



Complaints Policy

Status of policy: Statutory

Frequency of review: 2 years

Date of most recent review: 11 December 2025

Date of next review: December 2027

Approved by FGM: Holly Clark, Chair of Governors

Mission

We provide a safe and inclusive learning environment where everyone is valued and encouraged to reach their full potential.

Statement of Intent

Our school is committed to resolving concerns and complaints fairly, promptly and in a way that preserves positive relationships across our community. We want every concern to be addressed at the earliest possible stage, through dialogue and mutual understanding, while ensuring the wellbeing of staff and pupils is protected at all times.

This policy ensures our procedure is:

- clear, accessible and easy to use
- impartial, transparent and non-adversarial
- respectful of confidentiality
- rooted in statutory requirements
- designed with staff and governor wellbeing in mind

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, Governing Bodies of all maintained schools in England have been required to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school. The law also requires the procedure to be publicised.

There is a difference between a concern and a complaint; taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the number that develop into formal complaints.

Definitions

Concern: An expression of worry requiring reassurance.

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction about an action, decision or omission.

School working days: Days when the school is open to pupils and staff.

Holiday submissions: Complaints received during school holidays are deemed received on the first school working day after the holiday period.

Aims

We will endeavour to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint and will always put the interests of our children above all else. We will give careful consideration to all complaints and we aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding.

We aim to:

- resolve issues informally wherever possible
- act swiftly and clearly with proportionate time limits
- ensure the process is non-adversarial and child-centred
- protect staff wellbeing and avoid unnecessary workload
- prevent complaints from being unnecessarily prolonged
- use complaint outcomes to support school improvement

Timescales & Complainant Responsibilities

Complaints should be raised within three months of the incident.

Complainants must respond within 10 school working days when further information is requested. Failure to do so may result in the complaint being closed.

No meetings or investigations will take place during school holidays unless safeguarding requires it.

Guidelines

General Complaints:

Stage 1 – Informal discussion with the class teacher

If a parent or carer has a concern about their child's education, support or wellbeing, they should first speak with their child's class teacher. Most concerns can be resolved quickly and positively at this stage. Staff will always want to understand and address concerns before they impact a child's progress.

- An initial discussion should usually take place within **15 school working days** of the concern being raised.

Stage 2 – Informal discussion with the Headteacher

If the concern remains unresolved, or if the parent believes the issue is more serious, they should request a meeting with the Headteacher. The Headteacher will consider the matter carefully and investigate as appropriate. Most complaints are resolved at this stage.

- The Headteacher will aim to meet with the parent and provide an outcome within **15 school working days**.
If the matter is complex and more time is required, the parent will be informed of the revised timescale.

Stage 3 – Formal complaint to the Governing Body

If informal resolution has not been successful, the parent may submit a **formal written complaint** using the exemplar form below, addressed to the Chair of Governors via the school office (marked *Private & Confidential*). The written complaint must state:

- The nature of the complaint
- Who has already been involved
- The preferred outcome
- The Governing Body will only consider a formal complaint once Stages 1 and 2 have been completed, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

For a complaint about the headteacher:

Stage 1 – Raising the concern

Where the concern relates specifically to the behaviour, leadership or management of the Headteacher, the parent should raise the concern directly with the Headteacher in the first instance. Many issues can still be resolved informally at this stage.

Stage 2 – Inform chair of governors

If the concern cannot be resolved or is of a serious nature, the parent should write to or request a meeting with the Chair of Governors. The Chair will investigate the matter thoroughly and seek to resolve the issue.

- A written outcome will normally be provided within **20 school working days**.

Stage 3 – Formal written complaint to the Governing Body

If informal resolution through the Chair is not successful, the parent may submit a **formal written complaint** using the below form to the Governing Body. This must outline:

- The details of the complaint
- Who has been spoken to already
- The preferred resolution

Governing Body Complaints Committee

The Governing Body will arrange for a Complaints Appeal Panel (CAP) to consider the written complaint within **20 school working days** of receipt.

Composition of the panel

- Three governors who are **not employees** of the school and have had **no prior involvement** in the matter.
- A nominated governor will act as **Complaints Co-ordinator** to oversee arrangements.

Notice and attendance

- The complainant will receive **at least five school working days' notice** of the meeting.
- If the complainant cannot attend the first suggested date, a second date will be offered.
- If the complainant cannot attend the second date, a third and final date will be set, after which the meeting may proceed in their absence.

Documentation

- The Headteacher (or Chair of Governors for complaints about the Headteacher) will provide a written report to the panel and complainant **four school working days before** the meeting.
- The complainant may submit their own written statement, which must be circulated to the panel and the Headteacher/Chair **two school working days before** the meeting.
- New evidence will not be accepted at the meeting unless exceptional circumstances make this necessary.

Checklist for a Panel Hearing

The panel will ensure:

- The meeting is as informal as possible while maintaining procedural fairness.
- After introductions, the complainant may present their complaint and may bring a friend or advocate.
- Panel members and the Headteacher/Chair may ask questions.
- The Headteacher/Chair explains the school's actions and may be accompanied by a relevant colleague.
- Both parties may ask questions of each other.
- The complainant sums up their complaint.
- The Headteacher/Chair sums up the school's response.
- The panel chair confirms that both parties will receive the decision in writing within **15 school working days**.
- Both parties leave while the panel deliberates.

The panel may:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- Decide on appropriate action to resolve the complaint
- Recommend changes to school systems or procedures to prevent similar issues recurring

Investigating Complaints

Throughout the complaints process, the investigating person or panel will:

- Establish the facts and identify all individuals involved
- Clarify the exact nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved
- Meet or communicate with the complainant where necessary
- Determine what the complainant believes would put things right
- Interview relevant staff or individuals, allowing them to be accompanied
- Ask questions with an open mind and avoid assumptions
- Keep accurate, confidential notes of all interviews and discussions

Resolving Complaints

At every stage, the school seeks constructive resolution. This may include:

- An apology
- An explanation
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently (without admitting negligence)
- Assurance that the issue will not recur
- Clarification of steps already taken to prevent recurrence
- A review of relevant policies or practices

Monitoring Complaints

The Governing Body will review all complaints and associated actions annually. Any improvement recommendations will be brought to the appropriate committee for continued oversight.

Unresolved Complaints

If a complainant tries to reopen an issue that has been fully addressed through all stages of the procedure, the Chair of Governors may write to explain that the process has been exhausted and the matter is closed.

A complainant who remains dissatisfied after the school process is complete may contact the **Secretary of State for Education**.

COMPLAINT FORM

Please complete and return to the school office addressed to the Chair of Governors (marked Private and Confidential) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupil's name:
Your relationship to the pupil:
Address:
Postcode:
Day time telephone number:
Evening telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint.
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint.

(Who did you speak to and what was the response)?

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: