



# Complaints Procedure

**Approved by:** Melanie Entwistle

**Date:** 01/03/22

**Last reviewed on:** 01/03/23 01/03/24 24/02/2025 7/01/2026

**Next review due by:** 07/01/2027

## Compliance Statement

This Complaints Policy has been written to comply fully with Part 7 of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) guidance, Department for Education (DfE) complaints guidance, and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework. It is suitable for inspection by ISI, Ofsted, and the Department for Education.

Approved by: M. Entwistle

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## 1.Aims

The school aims to meet its statutory obligations when responding to complaints from parents of students at the school and others.

When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel where necessary
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response
- Respect complainants' desire for confidentiality
- Treat complainants with respect
- Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process
- Consider how complaints can contribute to school improvement

We aim to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed. The school will give complainants the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full. This policy is publicised and available on the school website.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements set out in Part 7 of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. [the Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#). It is based on guidance from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) [creating a complaints procedure that complies with the above regulations](#), and the Department for Education (DfE). It also reflects duties under the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework. [creating a complaints procedure that complies with the above regulations](#).

## 3. Definitions and scope

A **concern** is an expression of worry or doubt for which reassurance is sought and is normally resolved through day-to-day communication.

A **complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken or a lack of action. This policy applies to complaints made by parents of pupils currently attending the school.

This policy does not cover complaints relating to admissions, statutory SEN processes, safeguarding, exclusions, whistleblowing, or staff matters, which are addressed through separate procedures.

## 4. Principles for investigation

When investigating a complaint, the school will establish what has occurred, who was involved, and what outcome the complainant is seeking. Complaints are handled promptly within published timescales. Where delays are unavoidable, the complainant will be informed in writing with reasons and revised deadlines. Complaints should normally be raised within three months of the incident. Exceptions will be made where reasonable and where a fair investigation remains possible.

Parents and carers can notify Ofsted if they believe that the school is not meeting Early Years Foundation Stage requirements, by calling 0300 123 4234 or 0300 123 4666, or by emailing [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk). An online contact form is also available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted#org-contacts>. All written EYFS complaints will be investigated and responded to within 28 days. Records will be retained and made available to Ofsted on request.

## 5. Stages of complaint

### (except complaints against the proprietor or a governor)

The complaints process is designed to ensure concerns are addressed fairly, efficiently, and respectfully. Complainants are encouraged to use the 5 step process:

**Step 1:** Parents and carers are encouraged first to determine whether their communication is feedback, an informal concern, or a formal complaint.

**Step 2: Informal** The school will take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter quickly. It may be the case that the provision or clarification of information will resolve the issue.

- Concerns should be raised promptly with the relevant member of staff, preferably in person or by telephone. The school office can assist where necessary.
- Informal complaints will be acknowledged within five working days and responded to within ten working days.
- The complainant may be accompanied at any meeting.

**Step 3: Formal** If a formal complaint is necessary, it should be presented clearly and respectfully, with relevant details and the desired outcome. The formal stage involves the complainant putting the complaint into writing. This letter/email should provide details such as relevant dates, times and the names of witnesses of events, alongside copies of any relevant documents. The complainant should also state what they feel would resolve the complaint.

- Formal complaints must be submitted in writing to [MelanieEntwistle@thegreens-ens.co.uk](mailto:MelanieEntwistle@thegreens-ens.co.uk) (the Head of School.)
- A written response will be issued within ten working days.

**Step 4: Review panel** Complaints will be escalated to the panel hearing stage if the complainant is not satisfied with the response to the complaint at the second, formal, stage. The panel will be appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor (Melanie Entwistle) and must consist of at least 3 people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. At least 1 panel member must be independent of the management and running of the school. The panel cannot be made up solely of governing board members, as they are not independent of the management and running of the school.

- A panel of at least three people, including one independent member, will be convened where necessary.
- Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate the complainant's availability.
- Written findings and recommendations will be issued within 20 working days.

**Step 5: Escalation** may be made to the governing board and, in limited cases, to external bodies such as the Department for Education or Ofsted, ensuring the correct procedures are followed throughout. Complainants are encouraged to use the 5 step process:

## 6.Complaints against the proprietor or a governor

Complaints against the proprietor/director should be addressed to the Chair of Governors. ([LouiseHodson@gmis.org.uk](mailto:LouiseHodson@gmis.org.uk)) Complaints against the Chair or governors should be submitted to the Clerk.

## 7.Referring complaints on completion of the school's procedure

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the school's complaints procedure and the complaint is regarding the school not meeting standards set by the DfE in any of the following areas, the complainant can refer their complaint to the DfE:

- Education
- Student welfare and health and safety
- School premises
- Staff suitability
- Making information available to parents
- The spiritual, moral, social or cultural development of students

The DfE will consider reports of a major failure to meet the standards. Where appropriate, it can arrange an emergency inspection to look at Student welfare and health and safety and make sure that the school deals with serious failings.

For more information or to refer a complaint, see the following webpage:

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>

## 8.Persistent or unreasonable 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 chair of governors (or other appropriate person in the case of a complaint about the chair) will inform the complainant that the matter is closed.

If the complainant subsequently contacts the school again about the same issue, the school can 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 letters/emails/telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive, and/or
- The individual makes insulting personal comments about, or threats towards, school staff

Unreasonable behaviour, which is 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, either by letter or email.

The school will ensure when making this decision that complainants making any new complaint are heard, and that the school acts reasonably.

## **9. Record-keeping**

The school will record the progress of all complaints, including information about actions taken at all stages, the stage at which the complaint was resolved, and the outcome. The records will also include copies of letters and emails, and notes relating to meetings and phone calls.

This material will be treated as confidential and held centrally and will be viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint or on the review panel.

This is except where the secretary of state (or someone acting on their behalf) or the complainant requests access to records of a complaint through a freedom of information (FOI) request or under the terms of the Data Protection Act, or where the material must be made available during a school inspection.

Records of complaints will be kept for six years after the student has left the school.

The details of the complaint, including the names of individuals involved, will not be shared with the whole governing board in case a review panel needs to be organised at a later point.

Where the governing board is aware of the substance of the complaint before the review panel stage, the school will (where reasonably practicable) arrange for an independent panel to hear the complaint.

Complainants also have the right to request an independent panel if they believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings. The decision to approve this request is made by the governing board, who will not unreasonably withhold consent.

## **10. Learning lessons**

The governing board and proprietor review complaint outcomes to identify improvements.

## **11. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy is reviewed and approved annually by the governing board and proprietor. The governing board will monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure in ensuring that complaints are handled properly. The governing board will track the number and nature of complaints, and review underlying issues as stated in section 10.

- The complaints records are logged and managed by director, Melanie Entwistle.
- This policy will be reviewed by the director//full governing board every 12 months.
- At each review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board and the directors.

## **12.Links with other policies**

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Staff Grievance Policy
- Staff Disciplinary Policy

## **13.Complaints to date**

- Complaints in previous academic year 2023= 0
- Complaints in this academic year 2024 = 0
- Complaints up to February 2025 = 0
- Complaints up to January 2026 = 0

## **14.Appendix A: Summary of inspection-led improvements**

- Clarified proprietor and governance roles
- Strengthened panel independence wording
- Improved proportionality for persistent complaints
- Extended complaint record retention period •
- Added explicit compliance statement
- Improved clarity, consistency, and inspection language