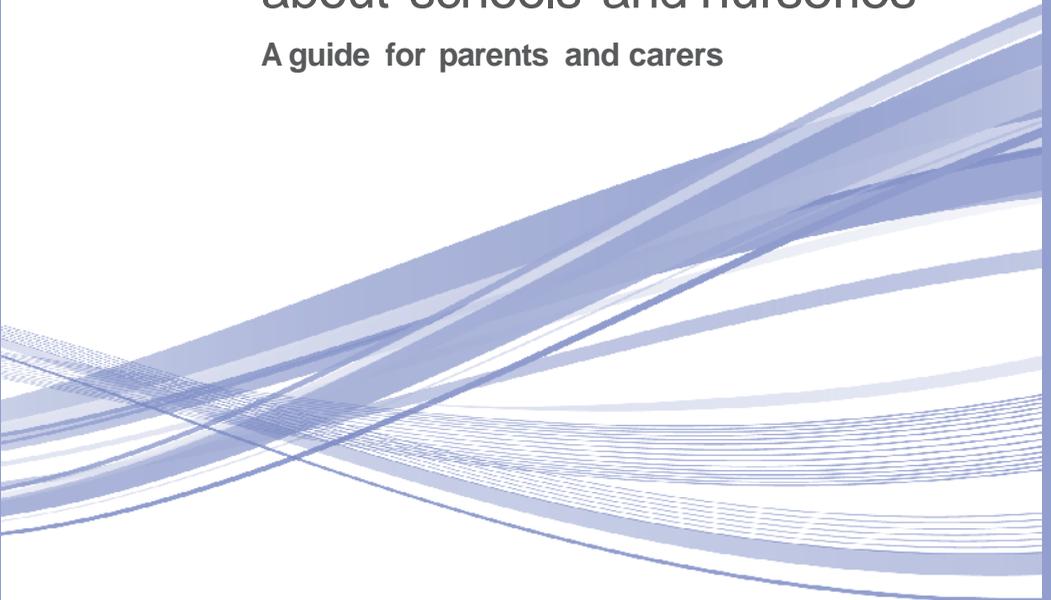


listening to you

Comments and complaints
about schools and nurseries

A guide for parents and carers



Complaints about schools and nurseries

Introduction

South Ayrshire Council is committed to providing a high-quality education service to all children and young people in schools and nurseries. We recognise the importance of fostering positive relations with parents and carers and are keen to promote good communication between families, schools and nurseries.

We welcome comments from parents and carers and want to know what you think, whether positive or negative, about the services we provide.

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied, we want to know about it. This leaflet describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint regarding a school or nursery as part of our *listening to you* complaints process.

Comments can be submitted in the same way as complaints. We will acknowledge all comments and feedback received.

What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.

What can I complain about?

Education-related issues you can complain about include:

- delays in responding to your enquiries and requests – for example, for information about your child's progress;
- failure to provide a service – for example, where a child has a right to school transport;
- our standard of service – for example, your child's right to be taught by qualified and competent staff;
- Council policy – for example, you believe a policy does not meet legal standards or national guidelines;
- treatment by or attitude of a member of staff; or
- failure to follow proper procedure – for example, a failure to apply our own policies properly.

Your complaint can involve more than one Council service or be about someone working on our behalf.

What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints procedure. These include:

- A routine first-time request for a service or action – for example raising a concern about your child's progress.
- Raising a concern for the first time about bullying – every school and nursery has policies on positive behaviour which they follow in cases of alleged bullying.
- Requests for compensation from the Council – for example for lost or damaged property.
- Matters that are covered by a right of appeal. For example:

School exclusions and placing requests

Decisions on appeals against a pupil's exclusion from school or a refusal of a school placing request are made by the appropriate committee. Once the Committee has reached a decision, you cannot use the complaints process to continue your case.

School exam results

Schools have a devolved authority to offer examinations on the awarding body's behalf. In most cases, this will be the Scottish Qualifications Authority. If you are dissatisfied with the result of an exam, the school will refer it to the awarding body.

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help resolve your concerns, we will give you the relevant information and advice.

Who can complain?

Anyone can make a complaint. However, if you are making a complaint on behalf of a pupil, you must be the pupil's legal guardian or a person authorised to complain on his/her behalf. For example, a child's grandparent who is not the legal guardian needs authority from the child's parent or guardian. This would normally mean agreement in writing from the parent or guardian.

How do I complain?

You should complain in the first instance to the school or nursery concerned. You can complain in person, by phone, by e-mail, in writing or on-line through the Council's website at: www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/listeningtoyou.

It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the school or nursery concerned, so please discuss any issues with a teacher or staff member. They will try to resolve any problems on the spot.

When complaining tell us:

- your full name and contact details;
- as much as you can about the complaint;
- what has gone wrong; and
- how you expect us to resolve the matter.

How long do I have to make a complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint within six months of:

- the event you want to complain about; or
- finding out that you have a reason to complain, but no longer than 12 months after the event itself.

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit. If you feel the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why when you advise us of your complaint.

What happens when I have complained?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint. Our complaints procedure has two stages:

Stage 1 – Frontline Resolution

We aim to resolve complaints as quickly as possible, so that's why it's best to raise any complaint directly with the school or nursery concerned. If something has clearly gone wrong, this could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation or immediate action to resolve the problem.

