that if you wish to pursue this route, you must do so within 20 working days (4 weeks) of receiving the written outcome of the hearing into your complaint. After 20 working days (4 weeks), neither the school nor the Local Authority is under any obligation to investigate or progress your complaint any further.

- You can complain to the Secretary of State at the Department for Education:

  The Secretary of State
  Department for Education
  Sanctuary Buildings
  Great Smith Street
  London
  SW1P 3BT
  Website: www.education.gov.uk
  Telephone: 0370 000 2288

Useful contacts

Advisory Centre for Education
Education Advice & Training
72 Durnsford Road
London
N11 2EJ
Web: www.ace-ed.org.uk
Phone: 0300 0115 142

Children’s Legal Centre
Riverside Office Centre
Century House North
North Station Road
Colchester
Essex
CO1 1RE
Web: www.childrenslegalcentre.com
Phone: 0345 345 4345

National Youth Advocacy Service
(NYAS)
Egerton House
Tower Road
Birkenhead
Wirral
CH41 1FN
Web: www.nyas.net
Phone: 0345 345 4345
# Formal Complaint Form

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<th>What is it you want to complain about?</th>
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<tr>
<th>Have you raised your issue with the Class Teacher (informal stage)?</th>
<th>YES (inc. date)</th>
<th>NO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you complained to the Headteacher (Stage1)?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<th>When did you do this?</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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<th>What happened when you complained to the Headteacher?</th>
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<td>Signed</td>
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Please return this form to the Chair of the Governing Body
Complaints about schools

Introduction

Southwark Council cannot deal with complaints about schools. School Governors are responsible in law for having a published complaints procedure and for responding to complaints.

Stage One

Most concerns, complaints or potential complaints can be resolved by talking to the member of school staff concerned. The school can tell you who you should speak to first. You may wish to request a copy of the school’s complaints procedure, available from the school office or website. If the concern isn’t resolved by speaking to a member of staff, you should then request a meeting with the Headteacher who will investigate your complaint and aim to inform you of the outcome within 10 school days (2 weeks).

If your first contact is with individual Governors, you may be asked to take up your concerns with the Headteacher or the appropriate member of staff. A Governor should not be made aware of a potential complaint as they may be required to sit on a Panel in the event of a formal hearing (Stage Two) and should be impartial.

If your complaint is about the Headteacher, you should write to the Chair of Governors at the school. You can also contact the Local Authority’s Special Needs department.

If you have not yet raised your concerns with the school in question but contact the Local Authority instead, Council Officers will ask you for your written consent to share information regarding your complaint with the school. If you decline to provide your consent, the matter will not be taken any further. If you do provide consent, the Council will pass your concerns onto the school for action by either school staff or governors.

Stage Two

If you remain dissatisfied following Stage 1 and wish to take your complaint further, the school may ask you to complete a form or write a letter addressed to the Chair of Governors. In the letter you should:

- Make it clear why you are complaining.
- Say who you have spoken to already.
- Explain what you want to happen as a result of your complaint.

The Chair of Governors will arrange for your complaint to be considered and investigated under the arrangements approved by the Governing Body. This is likely to involve a Panel of Governors. If the Chair of Governors or another Governor has been involved in discussions to help settle the disagreement at Stage 1, s/he should arrange for another Governor to take charge of the investigation. The Governor in charge of investigating the complaint may ask to
meet you to discuss your concerns. The Governing Body should give you full details of how they will carry out any further investigation or formal hearing and keep you up to date with progress.

You and the school must make sure the Governors' Complaint Panel is provided with any written information or evidence you intend to use in a formal hearing. You may bring a friend, representative or interpreter to any meeting if you wish. The Chair of the Panel may invite any person who may help establish the facts of the complaint. The Chair should tell you who this person is before the meeting. If any member of staff is required by the Governing Body to attend a meeting they will have the opportunity to be accompanied or represented as they wish. A member of staff named in a complaint may also choose to attend a meeting, even if not required to do so by the Governors. They may be represented. If this happens, the school will inform you in advance.

