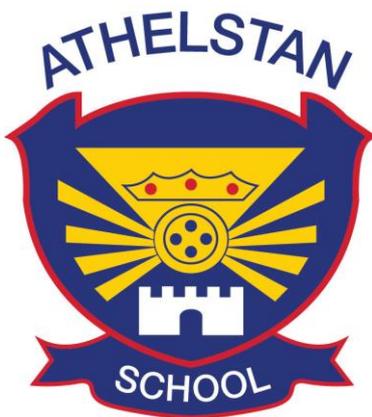


Athelstan Primary School  
Rose Avenue  
Sherburn in Elmet  
North Yorkshire  
LS25 6AY



Headteacher  
Karen O'Donnell MA BEd PGCPSE  
Tele 01977 684037  
Fax 01977 683172  
admin@athelstan.n-yorks.sch.uk



## CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

### **If you have a suggestion or a concern**

We would like you to tell us about it. We welcome suggestions for improving our work in the school and want to know if you have any concerns. Be assured that no matter what you wish to tell us, our support and respect for you and your child in the school will not be affected in any way. If you have a concern, please let us know as soon as possible. It is difficult for us to properly investigate an incident or problem that happened some time ago. Depending on circumstances, the governing body may decide not to consider a complaint about something that occurred more than two months ago.

### **What to do first**

Most concerns can be sorted out quickly by speaking with your child's class teacher.

If you have a concern, which you feel should be, looked at by the head teacher in the first instance you could contact him/her straightaway if you prefer. It is usually best to discuss the problem face to face. You may need an appointment to do this, and you can make one by ringing or calling in to the school office. You can take a friend or relation to the appointment with you if you would like to

All staff will make every effort to resolve your problem informally. They will make sure that they understand what you feel went wrong, and they will explain their actions to you. They will ask what you would like the school to do to put things right. Of course, this does not mean that in every case it will be possible to achieve a satisfactory outcome but it will help both you and the school to understand both sides of the question. It may also help to prevent a similar problem arising again.

### **If you are still concerned**

We will do all that we can to resolve matters straight away but if you are not entirely satisfied with the teacher's response (or with the head teacher's initial reaction if he/she has

already been involved) you can make a formal complaint to the head teacher. This should be made in writing, preferably using the form available in our Complaints policy which is available on the school website and from the school office.

The head teacher will contact you to discuss the problem. Usually you will be invited to a face-to-face meeting. Again you may take a friend or someone else with you if you wish. The head teacher will then conduct a full investigation of the complaint and may interview any members of staff or pupils involved. You will receive a written response to your complaint.

### **If you are still unhappy**

We very much hope and expect that we will have been able to resolve the problem by this stage. However, if you are still not satisfied you may wish to make a formal complaint to the governing body. You should write to the chair of governors. Initially your complaint may, depending on circumstances, be dealt with by the chair of governors/governor designated by the governing body to deal with complaints. He/she will try to see if there is a way forward. [Note that at this Stage your complaint will not be made known to other governors. This is so that if it is necessary for the governors to hold a formal hearing of your complaint they will be able to maintain impartiality.] If the chair/designated governor is unable to resolve the matter, your complaint will then be heard by a committee of three governors – the Complaints Review Committee. As explained above, they will have no prior knowledge of the case and will thus be able to make a fresh, unbiased assessment. You will be invited to attend the committee meeting, accompanied by a friend or representative if you wish, and to put your side of the matter. The head teacher will also attend to give his/her account. The governing body's complaints procedure explains how these meetings are conducted. You will be informed in writing of the Committee's decision.

### **If your complaint is about an action of the head teacher personally**

If your complaint is about an action of the head teacher personally, then you should refer it to Chair of Governors/Designated Governor. You can contact him/her by letter to c/o the school. The Chair of Governors/Designated Governor will discuss the matter with you and attempt to resolve the problem. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this process you will be asked to detail your complaint in writing and it will be considered by the Complaints Review Committee of the governing body - see above.

### **Further action**

Complaints about school problems are usually settled within the schools but in exceptional cases it may be possible to refer the matter to an outside body such as the local education authority or the Secretary of State for Education and Skills. If necessary the chair of the Complaints Review Committee of the governing body will let you have further information.