

Concerns & Complaints

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



Voicing your concern

From time to time, parents and carers may have concerns about their son or daughter's education and/or wellbeing at school. Quite often this is due to a misunderstanding about the school's policy or practice. Sometimes the student 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 you wish to speak to us about your child's academic progress, please make an appointment, in the first instance through the school office, 01376 321813, or in person at Reception, to see the appropriate **Achievement Co-ordinator**.
- **OR** about your child's wellbeing (for example, bullying or other anxiety), please ask to see the **Pastoral Leader** for the year group.

Alternatively you can attend the '**Headteacher's Surgery**' on Thursdays, from 3:30 to 4:30pm. No appointment is needed and this may help in choosing the best placed person to deal with your concern.

Dealing with your concern or complaint

Our **complaints procedure** is fully detailed in a document you can view under the 'Parents' tab on the school website: www.alehunter.com **OR** you can request a copy from the school office or at Reception. You can also access a Complaints Policy document in the same manner. This leaflet is a **summary** of how the procedure operates in order that you can have a quick overview of how we can help you.

The majority of concerns from parents, carers and others are handled under the following general procedure.

The procedure is divided into three stages:

Stage 1 aims to resolve the concern through **informal contact** at the appropriate level in school, as described above.

Stage 2 is the first **formal stage**, at which written complaints are considered by the Headteacher.

Stage 3 is the next stage, once Stage 2 has been worked through. It involves writing to the Chair of Governors c/o the school, or by email to peter.whent@alechunter.essex.sch.uk

Concerns and complaints are usually resolved at Stage 1 or Stage 2. The Chair of Governors has the discretion to offer, or agree to, a **Stage 3** complaints review panel if it is felt that this will help move things forward. A review panel is **not an automatic right** for complainants and it is a time consuming and resource intensive process to set up.

Please note that this procedure does not 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 are 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.

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 holiday periods when the school office 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 child.

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

Please note that the Local Authority (Essex County Council) has no powers to intervene in general complaints against schools. Similarly, Ofsted does not deal with individual parents' issues.

A complaint may be made to the Secretary of State for Education **if a person believes that a governing body or school is acting "unreasonably," or the Academy Trust is failing to carry out its statutory duties properly** under the terms of their funding agreement.

Please bear in mind, however, that the Secretary of State will expect you to have gone through the school's complaints procedures **before** contacting the Education Funding Agency. You should set out fully your concerns and reasons why the complaint is being submitted, enclosing all previous correspondence relevant to the complaint:

Department for Education
Castle View House
East Lane
Runcorn
Cheshire
WA7 2GJ

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