



CROYLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Our Complaint Procedure

Why do we need a procedure?

Most concerns raised by parents and carers about school matters are handled quickly by school staff without the need for formal procedures.

However, not all concerns can be resolved in this way and, since 1st September 2003 Governing Bodies (GBs) of all maintained schools and maintained nursery schools in England have been required, under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, to have in place a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides.

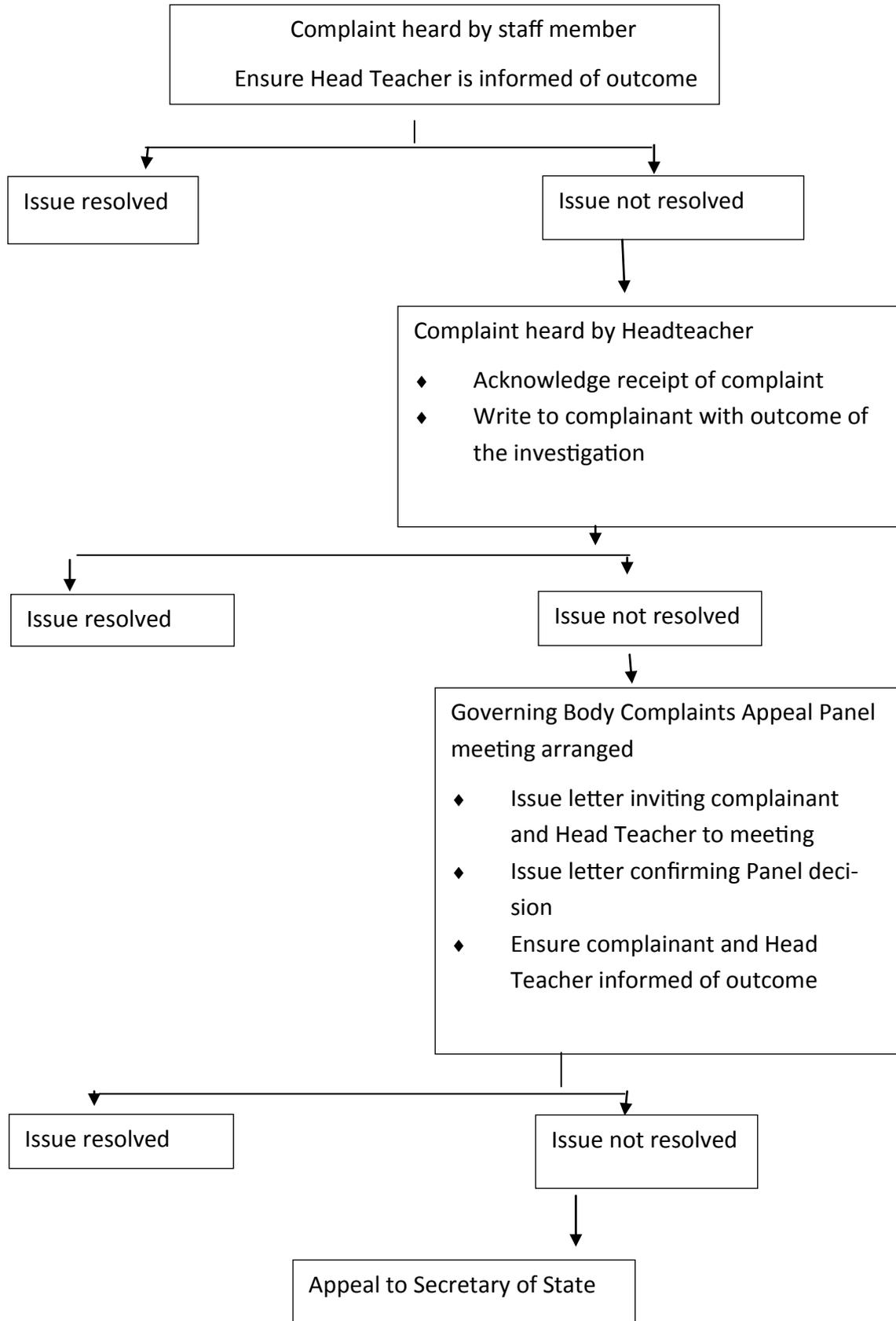
It is important to note that not all complaints fall within the remit of the Governing Body's Complaints procedure, and that matters of staff grievance or discipline are dealt with under separate arrangements.

What to do if you have a complaint

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The experience of the first contact between the complainant and the school can be crucial in determining whether the complaint will become more serious. To that end, any member of the school staff should be able to deal with a complaint.

Complaints Procedure:

Flowchart



Stage 1: Complaint heard by staff member

The Headteacher should receive any complaint in the first instance. Normally the parent would be directed to take the complaint to the member of staff involved.

Where the approach is made to a Governor, he or she should refer the complainant to the Headteacher. Most complaints will be resolved at this stage.

Stage 2: Complaint heard by Head Teacher

The complainant may be dissatisfied with the way the complaint was handled at Stage 1. Parents who wish to pursue a formal complaint at Stage Two should put their complaint and their desired outcome in writing to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors. The Headteacher/Chair of Governors will acknowledge the complaint orally or in writing within three working days of receipt giving a brief explanation of the complaints procedures and a target date for providing a response. Ideally, this should be within ten days. If it is not possible to deal with the matter in this time, the complainant will be informed of when it is likely to be concluded.

The Headteacher will investigate the complaint, review all the information and discuss the findings, together with any recommendations or apology, with the complainant. For a face to face meeting, the complainant will, if she/he wishes, be allowed to be accompanied by a friend or relative who can speak on his/her behalf. Interpreting facilities will be made available if required.

The Headteacher/Chair of Governors will keep written records of meetings, telephone conversations and other documentation and once all the relevant facts have been established will either write to the complainant or arrange a meeting to discuss or resolve the matter. This meeting will be followed up with a letter summarising the outcome of the meeting. The complainant will be advised in this letter that if they remain unhappy with the outcome, s/he may appeal to a panel of governors. The complainant should notify the Chair of Governors within two weeks of receiving the letter detailing the outcome of the com-

plaint.

Stage 3: Complaint heard by Governing Body's Complaints Appeal Panel.

Sometimes the Chair will be able to diffuse the situation at this point, by speaking with or writing to the complainant and reassuring him or her that the school has taken the complaint seriously. Should, however, this prove not to be the case, the Chair, or a nominated Governor, will convene a Governing Body Complaints Appeal Panel, normally within 15 school days of receipt, to which the complainant and Headteacher will be invited. The aim of the appeal to a panel of governors is to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. However, it may only be possible to establish the facts of a situation and make recommendations about future action, and to satisfy the complainant that their complaint has been taken seriously.

The Panel can:

- ♦ dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- ♦ uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- ♦ decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- ♦ recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur

The Panel's Decision

The Chair of the Panel will ensure that the complainant and the Headteacher are notified of the Panel's decision, in writing, within 3 days as stated in the school's complaints policy.

The final stage of appeal if the complainant remains dissatisfied is to the Secretary of State for Education. Complainants should be advised to write to: The School Complaints Unit (SCU) at: Department for Education, 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate, Manchester, M1 2WD.