



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: 05/04/2028

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

Contents

1. Aims
2. Legislation and guidance
3. Definitions and scope
4. Principles for investigation
5. Stages of complaint (except complaints against the proprietor or a governor)
6. Complaints against the proprietor or a governor
7. Referring complaints on completion of the school's procedure
8. Persistent or unreasonable complaints
9. Record-keeping
10. Learning lessons
11. Monitoring arrangements

12. Links with other policies Appendix A: Summary of inspection-led improvements
13. Complaints to date
14. Appendix A.

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) 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, staff grievances or staff discipline, which are addressed through separate procedures.

Please see our separate policies relating to these types of complaint.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The complainant

The complainant will get a more effective and timely response to their complaint if they:

- Follow these procedures
- Co-operate with the school throughout the process, and respond to deadlines and communication promptly
- Ask for assistance as needed
- Treat all those involved with respect
- Not publish details about the complaint on social media

The investigator

An individual will be appointed to look into the complaint and establish the facts. They will:

- Interview all relevant parties, keeping notes
- Consider records and any written evidence and keep these securely
- Prepare a comprehensive report to the headteacher or complaints committee which includes the facts and potential solutions

The complaints co-ordinator

The complaints co-ordinator can be:

- The headteacher
- A member of SLT
- Any other staff member providing administrative support (Clerk to the governor)
- The complaints co-ordinator will:
 - Keep the complainant up to date at each stage in the procedure
 - Make sure the process runs smoothly by liaising with staff members and the Headteacher. Be aware of issues relating to:
 - Sharing third party information
 - Additional support needed by complainants, for example interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or vulnerable person
 - Keep records

Committee chair

The committee chair will:

- Chair the meeting, ensuring that everyone is treated with respect throughout
- Make sure all parties see the relevant information, understand the purpose of the committee, and are allowed to present their case

5. Principles for investigation

When investigating a complaint, we will try to clarify:

- What has happened
- Who was involved
- What the complainant feels would put things right

Time scales

The complainant must raise the complaint within 3 months of the incident. If the complaint is about a series of related incidents, they must raise the complaint within 3 months of the last incident.

We will consider exceptions to this time frame in circumstances where there were valid reasons for not making a complaint at that time and the complaint can still be investigated in a fair manner for all involved.

When complaints are made out of term time, we will consider them to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

If at any point we cannot meet the time scales we have set out in this policy, we will:

- Set new time limits with the complainant
- Send the complainant details of the new deadline and explain the delay

Resolving Complaints

At each stage in the complaints procedure, The Greens want to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one of the following:

- An explanation
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- An assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- An explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- An undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaints

- An apology

6. Stages of complaint (not complaints against the headteacher or SLT)

Stage 1: 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.

The complainant should raise the complaint as soon as possible with the relevant member of staff or the headteacher as appropriate, either in person or by letter, telephone or email. If the complainant is unclear who to contact or how to contact them, they should contact the school office on 0161 459 2335.

The school will acknowledge informal complaints within 5 school days and investigate and provide a response within 10 school days.

The informal stage will involve a meeting between the complainant and the Head of School, as appropriate. If the complaint is not resolved informally, it will be escalated to a formal complaint.

Stage 2: formal

Formal complaints can be raised:

- By letter or email
- Over the phone
- In person
- By a third party acting on behalf of the complainant

The complainant should provide details such as relevant dates, times, and the names of witnesses of events, alongside copies of any relevant documents, and what they feel would resolve the complaint.

If complainants need assistance raising a formal complaint, they can contact the school office on 0161 459 2335.

The headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 10 school days.

The headteacher (or designated member of the senior leadership team) will call a meeting to clarify concerns and seek a resolution. The complainant may be accompanied to this meeting and should inform the school of the identity of their companion in advance.

In certain circumstances, the school may need to refuse a request for a particular individual to attend any such meeting – for example, if there is a conflict of interest. If this is the case, the school will notify the complainant as soon as they are aware, so that the complainant has the opportunity to arrange alternative accompaniment.

The headteacher (or other person appointed by the headteacher for this purpose) will then conduct their own investigation. The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant within 10 school

days.

