



The Grey Coat Hospital

Complaints Policy

POLICY NAME:	Complaints Policy
GOV COMMITTEE:	Strategy Committee
LAST POLICY REVIEW DATE:	June 2026
POLICY REVIEW SCHEDULE:	Annual

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Aims

Our school aims to meet its statutory obligations when responding to complaints from parents of pupils 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 and courtesy
- Make sure that any decisions we make are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate, in line with the principles of administrative law
- Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process
- Consider how the complaint can feed into school improvement evaluation processes

We try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed.

The school will aim to give the complainant the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full.

To support this, we will make sure we publicise the existence of this policy and make it available on the school website.

Throughout the process, we will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and make any reasonable adjustments needed to accommodate individuals.

Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements set out in part 7 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which states that we must have and make available a written procedure to deal with complaints from parents of pupils at the school.

It is also based on guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE).

Definitions and scope

Definitions

The DfE guidance explains the difference between a concern and a complaint:

- A **concern** is defined as “an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought”
- A **complaint** is defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action”

Scope

The school intends to resolve complaints informally where possible, at the earliest possible stage. There may be occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. This policy outlines the procedure relating to handling such complaints.

This policy does **not** cover complaints procedures relating to:

- Admissions
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)
- Safeguarding matters
- Exclusion
- Whistleblowing
- Staff grievances
- Staff discipline
- Withdrawal from the curriculum (parents and carers can withdraw their child from any aspect of religious education, including the daily act of collective worship. They do not have to explain why.)

Complaints about services provided by other providers who use school premises or facilities should be directed to the provider concerned.

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
- Do not publish details about the complaint on social media

The investigator

An individual will be appointed to investigate 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
- The designated complaints governor
- Any other staff member providing administrative support

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, the headteacher, chair of governors, and clerk to the governors

- 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 young person
 - Keeping records

Clerk to the governing board

The clerk will:

- Be the contact point for the complainant and the complaints committee, including circulating the relevant papers and evidence before complaints committee meetings
- Arrange the complaints hearing
- Record and circulate the minutes and outcome of the hearing

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

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 basis.

Making contact

A complainant with a concern or potential complaint should normally first contact the student's tutor, if the concern is of a pastoral nature, or the child's classroom teacher, if the concern is around learning and lessons. There may be occasions where the first contact may be with an alternative, normally more senior teacher, for example the student's Head of Year or Subject Leader. Other staff

(for example, a subject teacher, or member of the Leadership Group) may need to be involved or consulted if this teacher cannot resolve the matter.

If the complainant is a member of the public, contact should be made with the Headteacher, via the Headteacher's PA, using the 'Contact Us' form on the school website.

Parents and carers are welcome to contact the Chair of Governors directly, by contacting the Director of Governance and Operations at: The Foundation Office, The United Westminster & Grey Coat Foundation, Pouchot Building, 57 Palace Street, London SW1E 5HJ on any issue. However, if they wish to raise a concern or complaint, they should follow this Complaints Resolution procedure in the first instance.

Any complaint against a member of the Leadership Group should go to the Headteacher.

A complaint against the Headteacher should go straight to the Chair of Governors (via letter marked Private and Confidential).

Appendix C sets out how Governors will decide whether a complaint will be treated as unreasonable or unreasonably persistent, and how such a complaint will be handled.

Stages of complaint (not complaints against the headteacher or governors)

The key stages of our Complaints Resolution Procedure are as follows:

- Stage 1 Informal Resolution with a relevant staff member.
- Stage 2 Formal Complaint to the relevant member of Leadership Group for investigation.
- Stage 3 Formal Resolution by appeal to the Headteacher.
- Stage 4 Independent Resolution through a panel hearing.
- Stage 5 Referral to the Department for Education (DfE)

Note: Complaints against staff will be dealt with by the Headteacher or a person designated by the Headteacher.