When the Panel has fully investigated your complaint, the Chair of the Panel or the Governor in charge of the investigation will write to you to tell you the findings. These findings will be reported to the Governing Body. The Chair of Governors will then write to you confirming the outcome of your complaint and any agreed actions to be taken. The Governing Body should aim to deal with complaints within 28 school days (5½ weeks).

**Stage Three**

**FOR ALMOST ALL COMPLAINTS, THE PROCEDURE ENDS WITH THE GOVERNING BODY AND THERE IS NO THIRD STAGE OF COMPLAINT TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY**

If the school’s complaints procedure has been exhausted and you remain dissatisfied, you can approach the Secretary of State.

However, if your complaint is about the way that a school is providing for your child's Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education Health & Care Plan, you do have a third stage of complaint to the Local Authority.

In this case, you can write to the Complaints Manager who will acknowledge your complaint within five working days and inform the Chair of Governors and Headteacher. The Complaints Team will aim to investigate your complaint within 25 working days; however the investigation may take longer (up to 65 working days) in complex cases. When your complaint has been fully investigated the Complaints Manager will write to let you know the outcome. S/he will give the reasons for the outcome, any action or proposed action to be taken and any further avenues open to you. S/he will send a copy to the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors and anyone else concerned in the investigation. Parents who remain dissatisfied following further investigation by the Local Authority have the right to complain to the Secretary of State who may decide to conduct an additional investigation.

You can complain to the Secretary of State at the Department for Education:

The Secretary of State, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT. Website: [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk). Telephone: 0370 000 2288
Useful contact details

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chair of Governors</td>
<td>The name of the Chair of Governors can be found on the school website. Letters addressed to “the Chair of Governors” given to the school will be passed on directly.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Complaints Team (Children's Services)</td>
<td>PO Box 64529 London SE1P 5LX <a href="mailto:sscomplaints@southwark.gov.uk">sscomplaints@southwark.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>0207 525 3977</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwark Information Advice and Support Team (SIAST)</td>
<td>Sunshine House 27 Peckham Road London SE5 8UH <a href="http://www.sias@southwark.gov.uk">www.sias@southwark.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>0207 525 3104</td>
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<td>ACE (Advisory Centre for Education)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ace-ed.org.uk">www.ace-ed.org.uk</a></td>
<td>0300 0115 142</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children's Legal Centre</td>
<td><a href="http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com">www.childrenslegalcentre.com</a></td>
<td>0345 345 4345</td>
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<td>Citizen's Advice Bureau</td>
<td><a href="http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk">www.citizensadvice.org.uk</a></td>
<td>03444 111 444</td>
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Summary of the complaints process

Informal stage - concern discussed with staff member:
- Issue resolved
- Issue not resolved

Complaint heard by Headteacher - Stage 1:
- Acknowledge receipt of complaint within 5 school days
- Aim to meet complainant within 10 school days

Issue resolved
- Parent must put formal complaint in writing to Chair of Governors, Cio school office

Issue not resolved

Governors complaints panel meeting arranged - Stage 2:
- Issue letter inviting complainant to meeting
- Governing Bodies should hear complaints within 28 school days of the date of the written complaint
- Issue letter confirming panel decision

Issue resolved
- Issue not resolved

Stage 3 - Special Educational Needs only -
Local Authority (LA) except Academies, Free Schools, Studio Schools and University Technical Colleges
The LA will aim to respond with the outcome of any further investigation within 25 working days wherever possible.
More complex cases may take up to 55 working days

Issue resolved
- Issue not resolved

For all other matters, parents may approach the Secretary of State at the Department for Education or the Education Funding Agency if the school is an Academy, Free School, Studio School or University Technical College

Special Educational Needs - Parents may complain to the Secretary of State at the Department for Education

Issue resolved
- Issue not resolved