



School Complaints Factsheet

Introduction

This is a Factsheet about general complaints against schools. It should be read together with our '[How to Complain](#)' page, available under the 'Making A Complaint' tab.

If your complaint is about school admissions, school exclusions or special education needs, we have produced separate, specific factsheets covering these topics.

What the Ombudsman can do

As the next section explains, the Ombudsman's role in respect of complaints about schools is very restricted. Whilst he can sometimes look into complaints about the actions of an authority in respect of the administrative operation of a complaints or review procedure, this would not include a consideration of the substantive issues giving rise to the complaint.

Accordingly, whilst the Ombudsman might be able to consider a complaint that a local council (in its capacity as Local Education Authority) had, for example, taken too long to review a complaint about a school complaints process, he could not consider the issues originally raised in the complaint to the school itself.

In light of the restricted nature of the Ombudsman's powers in respect of schools issues, before putting a complaint in writing to us, we would encourage you to call our Complaints Advice Team for advice as to whether or not the Ombudsman is likely to be able to consider your complaint.

What the Ombudsman cannot do

The role of the Ombudsman in respect of complaints against schools is very strictly limited by law.

The Ombudsman cannot consider complaints about any action taken by a school or its governing body in relation to the giving of instruction, conduct, curriculum, internal organisation, management or discipline. This

means that the probability of the Ombudsman having any power to investigate a complaint about a school (other than in respect of the highly restricted matters referred to above or about the specific issues covered in our previously mentioned separate fact sheets) is low.

Issues to bear in mind

LEAs and diocesan authorities (for faith schools) do not have a statutory role in resolving complaints about schools as that responsibility rests with the governing body of the school.

Further information

The Welsh Assembly Government has issued guidance to school governing bodies about the structure of a formal complaints procedure. You can find a copy of the guidance on the Welsh Assembly Government's website at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/121002complaintsschoolsen.pdf>

The Ombudsman is independent and impartial; he cannot order public bodies to do what he recommends – but, in practice, they almost always do. Examples of cases that the Ombudsman has looked at can be found on our website, [on the 'Publications' tab under 'Our Findings' & 'The Ombudsman's Casebook'](#).

Contact us

If you are unsure whether the Ombudsman would be able to look into your complaint, please [contact us](#) on 0300 790 0203 or ask@ombudsman.wales

Also available in Welsh.

Easy Read

School Complaints

 [Download](#)

This document is available in Welsh and English. You can write to us in Welsh and we will reply in Welsh. This will not lead to a delay in responding.

ask@ombudsman.wales

0300 790 0203 Our phone line is open 10am-12:30pm and 1:30pm-4pm Monday – Friday