If a complaint is made directly against the Headteacher it will be dealt with by the chair of governors and then proceed to Stage 4 if necessary.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution (this is where most complaints will be dealt with)

Resolution Complainants should, wherever possible, seek an early and informal resolution of all concerns. The Grey Coat Hospital will take reasonable measures necessary to respond to and rectify any concerns as swiftly as possible, before they become a Formal Complaint. Such measures will include some or all of the following:

- Giving advice or reassurance;
- Explaining the context to an incident or decision;
- Gathering information from other staff or students;
- Finding information from other sources;
- Referring the concern or potential complaint to a senior colleague;

- Reviewing or amending practice; giving feedback to complainant;
- Apologising for mistakes or oversights; or
- Arranging an informal meeting to listen to, and try and solve, the complaint.

The member of staff who responds to the complainant should provide a prompt summary in writing to the complainant **within 10 school days**, detailing the concern and what has been done at the informal resolution stage.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution by the relevant member of the Leadership Group

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the response through the informal complaint resolution process, they are entitled to proceed with a formal written complaint in accordance with the procedure below. They must submit this **within 10 school days from the date of the informal decision letter**.

If the concern or complaint has not been resolved informally, the complainant should put it in writing using the Formal Complaint Record (Appendix A), addressed to the relevant member of Leadership Group (Appendix B).

In their complaint, the complainant is required to suggest proportionate and reasonable action which will resolve their complaint.

There will be an initial response **within 10 school days** of the complaint being received. Where necessary, the member of Leadership Group will meet with the complainant to discuss the matter and if possible, to reach a resolution at this stage.

Where a complaint is received during a school holiday, it will be deemed to have reached the school on the first full school day following its arrival.

It may be necessary to carry out investigations. The school has the discretion to decide which member of Leadership Group should lead on the investigation. The member of the Leadership Group will keep records of all complaints, and of meetings held in relation to them. Once the member of Leadership Group is satisfied that all the relevant facts have been established, a response to the complaint will be made and the complainant will be informed in writing, **within 15 school days of the Formal Complaint being received** by The Grey Coat Hospital.

The nature of the response will depend on the nature of the complaint but it will always give a judgement whether and to what extent, if at all, the complaint is justified, and reasons; the response may include actions which the school intends to take or a decision.

A complainant, for complaints of a particularly serious kind (and for any complaints relating to the actions or conduct of a member of Leadership Group), may choose to address the Formal Complaint directly to the Headteacher, in which case Stage 3, the Formal Resolution by Appeal to the Headteacher, will be dealt with by the Headteacher.

Stage 3 – Formal Resolution by Appeal to the Headteacher

If Stage 2 has not resolved the complaint satisfactorily, the complainant should write to the Headteacher **within 10 school days of the date of the written response** stating why an appeal for

resolution by the Headteacher is requested and, wherever possible, the action which the complainant wishes The Grey Coat Hospital to take to resolve the concern.

The Headteacher will acknowledge the appeal. Stage 3 will then follow the same steps, timescale, record keeping and form of response as set out for resolution by the member of Leadership Group in Stage 2.

Stage 4 – Independent Resolution through a panel hearing

If the complainant is not happy with the Headteacher's response at Stage 3, they can request this to be escalated to Stage 4. This must be done in writing to the Chair of Governors, and the complainant must explain clearly how they would like the complaint resolved. This must be **within 10 school days of the date of the decision letter**. The Chair of Governors, will acknowledge the letter of complaint **within five school days** of receiving it.

A panel of two Governors and one member who is independent of the management and the running of the school (all of whom have not been involved in the complaint up to this point) will be convened to hear the complaint, normally **within 20 school days** of the complaint being acknowledged by the Chair of Governors.

The Clerk to the Governors or an Independent Clerk will be present to act as clerk to the panel.

The Panel 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.

Members of the panel will have access to all relevant documentation and will be able to ask representatives of The Grey Coat Hospital and the complainant for any other relevant information or documentation. It is intended that the process should not be adversarial or legalistic.

The complainant must be allowed to attend the panel hearing and be accompanied if they wish. The complainant may be accompanied at this meeting by one other person (e.g. relative, friend or a relevant specialist). If the complaint is from a group, then no more than two representatives from that group will be allowed to attend the meeting. 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.

The Headteacher may be accompanied by another person to support them during the hearing.

If a student has made a complaint, they are encouraged to bring a parent and may also be accompanied by one other person (e.g. relative, friend or a relevant specialist).