If the complainant wishes to proceed to the next stage of the procedure, they should inform the Head of School within 5 school days. The Head of School will acknowledge receipt of the request within 5 school days.

How to escalate a complaint

Complaints can be escalated by contacting the clerk to the governor (Lindabroadbent@gmis.org.uk)

- By letter or email
- Over the phone
- In person
- Through a third party acting on behalf of the complainant

The clerk will need the details of the complaint as set out above, as well as details from the complainant on how they feel the previous stage of the procedure has not addressed their complaint sufficiently, and what they feel would resolve the complaint.

The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant within 10 school days.

If the complainant wishes to proceed to the next stage of the procedure, they should inform the Head of School in writing within 5 school days. Requests received outside of this time frame will be considered in exceptional circumstances.

The Head of School will acknowledge receipt of the request within 5 school days.

Stage 3a: submit the complaint to the review panel

Convening the panel

The review panel consists of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint with one panel member who is independent of the management and running of the school. These individuals will have access to the existing record of the complaint's progress (see section 10).

We will seek panel members/an independent reviewer (see stage 3b) from other schools or the local authority. We will make sure the members we source are suitably skilled and can demonstrate that they are independent and impartial.

The complainant must have reasonable notice of the date of the review panel. The clerk will aim to find a date within 10 school days of the request, where possible.

If the complainant rejects the offer of 3 proposed dates without good reason, the clerk will set a date. The hearing will go ahead using written submissions from both parties.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 5 school days before the date of the meeting.

At the meeting

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending will be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any

minutes taken.

At the review panel meeting, the complainant and representatives from the school, as appropriate, will be present. Each will have an opportunity to set out written or oral submissions prior to the meeting.

The complainant must be allowed to attend the panel hearing and be accompanied by a suitable companion if they wish. We don't encourage either party to bring legal representation but will consider it on a case-by-case basis. For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by their union.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At the meeting, each individual will have the opportunity to give statements and present their evidence, and witnesses will be called as appropriate to present their evidence.

The panel, the complainant and the school representative will be given the chance to ask and reply to questions. Once the complainant and school representatives have completed presenting their cases, they will be asked to leave, and evidence will then be considered.

The panel will then put together its findings and recommendations from the case. The panel will also provide copies of the minutes of the hearing and the findings and recommendations to the complainant and, where relevant, the subject of the complaint, and make a copy of the findings and recommendations available for inspection by the headteacher.

The outcome

The committee can:

- Uphold the complaint, in whole or in part
- Dismiss the complaint, in whole or in part If the complaint is upheld, the committee will:
- Decide the appropriate action to resolve the complaint
- Where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future

The school will inform those involved of the decision in writing within 20 school days.

Stage 3b: submit the complaint to an independent reviewer

The independent reviewer is appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor. This person must not, at any time, have been a member of staff or supply staff at the school, and must not have been the parent of a registered or former registered pupil at the school. They must also not have been directly involved in any matter detailed in the complaint.

The independent reviewer will convene a review meeting with the complainant and representatives from the school, as appropriate. Each will have an opportunity to set out written or oral submissions prior to the meeting.

At the meeting, each individual will have the opportunity to give statements and present their evidence, and witnesses will be called as appropriate to present their evidence.

The independent reviewer, the complainant and the school representative(s) will be given the chance to ask and reply to questions.

The complainant, proprietor and headteacher, and where relevant, the subject of the complaint, will be given a copy of the findings and recommendations made by the independent person.

The school will inform those involved of the decision in writing within 10 school days.

7.Complaints against the headteacher

Stage 1: informal

Complaints made against the headteacher should be directed to the clerk to the governor in the first instance. The clerk is lindabroadbent@gmis.org.uk

If the complaint is about the headteacher, a suitably skilled and impartial governor will carry out the steps at stage 1 (set out in section 6 above). If required, an impartial governor, will be sourced from local schools or the local authority

Stage 2: formal

If the complaint is jointly about the headteacher and safeguarding governor, an independent investigator will carry out the steps in stage 2 (set out in section 6 above). They will be appointed by the Local Authority and will write a formal response at the end of their investigation.

