

Do you have concerns about your child at school?

Our schools are rated very highly and want to provide a good service. However, If your child has a problem at school you should be able to resolve it by an informal discussion with your child's teacher. If you are unable to resolve a problem informally, the school will have a formal complaints procedure, recommended by the Dept of Children Schools and Families, that you can follow. Please contact the school and obtain a copy before making your complaint.

- You can be assured that whatever the nature of your concern, the school's support for your child will not change in any way. All concerns will be properly considered.
- It is important that a school should be informed about a concern as soon as possible, so that it can be investigated.

This leaflet explains what to do if you want to complain about schools maintained by Devon County Council. This does not include Academies which have separate procedures. Devon's maintained schools are managed by governing bodies whose membership includes parents, staff and community governors. Headteachers are directly responsible to the governing body for the performance of the school.



What can you do?

Stage 1: discuss your concerns with your child's class teacher or head of year. Experience has shown that most difficulties can be resolved satisfactorily at this informal stage. However, if this is not the case, you can go to the next stage.

Stage 2: contact the Headteacher and ask for an appointment to discuss the matter or alternatively put your concern in writing. The Headteacher will look into the issues you have raised and respond once the relevant facts have been established. If this does not resolve the issue for you proceed to Stage 3 by writing to the chair of governors with your concerns.

Stage 3: The governing body will convene a small panel of governors, who have not been involved previously, to look in detail at the issues you raise. You may be invited to attend a meeting to discuss your complaint. After fully considering your complaint the governors will write to you to inform you of their decision.

Finally, if you believe that your school's governing body is acting 'unreasonably' you can complain in writing to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families. Complaints to the Secretary of State are handled by the government's Department for Children, Schools and Families. This should be a last resort, and you should highlight in your letter the steps you have already taken to resolve the problem locally.

Consider Mediation

Mediation is a process by which impartial facilitators (mediators) help people in dispute work out an agreement. The disputants, not the mediators, decide the terms of the agreement. Mediation is a voluntary process which can transform the way people communicate, interact and manage conflict. This process is an informal alternative to the complaint process; however, at any time during the process either party can withdraw and seek a formal resolution to their issues. Mediation seeks to meet the interests of both sides in a dispute. If you feel communication between yourself and the school has broken down – this may be an acceptable alternative.

Mediation

Roger Morris - Mediation Co-ordinator
Tel 07966474364
Email roger.morris@devon.gov.uk



Ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills also has a role in investigating complaints about the work of schools as a whole

Examples include:

- *The school is not providing a good enough education*
- *The pupils are not achieving as they should, or their different needs are not being met*
- *The school is not well led and managed, or wasting money*
- *The pupils' personal development and well being are being neglected*

Complaints about matters relating to an individual child **cannot** be considered.

Ofsted can consider complaints from parents (or some carers) of pupils registered at the school the complaint is about. More information can be found on their website

Other Matters

If you have concerns about the following

- School Admissions
- Exclusions
- Home to School Transport
- Special Educational Needs
- Provision of the Curriculum
- Religious Education

Please telephone **Customer Services, Children and Young Peoples Services 0808 1683750** or email cypsfeedback-mailbox@devon.gov.uk - who will direct you to the correct department.

Useful Contacts

Customer Service Team

Children and Young People's Services

Devon County Council, Room 120
County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter,
EX2 7PL

Tel: 0808 1683750
Email: cypsfeedback-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

Mediation

Roger Morris - Mediation Co-ordinator
Tel 07966474364
Email roger.morris@devon.gov.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings, St Ann's
Square, Manchester M2 7LA
08456 014772
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Directgov

www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schools/learninganddevelopment/YourChildsWelfareAtSchool

Dept for Children, Schools and Families

Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT
0870 000 2288
info@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk
www.dcsf.gov.uk

The Local Authority's Role

Schools are independently managed and governed. The areas where the local authority can instruct a school to take particular action are limited. It is the **headteacher's** responsibility to ensure that all concerns and complaints are dealt with speedily, efficiently, fully and fairly within the school, in accordance with the policy of the school's governing body.

The exception is where the Local Authority does not feel the school has dealt with a complaint regarding the provision of the curriculum and other matters under section 409 of the Education Act 1996. The Local Authority's role is limited to:

- Offering and providing mediation
- Giving advice, where appropriate

The local authority has no duty to investigate a complaint made about day to day school issues.

