



ST. PETER'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY EDMOND

Complaints Policy

Last reviewed	September 2026
Governors approval	1.9.26
Next reviewed	September 2027

1 Introduction

1.1

St Peter's CE Primary School & Nursery is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly, openly and impartially and to providing a high-quality service to those who raise concerns. We recognise that raising a complaint can be challenging and we aim to respond with kindness, patience and respect, in line with our Christian ethos.

Department for Education (DfE) best practice guidance for school complaint procedures defines a concern 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 or statement of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action."

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally without the need to use the formal stages of this procedure.

The school takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve matters as quickly as possible. As a Church of England school, St Peter's seeks to resolve concerns and complaints in a manner consistent with its Christian vision and values. We seek to work in partnership with families and the wider community so that concerns can be addressed constructively and relationships maintained wherever possible. If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these circumstances, the Headteacher will refer you to another member of staff. Likewise, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with the concern objectively, the Headteacher will refer the matter to another member of staff.

The school also has a duty to ensure that staff and governors are able to carry out their roles without fear of abuse, harassment or unreasonable demands and that school resources are used appropriately in the interests of all pupils.

Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children attending the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that the school provides.

Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures, such as admissions or exclusions appeals, this complaints procedure will apply.

1.5 Scope of the policy

Certain matters fall outside the scope of this complaints procedure because separate statutory or internal procedures apply:

Admissions to schools

Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)

School reorganisation proposals

Concerns should be raised directly with Telford and Wrekin Council.

Complaints regarding admission appeals for maintained schools are dealt with by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation

Complaints about child protection matters are handled under the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

If a complainant has serious concerns regarding safeguarding practice, they may contact:

- the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Services

Exclusion of children from school

Further information can be found at:

www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions

Complaints regarding the application of the school's Behaviour Policy may be considered under this complaints procedure.

Whistleblowing

The school has an internal whistleblowing procedure for employees, temporary staff and volunteers. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for whistleblowing matters in education.

Staff grievances

Complaints raised by school employees will be dealt with through the school's grievance procedures.

Staff conduct

Complaints regarding staff conduct will normally be considered through the school's disciplinary procedures where appropriate.

Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a member of staff but will be advised that the matter has been addressed.

Complaints about external providers using school premises

External providers should have their own complaints procedures.

Complaints should be directed to the organisation providing the service.

National Curriculum content

Complaints regarding National Curriculum content should be directed to the Department for Education.

1.6 Concurrent investigations and legal proceedings

If other bodies are investigating aspects of a complaint, for example:

- the police
- local authority safeguarding services
- social care services
- tribunals
- regulatory bodies

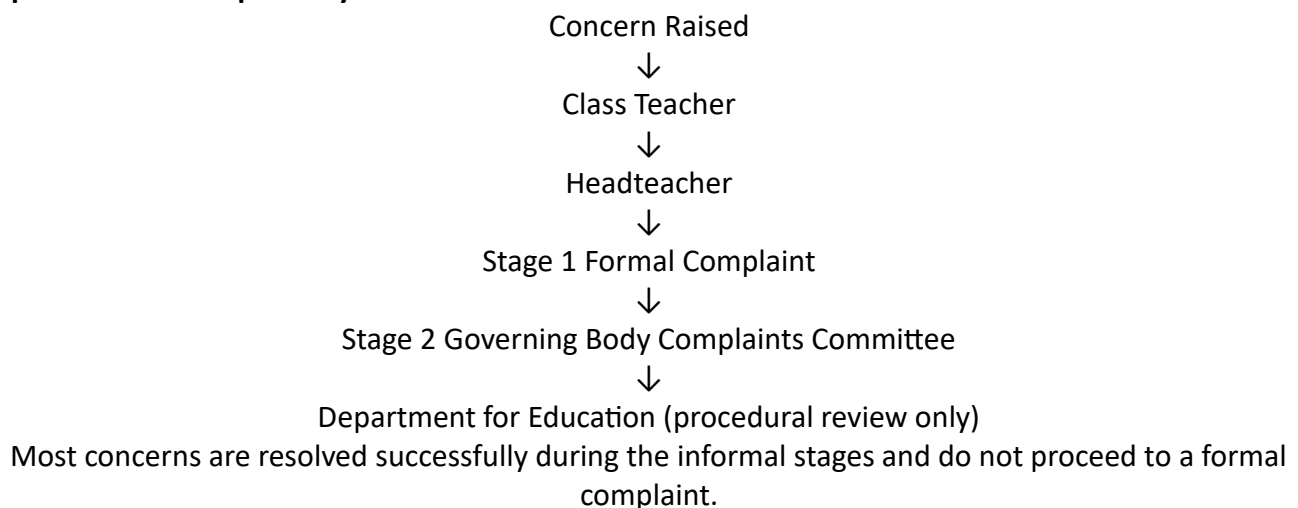
This may affect the school's ability to comply with the timescales set out within this procedure.

