

## Stage 1: Talk over your concern with the class teacher

All primary schools have a formal complaints procedure and this is often displayed and/or is available in the prospectus.

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If you have a concern about an aspect of the school's provision talk it over with the teacher first of all. Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage. If you still have concerns after a few weeks then ask for a copy of the policy that particularly applies to your concern, e.g. the policy on teasing and bullying, or special educational needs.

Request another meeting with the teacher and either the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) if your complaint is related to your child's stammer, or the Head or Deputy if it is related to organisational or other issues.

At this stage you are talking informally but it is still helpful to make sure that you have written down concerns in a log to remind you of dates of incidents and, if applicable, names of children and staff involved. Refer to the policy that you believe particularly refers to your concern.

- Remember to stress that in giving names you are only **alleging** that these individuals were involved, as you must appreciate that you are probably relying on information from your child and he may be mistaken. Other parents will be annoyed if their child is wrongly accused, and staff will not be pleased if they are brought into disrepute without cause. If it is the teacher herself who seems to have upset your child, it is still important to talk with her in a calm manner and hopefully the matter will be put right at this early stage.
- Be tactful and make it clear that you are simply anxious to find out what is upsetting your child and that you understand that your information is based on allegations. Show that you understand you may not have the full picture yet and are willing to hear both sides of the story.
- Try to keep as calm as possible, and work out with the staff a strategy that makes sense to you with a sensible time limit for its completion.
- Agree with the staff that you will be given information about the actions taken and the final resolution of your complaint.

Most complaints will be satisfactorily dealt with at this informal stage. If you are still concerned and wish to continue to the next stage there is advice available.

### Organisations that can offer support and advice

The BSA can provide information about stammering and its effects on children and provide you with information and support during the complaints procedure.

### Parent Partnership

Parent partnership services provide accurate and unbiased information on the options available to you. They may provide you with training to guide you through complaints procedures and processes or link you to organisations and groups that can help. You can find your local parent partnership service through your local authority or the National Parent Partnership Network.

Your local parent partnership service should be able to give you access to an independent parental supporter. These can help you through the complaint procedures. They work under the guidance and supervision of your local parent partnership service and are usually trained volunteers. You can also choose any other adult you wish to support you: for example, a friend, a relative or someone from a voluntary organisation. You may request that this person accompanies you to significant meetings.

## **An independent parental supporter may help you by:**

- explaining your rights and responsibilities
- finding further sources of information, support and advice for you
- helping you to understand what is happening during SEN procedures and processes such as School Action , assessment and statementing
- helping you to prepare for and attend visits and meetings
- helping you to make phone calls, fill in forms and write letters and reports
- helping you to express your views and communicate with schools and local authorities
- listening to your worries and concerns
- providing you with ongoing and general support

[Advisory Centre for Education \(ACE\)](#) an independent advice centre for parents, offering information about state education in England and Wales for five to 16 year olds. They offer free telephone advice on many subjects like complaints, exclusion from school, bullying and special educational needs.