

Model Complaint Letters

This Letter of Invitation to a Complaints Hearing may be adapted for use during the formal stages of a complaint:

Model Letter of Invitation to a School Governance Committee Complaints Hearing

Address

Date

Dear *Parent*,

Please find enclosed all relevant information relating to the School Governance Sub Committee Complaints hearing which will be convened on *date* at *time* in the *Venue*.

You are welcome to attend the meeting together with a friend or representative. Those present at the meeting will include two School Governance Committee members, a head teacher/setting manager from a different school and a senior representative from HQ DCYP.

A complaint is defined as “dissatisfaction about any aspect of the school’s/setting’s work.” Concerns and complaints may be communicated in writing, by telephone or in person and can be about any aspect of the school’s/setting’s work. They may be expressed by parents, guardians, neighbours or anyone with an interest in the working of the school/setting.

The majority of concerns/complaints can be dealt with satisfactorily by staff on an informal basis. Where this is not possible, the complaint should be addressed through a formal procedure which sequentially should begin with the head teacher/setting manager or Chair of the School Governance Committee and then a School Governance Sub Committee panel.

General Principles

The following should be observed during the hearing:

- a. The aim of the hearing should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school/setting and the complainant.
- b. It is the responsibility of the committee to ensure the hearing is properly minuted.

c. The complainant may be unused to dealing with groups of people in formal situations. It is recommended that the Chairperson ensures that the procedures are as informal as possible.

d. In the interest of natural justice, the introduction of previously undisclosed evidence or witnesses would be reason to adjourn the meeting so that the other side has time to consider and respond to the new evidence.

Order of Hearing

The following order of hearing will be followed:

1. Welcome and introduction by Chairperson of the Governors' Complaints Committee;
2. Explanation of the procedure;
3. Complainant presents the appeal;
4. Questions to complainant by governors and headteacher/setting manager
5. Headteacher responds to the complaint;
6. Questions to headteacher/setting manager and governors;
7. Summing up by the complainant;
8. Summing up by the headteacher/setting manager;
9. Concluding remarks by the Chairperson of the Governors' Complaints Committee and explanation of what happens next;
10. The complainant and headteacher/setting manager are asked to leave.

The Decision

The Committee can:

1. Uphold the complaint;
2. Uphold it in part; or
3. Dismiss it.

The complainant and the head teacher/setting manager will be informed in writing within 5 school days of the hearing.

Yours sincerely

Clerk to the School Governance Committee

These model closure letters may be adapted for use at the Formal stages of a complaint:

Model Closure Letter for Formal Stage One.

Dear *Parent*,

FORMAL STAGE 1 COMPLAINT ABOUT Y AND SCHOOL Z

Thank you for your letter dated... From your letter(s) it is clear that you are still unhappy with the situation. As a result, I have decided to have the matter investigated as part of formal stage one of the school's complaints procedure.

You complain that:

Summary of complaint to be stated. State each point separately.

I have completed my investigation and can offer the following response(s) on each of the points you have raised.

1. Concerning your complaint that...
2. Concerning your complaint that...

It is important that you are clear about what action the school/setting has taken at each stage of the process so far:

Informal stage

State what action was taken in response and the outcome of this.

Formal stage one

State what investigative action was taken in response and the outcome of this, including any remedial action to be taken if complaint is upheld.

I hope this response answers your concerns. Please let me know if you wish me to clarify any points.

In the meantime, if you are still not satisfied with my reply, there is a further stage of the complaints procedure that you can follow. This formal stage two is a review by a panel who will look at the way in which your complaint has been dealt with. The panel will not, however, rehear the whole case. To go to the next stage (formal stage two), you should write to the chair of your School Governance Committee within ten days of the receipt of this letter, giving your reasons why you wish to take your complaint further.

Yours sincerely,

Model Closure Letter for Formal Stage Two – Appeal

Dear *Parent*

FORMAL STAGE 2 COMPLAINT ABOUT Y AND SCHOOL Z

The panel met on ...date...to hear your appeal regarding your complaint which can be summarised as follows:

That so and so/the school did/said/did not...

Legal or administrative background

State any legal or administrative background to the case, including any legislation relevant to the investigation.

The investigation

Set out the key facts about the complaint, the findings and conclusions from the formal stage one investigation, and any continuing concerns.

Conclusion

Set out the findings of the panel

Panel decision

Outcome of the decision

Please let me know if you wish me to clarify any points for you.

This concludes the formal procedure stage for managing complaints against MOD schools/settings and there is no further right of appeal.

If you feel that your complaint has been managed unreasonably, you may make a complaint in writing to the Chief Education Officer, HQ DCYP, Trenchard Lines, Upavon, Wiltshire, UK, SN9 6BE

Yours sincerely