In such circumstances, the school may suspend the complaints procedure until the external investigation has concluded.

If a complainant commences legal proceedings against the school in relation to matters raised within the complaint, the school will consider whether the complaints procedure should be suspended until those proceedings have been completed.

2 How to raise a concern or make a complaint

Complaint resolution pathway



A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone.

A concern or complaint may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, provided appropriate consent has been obtained.

Concerns should normally be raised with the class teacher in the first instance. If the concern remains unresolved, it should be raised with the Headteacher.

Complainants should not approach individual governors with concerns or complaints. Governors have no authority to act individually and prior involvement may prevent them from participating in any future complaints committee.

Complaints against school staff (other than the Headteacher) should be addressed to the Headteacher via the school office and clearly marked Private and Confidential.

Complaints concerning the Headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors via the school office and marked Private and Confidential.

Complaints concerning the Chair of Governors, an individual governor or the Governing Body should be addressed to the Clerk to Governors via the school office and marked Private and Confidential.

For ease of use, a complaint form is included at Appendix 1.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary to enable complainants to access this procedure.

This may include:

- alternative formats
- interpretation support
- assistance completing forms
- accessible meeting arrangements
- virtual meetings where appropriate

Anonymous complaints

The school will not normally investigate anonymous complaints.

However, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors may determine that an anonymous complaint warrants investigation where there are safeguarding, welfare or public interest considerations.

Timescales

A complaint should be raised within three months of the incident concerned or within three months of the last occurrence where a series of related incidents has taken place.

Complaints submitted outside this period may be considered where exceptional circumstances apply.

Delays to published timescales

Where the school is unable to meet a published timescale, the complainant will be informed in writing.

This communication will:

- explain the reason for the delay
- provide an update on progress
- set out a revised response timetable

The school will seek to keep complainants informed throughout any extended investigation.

Complaints received outside term time

Complaints received during school holidays will be considered received on the first school day following the holiday period.

3 Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, the school seeks to resolve complaints wherever possible.

If appropriate, the school may acknowledge that a complaint is upheld in whole or in part.

In addition, the school may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to prevent a recurrence
- an indication of the timescale within which any changes will be implemented
- a commitment to review policies, procedures or practice
- an apology where appropriate

The aim of the procedure is not simply to determine whether a complaint is upheld, but to identify solutions, improve practice and maintain positive relationships wherever possible.

3.1 Withdrawal of a complaint

If a complainant wishes to withdraw their complaint, the school will ask them to confirm this in writing. The school may nevertheless continue investigating a complaint where there are safeguarding, welfare or wider public interest considerations requiring further action.

4 Stages of the formal complaints procedure

Stage 1 – Formal investigation

Formal complaints should be submitted to the Headteacher via the school office.

A complaint may be made:

- in person
- by telephone
- in writing
- by email
- by using the complaint form at Appendix 1

The Headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt in writing within five school days.

Clarification of the complaint

As part of the acknowledgement process, the Headteacher will seek to:

- clarify the precise nature of the complaint
- identify any unresolved issues
- establish the outcome being sought
- explain the investigation process

The Headteacher may decide that a face-to-face meeting, telephone discussion or virtual meeting is the most appropriate method of gathering this information.

Investigation

The Headteacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the Senior Leadership Team but will retain responsibility for the final decision.

During the investigation the investigator may:

- interview the complainant
- interview staff members
- interview witnesses where appropriate
- review records and documentation
- gather any other relevant evidence

Individuals involved in meetings may be accompanied by a colleague, friend, trade union representative or other appropriate supporter where appropriate.

A written record will be kept of all meetings and interviews undertaken during the investigation.

Outcome

A formal written response will normally be issued within ten school days of receipt of the complaint.

The response will:

- summarise the complaint
- describe the investigation undertaken
- record the findings
- explain the decision reached
- identify whether the complaint is upheld, partially upheld or not upheld
- set out any actions the school intends to take

Where it is not possible to meet this timescale, the complainant will be informed of:

- the reason for the delay
- progress made so far
- the revised timescale

The response will also explain how the complainant may escalate the complaint should they remain dissatisfied.