We will give you our decision at Stage 1 within five working days or fewer, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Stage 1 complaints will usually be dealt with by a member of teaching staff or Deputy Head Teacher.

If we can't resolve your complaint at this stage, we will tell you how we intend to deal with it.

Stage 2 – Investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at Stage 1; and those that are complex and require detailed investigation. Stage 2 investigations will normally be conducted by the Head Teacher or another senior member of staff. When using Stage 2 we will:

- acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days;
- normally discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for; and give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days.

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We'll agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

What if I'm still dissatisfied?

After we have fully investigated, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at it.

The SPSO cannot normally look at:

- a complaint that has not been dealt with through our complaints procedure;
- something that happened or you became aware of more than a year ago; or
- a matter that has been or is being considered in court.

You can contact the SPSO:

In Person:

SPSO
4 Melville Street Edinburgh, EH3 7NS

By Post:

SPSO
Freepost EH641, Edinburgh, EH3 0BR

Freephone: 0800 377 7330

Website: www.spsso.org.uk

Mobile site: <http://m.spsso.org.uk>

Getting help to make your complaint

We understand that you may be unable, or reluctant, to make a complaint yourself. We accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our service. We can take complaints from a friend, relative, or an advocate, if you have given them your consent to complain for you.

You can find out about advocates in your area by contacting the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance.

Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

Tel: 0131 556 6443

Fax: 0131 550 9819

Website: www.siaa.org.uk

We are committed to making our service easy to use for all members of the community. In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help customers access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing, or want this information in another language or format, such as large font, or Braille, please let us know and we will help.

Getting In Touch

Please contact your school or nursery directly in the first instance, by phone, in person, in writing or by e-mail.

Nursery Schools

Cherry Tree Nursery	cherrytree.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612037
Girvan Nursery	girvannursery.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01465 716802
Tarbolton Nursery	tarboltonnursery.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 541451
Wallacetown Nursery	wallacetown.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612164

Primary Schools

Alloway Primary School	alloway.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612490
Annbank Primary School	annbank.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612493
Ballantrae Primary School	ballantrae.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01465 716803
Barassie Primary School	barassie.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 690072
Barr Primary School	barr.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01465 716804
Barrhill Primary School	barrhill.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01465 716805
Braehead Primary School	braehead.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612713
Cairn Primary School	cairn.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01655 885802
Colmonell Primary School	colmonell.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01465 716806
Coylton Primary School	coylton.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612491
Crosshill Primary School	crosshill.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01655 885803
Dailly Primary School	dailly.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01465 716807
Dalmilling Primary School	dalmilling.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612736
Doonfoot Primary School	doonfoot.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612702
Dundonald Primary School	dundonald.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 690075
Fisherton Primary School	fisherton.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612049
Forehill Primary School	forehill.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612461
Gardenrose Primary School	gardenrose.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01655 885804
Girvan Primary School	girvanprimary.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01465 716801
Glenburn Primary School	glenburn.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 473452
Grammar Primary School	grammar.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612489
Heathfield Primary School	heathfield.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612123
Holmston Primary School	holmston.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612705

Primary Schools (cont.)

Kincaidston Primary School	kincaidston.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612492
Kingcase Primary School	kingcase.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 473451
Kirkmichael Primary School	kirkmichael.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01655 885805
Maidens Primary School	maidens.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01655 885806
Minishant Primary School	minishant.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612144
Monkton Primary School	monkton.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 473456
Muirhead Primary School	muirhead.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 690033
Newton Primary School	newton.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612174
Sacred Heart Primary School	sacredheart.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01465 716809
Straiton Primary School	straiton.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01655 885808
Struthers Primary School	struthers.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 690073
Symington Primary School	symington.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 690074
St Cuthbert's Primary School	stcuthberts.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01655 885807
St John's Primary School	stjohns.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612711
St Ninian's Primary School	stninians.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 473457
St Patrick's Primary School	stpatricks.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 690070
Tarbolton Primary School	tarbolton.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612152
Tron Primary School	tron.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 690069

Secondary Schools

Ayr Academy	ayr.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612028
Belmont Academy	belmont.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612054
Carrick Academy	carrick.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01655 883003
Girvan Academy	girvan.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01465 716816
Kyle Academy	kyle.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612338
Marr College	marr.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 690022
Prestwick Academy	prestwick.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 477121
Queen Margaret Academy	qma.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612020

Special Schools

Invergarven School	invergarven.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01465 716808
Southcraig Campus	southpark.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	01292 612416

For further information please contact:

0300 123 0900

Dostępna jest wersja tej publikacji w języku polskim, zawierająca wyłącznie tekst.

Aby uzyskać więcej informacji, proszę skontaktować się z:

0300 123 0900

本出版物還有純文字中文版。

有關更多資訊，請聯絡：

0300 123 0900

اس اشاعت کے نسخہ کا صرف متن اردو زبان میں دستیاب ہے۔
مزید جانکاری کے لیے براہ کرم درج ذیل پر رابطہ قائم کریں:

0300 123 0900

Do you know anyone who is registered blind or has a visual impairment?

If you do and think they would like a larger print version or an

audio version of the text contact us on:

0300 123 0900