

Dealing with Bullying

How to write a letter of complaint to the school's head teacher or governing body.

The complaints process in schools:

If your child is being bullied at school, talk to your child's teacher in the first instance to see if they are aware of the situation. If things do not improve, you may want to contact or write to the head teacher to make an appointment and make them aware of the situation.

If after meeting the headteacher you are still not happy, you can write to the school's Governing Body.

This factsheet provides details of what you need to include in your letter of complaint.

Information to include in your letter of complaint

There are four key points that need to be made in order for the complaint to be investigated and dealt with efficiently:

What is the complaint? – Who is the complaint against? Is it a complaint about a particular child? Is it a general complaint against a teacher or teachers at the school, or against the school's anti-bullying policy?

A summary of the situation – Is it about a specific one-off incident or is it an ongoing bullying situation? Dates and incidents may be helpful if the complaint is to be investigated and addressed.

Actions to resolve a situation – What needs to be done to resolve the situation? Are there any suggestions that you have that might help? It is important they are realistic and constructive.

Who you are – Make sure that your name and contact details (address, telephone number and email address) are included on any letter that you send to the school. Anonymous complaints cannot be investigated or replied to.

General tips on writing your letter of complaint

You may find the following tips helpful when you are writing your letter:

Try and keep your letter brief – It will be helpful to the school if the letter can be understood quickly. Try to stay on topic and focus on the specific complaint you are making. If there are several pages with a number of different topics then it might be harder for the person receiving it to understand the main complaint, because the main points of your letter might get lost in a long letter running to several pages.

Stick to the facts – If the dates of the bullying incidents and other specific facts are included, then it will make it easier for the complaint to be investigated. You may want to include more information than would fit in an ordinary letter, so it might be useful for you to summarise what has happened and the most serious incidents, and then include a more detailed list on another sheet of paper which you can attach to the letter. This way the person reading the letter will immediately be able to see what has happened and refer to the more detailed information as they need to.

Try and stay calm and be co-operative at all times – You may have strong feelings about what has happened and feel that it needs to be dealt with urgently. While it is important to explain the seriousness of the situation, it is also important not to become confrontational. It will be harder for the situation to be sorted out if communication breaks down.

Having explained the facts about what has happened and why you are unhappy, make useful suggestions about how you think it can be resolved.

Say that you are willing to do your part, but that there is also a responsibility from the school, its governors or the local authority as well.

Make sure that you keep a copy of your letter for future reference – After you have gone to all the hard work of writing your letter, it is worth keeping a copy of this as you may need it in the future, even if it is just to prove that you have already contacted the school regarding this particular bullying issue. If you are writing it by hand, photocopy it; if you are typing on a computer, save the letter.

Sending your letter of complaint – If you send your letter through the post, you might want to use recorded delivery so that you can prove it was posted. If you drop it in to the school office by hand, make sure you ask for a receipt. If you send your letter using email, make sure you save a copy of the email in your sent items folder.

Setting out your letter of complaint

You may find the following letter template useful when you are writing your letter of complaint to the school:

	(Your name) (Address) (Telephone and/or email)
Headteacher/Governing Body (as applicable) (School address)	
(Date)	
Dear _____,	
Re.: (Subject of complaint)	
I am writing to express my concern about (explain what has happened and summarise the problems: who is involved, what happened and when, etc.).	
(Explain what you feel needs to be done to resolve the situation). I	
look forward to hearing from you shortly.	
Sincerely,	
(Your name)	

Further Help

If your complaint isn't dealt with to your satisfaction after meeting the governing body then please phone Call Derbyshire on 01629 533190 or email prevent&tackle@derbyshire.gov.uk with your concerns