Stage 3: review panel

If the complaint is:

- Jointly about the chair and vice-chair or
- The entire governing board or/governor

A committee of independent members will hear the complaint. They will be sourced from local schools or the local authority and will carry out the steps at stage 3 (set out in section 6 above).

8.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
- Pupil welfare and health and safety
- School premises
- Staff suitability
- Making information available to parents
- The spiritual, moral, social or cultural development of pupils

The DfE will consider reports of a major failure to meet the standards. Where appropriate, it can arrange an emergency inspection to look at pupil 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>

9. Persistent complaints

Where a complainant tries to re-open the issues with the school after the complaint's procedure has been fully exhausted and the school has done everything it reasonably can in response to the complaint, the Head of School or SLT, 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 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

Unreasonably persistent complaints

Most complaints raised will be valid, and therefore we will treat them seriously. However, a complaint may become unreasonable if the person:

- Has made the same complaint before, and it's already been resolved by following the school's complaints procedure
- Makes a complaint that is obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, defamatory or repetitive
- Insists on pursuing a complaint that is unfounded, or out of scope of the complaint's procedure, beyond all reason
- Refuses to engage with the school and insists that the school deals with the complaint.
- Makes a complaint designed to cause disruption, annoyance or excessive demands on school time
- Seeks unrealistic outcomes, or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value

Steps we will take

We will take every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns and give them a clear statement of our position and their options. We will maintain our role as an objective arbiter throughout the process, including when we meet with individuals. We will follow our complaints procedure as normal (as outlined above) wherever possible.

If the complainant continues to contact the school in a disruptive way, we may put communications strategies in place. We may:

- Give the complainant a single point of contact via an email address
- Limit the number of times the complainant can make contact, such as a fixed number per term
- Ask the complainant to engage a third party to act on their behalf, such as [Citizens Advice](#)

- Put any other strategy in place as necessary

Stopping responding

We may stop responding to the complainant when all of these factors are met:

- We believe we have taken all reasonable steps to help address their concerns
- We have provided a clear statement of our position and their options
- The complainant contacts us repeatedly, and we believe their intention is to cause disruption or inconvenience

Where we stop responding, we will inform the individual that we intend to do so. We will also explain that we will still consider any new complaints they make.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from our school site.

Duplicate complaints

If we have resolved a complaint under this procedure and receive a duplicate complaint on the same subject from a partner, family member or other individual, we will assess whether there are aspects that we hadn't previously considered, or any new information we need to take into account.

If we are satisfied that there are no new aspects, we will:

- Tell the new complainant that we have already investigated and responded to this issue, and that the local process is complete
- Direct them to the DfE if they are dissatisfied with our original handling of the complaint. If there are new aspects, we will follow this procedure again.

Complaint campaigns

Where the school receives a large volume of complaints about the same topic or subject, especially if these come from complainants unconnected with the school, the school may respond to these complaints by:

- Publishing a single response on the school website
- Sending a template response to all of the complainants

If complainants are not satisfied with the school's response, or wish to pursue the complaint further, the normal procedures will apply.

10. Record-keeping

The school will record the progress of all complaints, (regardless of being upheld or not) 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 securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with data protection law, and our privacy notices.

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.

11.Learning lessons

The Head of School will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the senior leadership team where appropriate, and respecting confidentiality, to determine whether there are any improvements that the school can make to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

12.Monitoring arrangements

The Head of School will monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure in making sure that complaints are handled properly. The Head of School will track the number and nature of complaints, and review underlying issues as stated in section 11.

The complaints records are logged and managed by Melanie Entwistle, Head of School. This policy will be reviewed by the Head of School every 2 years.

At each review, the policy will be approved by the Head of School and SLT.

13.Links with other policies

- Child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures
- Admissions policy
- Exclusions policy
- Staff grievance procedures
- Staff disciplinary procedures
- SEN policy and information report

14.Complaints to date

- Complaints in academic year 2023= 0
- Complaints in academic year 2024 = 0
- Complaints in academic year 2025 = 0
- Complaints up to 2026 = 0