Due to the sensitive nature of some complaints, it may be inappropriate for a student to be in the entirety of the panel hearing. The Chair of the complaints panel will, where he/she feels it is appropriate, ask a student at the school to leave the panel hearing at their discretion. The Chair also has the right to remove any person whose behaviour is unacceptable.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

Both the school and the complainant can submit supporting papers to the complaints panel, and these will be accepted at the discretion of the Chair of the panel.

If the Chair of the panel imposes a deadline before which papers must be submitted, then they reserve the right to refuse anything submitted after that date.

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(s) will be given the chance to ask and reply to questions. Once the complainant and school representative(s) have presented their cases, they will be asked to leave, and evidence will then be considered by the panel.

If possible, the panel will resolve the complaint without further investigation. Where further investigation is needed, the panel will decide how to carry out the investigation.

After due consideration of all relevant facts, the panel will give written findings in response to the complaint; the findings will depend on the nature of the complaint but the panel will always give a judgement whether and to what extent, if at all, the complaint is justified, and the panel's reasons. The findings may include recommendations or actions which the panel requires The Grey Coat Hospital to take.

The findings of the panel will be final. A copy of the findings will be sent to the complainant, Headteacher and Governors (at the school address) and any person who is the object of the complaint, by electronic mail or by post, at the discretion of the panel.

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 10 school days of the hearing**.

Stage 5 - Referral to the Department of Education.

If Stage 4 has not resolved a complaint satisfactorily, the complainant should write **within 10 school days** of the report of the Governors' findings on the complaint to the Department of Education requesting their advice using the online form: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-to-dfe>

Complaints against the Headteacher, a governor or the governing board

Stage 1: informal

Complaints made against the Headteacher or any member of the governing board should be directed to the clerk to the governing board in the first instance.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher or one member of the governing board (including the chair or vicechair), a suitably skilled and impartial governor will carry out the steps at stage 1 (set out in section above).

Stage 2: formal

If the complaint is:

- Jointly about the chair and vice-chair or
- The entire governing board or
- The majority of the governing board

An independent investigator will carry out the steps in stage 2. They will be appointed by the governing board 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
- The majority of the governing board

A committee of independent governors will hear the complaint. They will be sourced from local schools, the local authority or another appropriate body and will carry out the steps at stage 3.

Referring complaints on completion of the school's procedure

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the school's complaints procedure, they can refer their complaint to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The ESFA will check whether the complaint has been dealt with properly by the school. The ESFA will not overturn a school's decision about a complaint, but will intervene if a school or trust has:

- Breached a clause in its funding agreement
- Failed to act in line with its duties under education law
- Acted (or is proposing to act) unreasonably when exercising its functions

If Stage 4 has not resolved a complaint satisfactorily, the complainant should write **within 10 school days of the report of the Governors' findings on the complaint** to the Department of Education requesting their advice using the online form: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-to-dfe>

Students wishing to make a complaint

Students are entitled to make a formal complaint in exceptional circumstances. The pastoral structure of The Grey Coat Hospital gives many opportunities for informal resolution, and all reasonable attempts should be made to resolve concerns before a formal complaint. If a student wishes to carry forward a formal complaint, the stages outlined above apply.

Confidentiality

All information, correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential by the school, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting a formal inspection requests access to them. Complainants are expected to comply with the confidentiality of the process.

Complaints Register

The Grey Coat Hospital will maintain a register of all formal complaints (Stage 2 and above). This register will help to identify trends and ensure that a resolution is made with appropriate feedback to the relevant parties.

Publication of Procedures

The existence of the Complaints Policy shall be published on The Grey Coat Hospital's website as part of its publication scheme. Printed copies are available on request at The Grey Coat Hospital.

Summary of time scales for a complaint

	Initial response by the school	Investigation and response	Response by complainant*
Informal	Within 10 school days of a concern being raised	Included in initial response.	A formal complaint to be made within 10 school days from the date of the informal decision letter
Formal	Within 10 school days of the complaint being received	Within 15 school days of the complaint being received	Within 10 school days of the date of the member of Leadership Group's written response
Appeal	Within 10 school days of receipt of the appeal request	Within 15 school days of the appeal	Within 10 school days of the date of the Headteacher's written response
Independent	Within 5 school days of receipt of the complaint	Within 20 school days of the initial response to the complaint	Within 10 school days of the date of the Governors' report

*After any of these time intervals have elapsed, it will be assumed that the complainant does not wish to continue with the complaint, and the matter will be closed by the Academy. Complainants cannot re-open a closed complaint unless there are exceptional circumstances to justify their doing so.

Conduct and unreasonable complainants

The Grey Coat Hospital is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially in accordance with its Complaints Resolution Procedure. The Grey Coat Hospital expects that all parties will be respectful and courteous throughout the complaints process, and to maintain the confidentiality of it. The Grey Coat Hospital will not tolerate verbal or physical harassment or abuse towards any of its staff members.

The Grey Coat Hospital will not tolerate any attempts to make public statements or derogatory or negative comments about the school or employees during this process. In cases where threats are made against staff or allegations are made; or public or unnecessary, unpleasant behaviour is seen; the school reserves the right to impose communication restrictions or close the complaint. This will only be done in exceptional circumstances, and the school will warn complainants that their behaviour is unreasonable before issuing the sanctions above.

If a complainant makes a complaint which, after investigation, is deemed to be excessive, unfounded or based on exaggerated or elaborated statements, then the Headteacher may decide to class the complaint as malicious. The school will keep a list of malicious complainants. The school reserves the right to stop the complaints process if the complaint is investigated and seen to be unfounded. This is especially so for complainants who have previously had a complaint deemed as malicious.

If necessary, the Chair of the Complaints Panel has the right to stop the complaints process at Stage 4 if the behaviour of the complainant is unreasonable as outlined above. More guidance on how this type of behaviour will be dealt with is available in Appendix C

Persistent complaints

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 procedure, beyond all reason
- Pursues a valid complaint, but in an unreasonable manner e.g. refuses to articulate the complaint, refuses to co-operate with this complaint procedure, or insists that the complaint is dealt with in ways that are incompatible with this procedure and the time frames it sets out
- 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 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 raised by the complainant, 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 the complainants

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

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 through a subject access request 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, our privacy notices and records management policy/record retention schedule. 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.

Learning lessons

The governors will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the headteacher or other staff where appropriate, 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.

Monitoring arrangements

The governing body will monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure in making sure that complaints are handled properly. The governing body will track the number and nature of complaints, and review underlying issues.

The complaint records are logged and managed by the Headteacher's PA.

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Strategy Committee of the governing body. After each review, the policy will be submitted for ratification to the full Governing Body.

Links with other policies

Policies dealing with other forms of complaints include:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures
- Admissions policy
- Exclusions policy
- Staff grievance procedures
- Staff disciplinary procedures
- SEND policy and information report
- Privacy notices

Appendix A: Formal Complaint Record

Please complete all sections of this record. The record should be sent to the Headteacher's PA, at The Grey Coat Hospital.

Name of complainant: _____

Name of student at The Grey Coat Hospital: _____

Please give full details of your Formal Complaint.

Please suggest the proportionate and reasonable action that The Grey Coat Hospital can take to resolve your Formal Complaint:

If you would like to do so, please continue on a separate sheet or attach a letter to this Formal Complaint Record.

Appendix B: Directing a complaint to the relevant person in the Leadership Group - Stage 2

Who will deal with the complaint	Focus of the complaint
Headteacher	Complaint against a member of the Leadership Group, Stage 3 complaints, permanent exclusions, Christian ethos
Senior Deputy Headteacher and DSL	Safeguarding; teaching and learning, bullying, suspensions, SEND and Inclusion
Assistant Headteacher (KS3)	School trips and events, curriculum, enrichment, PSHCE, internal exams KS3, Y9 subject choices; and academic/pastoral matters relating to a student in Y7-9
Assistant Headteacher (KS4)	Timetable, tracking data, and internal exams for Y10/11; academic/pastoral matters relating to a student in Y10-11; progression advice for post-16
Deputy Headteacher (KS5)	Sixth Form matters, recruitment process for sixth form places, attendance, internal exams for Y12/13, public examinations GCSE and A Level
Director of Finance and Operations	Premises; financial management; catering; staff recruitment; health and safety

Appendix C: Unreasonable Complaints

This appendix sets out how Governors will decide whether complaints will be treated as unreasonable or unreasonably persistent, and how such a complaint will be handled.

It is important to distinguish between people who make several complaints because they really think things have gone wrong, and people who are unreasonably persistent in making their complaints.

If the complainant is persisting because their complaints have not been considered in full, the school must address this. However, if the school has already done so and has demonstrated this to the complainant, the Headteacher (or Chair of the Governors Panel) should consider whether the behaviour of the complainant is now inappropriately persistent or malicious. This process should only be used as a last resort and after all reasonable measures have been taken to resolve complaints in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy.

Identifying unreasonable or unreasonably persistent behaviour

We will not tolerate deceitful, abusive, offensive, threatening, discriminatory or other forms of unacceptable behaviour from complainants. Personal attacks or threats towards employees will not be tolerated. When such actions occur, The Grey Coat Hospital will take proportionate action to protect the wellbeing of our staff and the integrity of our processes; this may include closing the complaint following a warning that the behaviour is not acceptable.

The following are some of the actions and behaviours which the Academy would consider to be unreasonably persistent behaviour. Single incidents may be unacceptable but unreasonably persistent behaviour will usually be found when the complainant demonstrates the following behaviour over time:

- refusing to specify the grounds of a complaint despite offers of assistance;
- refusing to cooperate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refusing to accept that issues are not within the power of the Academy to investigate, change or influence;
- insisting on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the Complaints Resolution Procedure or with good practice (insisting, for instance, that there must not be any written record of the complaint);
- making what appears to be an unjustified complaint about the staff dealing with the complaints, and seek to have them replaced;
- making excessive demands on the time and resources of staff dealing with the complaint by, for example, lengthy phone calls or emails to numerous Academy staff and expecting immediate responses raising subsidiary or new issues whilst a complaint is being addressed that were not part of the complaint at the start of the complaint process;
- introducing trivial or irrelevant new information whilst the complaint is being investigated and expecting this to be taken into account and commented on;
- changing the substance or basis of the complaint without reasonable justification whilst the complaint is being considered;

- denying statements made at an earlier stage in the complaint process;
- electronically recording meetings and conversations without the prior knowledge of the other person involved;
- refusing to accept the outcome of the complaint process after its conclusion or repeatedly arguing the point with no new evidence;
- making the same complaint repeatedly, perhaps with minor differences, after the Complaints Resolution Procedure has been concluded, and insist that the minor differences constitute 'new' complaints which should be put through the full Complaints Resolution Procedure; or
- raising numerous detailed but unimportant questions and insisting they are all answered.
- threatening staff both directly or indirectly.
- posting inappropriate comments about the school on social media or to external parties.

Actions in the event of unreasonable or unreasonably persistent behaviour

In most instances when we consider someone's behaviour to be unreasonable, we will explain why and ask them to change it. We will also warn them that, if the behaviour continues, we may take action to restrict their contact with the school. Any restriction imposed should be appropriate and proportionate.

Where the behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of school staff, we may report the matter to the police or consider taking legal action.

Restrictions that may be imposed by the Headteacher include:

- Restricting contact only with named members of staff;
- Restricting contact by telephone except with a named school staff member;
- Restricting correspondence in connection with the complaint to letter and not email;
- Banning a complainant from the school site except with prior permission from the Headteacher.
- Refusing to communicate further with the complainant.

In the event of unreasonable or unreasonably persistent behaviour which leads the Headteacher to impose restrictions, the Headteacher or designated member of school staff will notify the complainant:

- why their behaviour is being treated as unacceptable;
- the action the school is going to take;
- the duration of this action; and
- when this action will be reviewed.

Where the behaviour is abusive or it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of staff, the school will consider other options, including reporting the matter to the police or taking legal action to restrict access to school premises. In such cases, the school may not give the complainant a prior warning of that action.

If a complainant makes a complaint which, after investigation, is deemed to be excessive, unfounded or based on exaggerated or elaborated statements, the Headteacher may decide to class

the complaint as malicious. The school will keep a list of malicious complainants. The school reserves the right to stop the complaints process if the complaint is investigated and seen to be unfounded. This is especially so for complainants who have previously had a complaint deemed as malicious.

If necessary, the Chair of the Complaints Panel has the right to stop the complaints process at Stage 4 if the behaviour of the complainant is unreasonable as outlined above.