



## **Complaints Policy**

January 2023

Review by January 2026

We want all pupils and their families to be happy with the education they receive, and our staff try to do their best for all of them. We recognise that communicating effectively with parents helps pupils to be happy and successful. As a small school, we are fortunate to be able to have regular contact with many of our parents and any concerns can be dealt with very quickly. We welcome feedback from parents and use suggestions when planning for the future.

Despite this, there may be occasions when you have questions, concerns or complaints that you wish to bring to the attention of the school. The following guidelines describe the ways in which you can raise any concerns you may have.

These procedures seek to ensure that your concerns are addressed and resolved as quickly as possible.

The purpose of this policy is to guide parents and carers on:

- The appropriate action to follow to make a complaint;
- The procedures for resolving the complaint.

Our promise to you:

- Concerns will be dealt with honestly, politely and in confidence
- Concerns will be looked at thoroughly and fairly
- We will keep parents and carers up-to-date with progress at each stage
- You will receive an apology if we have made a mistake
- You will be told what we are going to do to put matters right

### **Stage 1 (Informal)**

#### The Class Teacher

Many concerns may be settled by contacting your child's teacher because they have most day-to-day contact with your child. You can contact them by letter or by arranging an appointment to speak to them. They may be able to give you immediate assistance or they may need time to find further information before responding to your concerns.

If you are not satisfied with the class teacher's response, you can contact the Senior Teacher.

#### The Senior Teacher

If you are not satisfied with the class teacher's response, you can contact the Head Teacher.

#### The Head Teacher

If you wish to take the matter further, you should make an appointment to speak to the Head Teacher. If you are not satisfied with the school's response to your concern, you may then have to make a formal complaint.

### **Stage 2 (Formal)**

#### The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher will ask you for your complaint in writing. A member of staff will help you to draft it if necessary. The Head Teacher will contact you within two working days to confirm that the complaint has been received. The complaint should be investigated within five working days or as soon as possible. You may be asked to provide further information. You will be invited to a meeting at which the matter will be discussed. You will then receive a written reply to your complaint. You will also be given details of any actions that the school may take.

#### The Chair of Governors

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, the handling of the complaint or if you wish to make a complaint about a member of staff then a full written complaint should be made to the Chair of Governors at the school's address.

The Chair of Governors will arrange to investigate the matter and will confirm receipt of your letter.

In some cases he/she may meet with you to give you the opportunity to present your evidence verbally. The Chair of Governors will complete his/her investigation within twenty-one days of receipt of the formal complaint and will inform you of the outcome in writing.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation you may request that the Governing Body reviews the Chair of Governor's handling of the complaint. This will take the form of a hearing before a panel of the Governing Body Discipline Committee (Complaints Committee). Any such request would need to be made in writing within 14 days of receipt of the Chair of Governor's letter to you.

### **Stage 3 (formal)**

#### **The Complaints Committee**

You will be contacted within five school days and given the date and time of the hearing and the names of the panel members. You will be invited to attend the hearing. You may bring a friend or representative with you and you will be given the opportunity to explain your complaint in full to the panel. The Head Teacher and Chair of Governors will also be invited to the hearing to give details of the school's response to the complaint to date. Once governors have all the details they require, everyone will be asked to leave so that they can consider what needs to be done. The Governing Body will write to you within forty-eight hours with their findings. You will be informed of any actions that the Governing Body may take in response to its findings. This brings to an end the involvement of the Governing Body in the complaints procedure. Governors will not enter into any further correspondence regarding a complaint.

***It is important that parents follow the correct procedures and steps, both informal and formal, in pursuing a complaint; failure to do so may mean that governors reject the complaint and terminate the complaints procedure.***

***In addition, if governors judge that the complaint is vexatious, you may be informed that your complaint will not be accepted or investigated.***

#### ***Your views are important***

We are committed to providing excellent education at our school. The Headteacher, Staff and Governing Body take all complaints very seriously and we will do everything we can to ensure that you and your children are happy with our school.

#### **Withdrawal of a Complaint:**

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

#### **Persistent Complaints:**

Where a complainant tries to re-open the issue with the school after the complaints procedure has been fully exhausted and the school has done everything it reasonably can in response to the complaint, the Headteacher (or other appropriate person in the case of a complaint about the Headteacher) will inform the complainant that the matter is closed.

If the complainant subsequently contacts the school again about the same issue, the school may choose not to respond. The normal circumstance in which we will not respond is if:

- The school has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's needs, and
- The complainant has been given a clear statement of the school's position and their options (if any), and
- The complainant is contacting the school repeatedly but making substantially the same points each time

However, this list is not intended to be exhaustive.

The school will be most likely to choose not to respond if:

- We have reason to believe the individual is contacting the school with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience, and/or
- The individual's interactions/letters/emails/telephone calls are often or always abusive, aggressive or seek to instil fear amongst staff members, and/or
- The individual makes insulting personal comments about, or threats towards, school staff

Unreasonable behaviour which is considered as abusive, offensive or threatening may constitute an unreasonably persistent complaint. Once the school has decided that it is appropriate to stop responding, the complainant will be informed in writing. The school will ensure when making this decision that complainants making any new complaint are heard, and that the school acts reasonably.

**Anonymous Complaints:**

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.