



Tenterfield Nursery and Children's Centre

SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Last reviewed: January 2015

Reviewed by: Headteacher

Next review due: January 2017

Introduction

The governors and staff at Tenterfield Nursery and Children's Centre believe that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve the Centre and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the nursery, wraparound and children's centre activities. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns.

Equality Statement

Tenterfield Nursery and Children's Centre is committed to valuing diversity by providing equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children and families.

What happens at the first stage?

Most concerns, complaints or potential complaints can be resolved by talking to the member of staff concerned. The office can tell you who you should speak to first. You may wish to request a copy of the complaints procedure, available from the office. If the concern isn't resolved by speaking to a member of staff, you should then request a meeting with the Head who will investigate your complaint and aim to inform you of the outcome within 10 working days. If your first contact is with individual governors, you may be asked to take up your concerns with the head or the appropriate member of staff.

If your complaint is about the head, you should write to the chair of governors (John Blackburn). If your child has Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) you might find it helpful to talk to the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator (SENco) or your named Special Needs Officer if your child has a Statement of SEND. A Parent Partnership supporter may also be able to help you.

What happens at the second stage?

You will be asked to complete a form (see appendix A) 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 Nursery/Centre 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 by parents in the 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, you will be informed before the meeting.

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 working days.

Is there a third stage of complaint?

For most complaints, the procedure ends with the governing body and there is no third stage of complaint to the local authority.

If the Nursery/Centre's complaints procedure has been exhausted and you remain dissatisfied, you can approach the Secretary of State. Further advice is available from the Children's Legal Centre, the Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) or Family Lives (formerly Parentline Plus).

If your complaint is about the way that the Nursery/Centre is providing for your child's Statement of Special Educational Needs 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 then 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 in complex situations. When your complaint has been fully investigated the complaints manager will write to let you know the decision. S/he will give the reasons for the decision, 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.

If your complaint is about collective worship in a community you do have a third stage of complaint to the local authority.

In this case, you can complain further by writing to the complaints manager who will acknowledge your complaint within five working days and inform the chair of governors and head. S/he will make sure your complaint is investigated and will ask the governing body for further information or advice as necessary. Following this investigation, a panel made up of the complaints manager and three members of the local authority will consider your complaint. You may talk to the investigating officer about your complaint and present your case personally to the panel. You may bring a friend, representative or interpreter to any meeting if you wish. Up to two representatives of the governing body may speak at the meeting.

When the panel has fully investigated your complaint, the complaints manager will write and let you know the decision. S/he will explain the reasons for the decision, any action taken or proposed to be taken and any further avenues open to you. S/he will send a copy to the clerk and chair of governors and the head. The aim will be to complete this process within 25 working days (this may well take longer in complex cases).

Can I complain to anyone other than the County Council?

Yes, 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. Tel: 0870 000 2288. Web: www.education.gov.uk

Please note that the Department for Education will only follow up your complaint with the Centre or the local authority if they believe either might have acted unreasonably or failed to carry out a statutory duty.

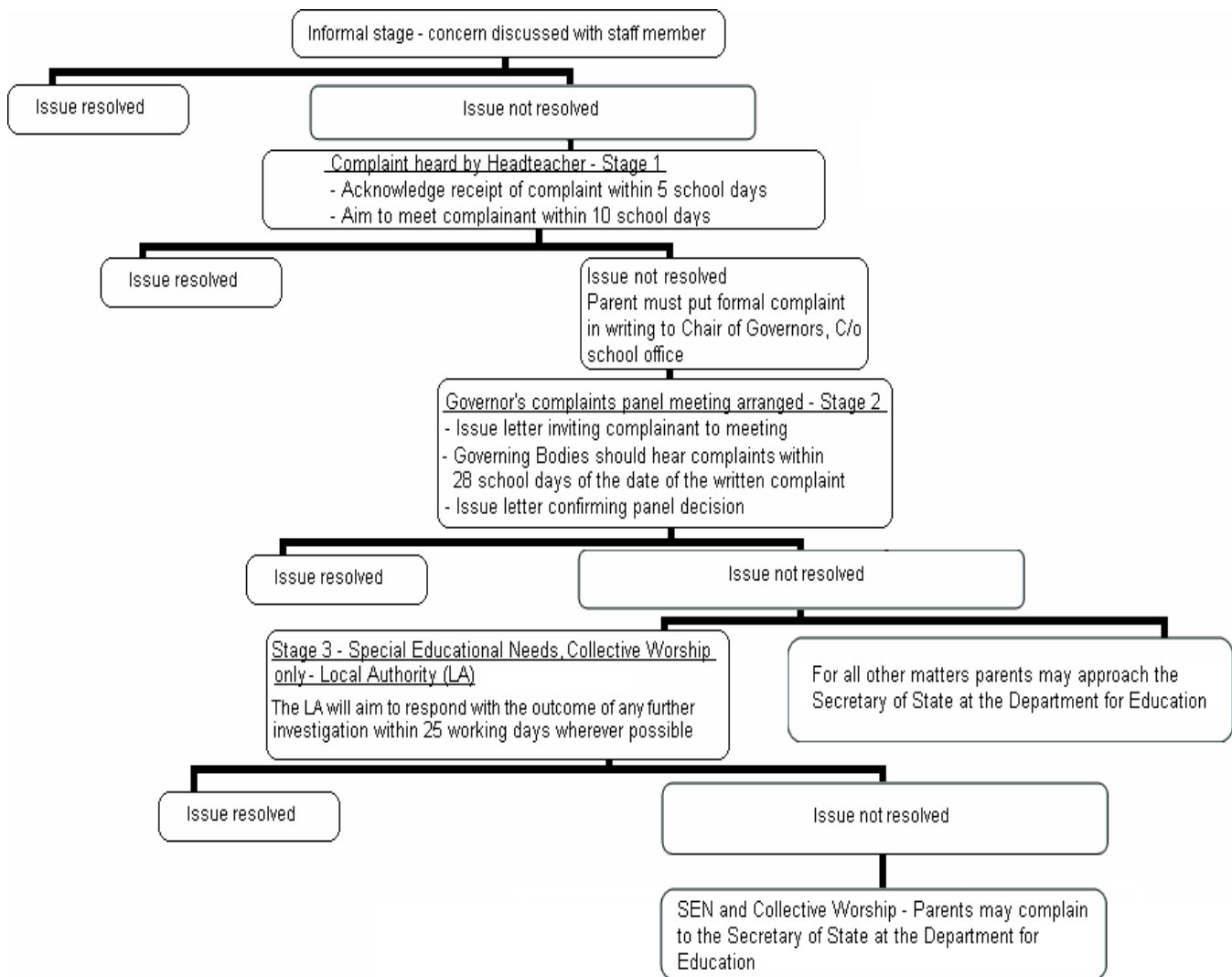
Ofsted

In line with the safeguarding and promoting children’s welfare requirements in the Early Years Foundation Stage the contact number for parents to complain or share concerns about the Nursery/Centre or childcare provider to Ofsted is 0300 123 4666. Further details can be found in the nursery office. Web link is <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/contact-us/how-complain>

Useful contact details

Chair of Governors	John Blackburn The office will pass on any written correspondence to the chair.	
Complaints Team Children’s Services	www.hertsdirect.org Email: cs.complaints@hertscc.gov.uk	01992 588542
Parent Partnership Service (SEN)	www.hertsdirect.org/parentpartnership Email: parent.partnership@hertscc.gov.uk	01992 555847
Black Minority Ethnic (BME) Achievement Team - If your complaint is about racial harassment or discrimination	www.thegrid.org.uk	01438 844752
ACE (Advisory Centre for Education)	www.ace-ed.org.uk	0808 800 5793
HertsHelp	www.hertsdirect.org/hertshelp	0300 123 4044
Family Lives	www.familylives.org.uk	0808 800 2222
Carers in Herts	www.carersinherts.org.uk	01992 586969
Children’s Legal Centre	www.childrenslegalcentre.com	01206 873820
Citizen’s Advice Bureau	www.citizensadvice.org.uk	08444 111 444

Summary of the complaints process



Annex A

Appendix A: Formal Complaint Form

Name		
Address		
Postcode		
Email address		
Telephone No.		
Day		
Evening		
Mobile		
What is it you want to complain about?		
Have you complained to the Headteacher?	YES	NO
When did you do this?	Date:	
What happened when you complained to the Headteacher?		

What would you like us to do to put things right?

Signed	
Date	

Please return this form to the Chair of the Governing Body