Complaints about the Headteacher and Governors

Where the complaint concerns:

- the Headteacher
- the Chair of Governors
- the Vice Chair of Governors
- an individual governor

the complaint must be submitted to the Clerk to Governors via the school office.

A suitably skilled governor who has had no previous involvement in the matter will undertake Stage 1 of the process.

That governor will assume the same responsibilities normally undertaken by the Headteacher.

Complaints concerning the whole governing body

Where the complaint concerns:

- both the Chair and Vice Chair
- the majority of the Governing Body
- the entire Governing Body

Stage 1 will be undertaken by an independent investigator appointed by the Governing Body or, where appropriate, in consultation with the Diocese of Lichfield.

A written report and formal response will be issued following completion of the investigation.

Stage 2 – Governing Body Complaints Committee

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following Stage 1, they may request that the complaint is considered by the Governing Body Complaints Committee.

Stage 2 is the final stage of the school's complaints procedure.

Requesting a Stage 2 review

A request for Stage 2 consideration must:

- be made in writing
- be addressed to the Clerk to Governors
- be submitted within **ten school days** of receipt of the Stage 1 response

The request should explain:

- which aspects of the Stage 1 outcome remain unresolved
- why the complainant remains dissatisfied
- the outcome sought

Requests received outside this timeframe will only be considered where exceptional circumstances apply, for example:

- serious illness
- bereavement
- significant personal circumstances beyond the complainant's control

Acknowledgement

The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the request within five school days.

The Clerk will record:

- the date received
- the issues being considered
- any additional information provided

Convening the committee

The Clerk will seek to convene the meeting within twenty school days of receiving the request.

Where this is not possible, the complainant will be informed of:

- the reason for the delay
- the anticipated hearing date
- any revised timescales

Membership of the complaints committee

The Complaints Committee will consist of at least three governors who:

- have had no previous involvement in the complaint
- have no knowledge of the issues beyond the information provided
- have no personal interest in the outcome
- can act independently and impartially

Where there are insufficient eligible governors available, the Clerk may:

- appoint independent governors from another school
- seek support from governor services
- convene an entirely independent panel

The Governing Body will ensure that the panel is independent, impartial and seen to be impartial.

No governor may serve on the panel if they have:

- investigated the complaint previously
- been involved in the circumstances giving rise to the complaint
- a personal or professional conflict of interest

Attendance at the hearing

The complainant may attend the hearing and may be accompanied by:

- a friend
- a relative
- an advocate
- another supporter

The school will normally not expect legal representatives to attend.

However, legal or trade union representation may be appropriate in some circumstances, particularly where a member of staff is required to participate.

Representatives of the media will not be permitted to attend.

Accessibility and reasonable adjustments

The school recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

Reasonable adjustments will be made wherever necessary to ensure that all participants can engage fully with the process.

This may include:

- documents in alternative formats

- interpretation services
- hearing support
- additional meeting time
- virtual attendance
- accessible venues

Preparation for the hearing

At least five school days before the hearing, the Clerk will:

- confirm the date, time and venue
- ensure arrangements are accessible
- provide procedural information
- request any additional documentation

Any further written information must normally be submitted no later than four school days before the hearing.

The Clerk will circulate all papers at least three school days before the hearing.

The Committee will not normally accept:

- covert recordings
- late evidence without good reason
- material unrelated to the complaint

The Committee will not consider entirely new complaints at Stage 2.

Where new complaints arise, they will normally be referred back to Stage 1.

Conduct of the hearing

The hearing will be conducted in a supportive and non-adversarial manner.

The purpose of the hearing is to:

- understand the complaint
- review the investigation undertaken
- determine whether the complaint was handled appropriately
- decide whether further action is required

The Committee recognises that complainants may feel anxious when attending a hearing.

Members will therefore seek to:

- create a welcoming environment
- explain the process clearly
- treat all parties respectfully
- allow sufficient opportunity for each person to be heard
- maintain confidentiality throughout

The hearing is not intended to resemble a court process.

Committee decisions and outcomes

Following its consideration of the complaint, the Complaints Committee may:

- uphold the complaint in full
- uphold the complaint in part
- dismiss the complaint in full
- make recommendations for future improvement

Where a complaint is upheld wholly or partially, the Committee may:

- require further investigation
- recommend changes to procedures or practice
- recommend training or support

- require further communication with the complainant
- recommend policy review

The Committee's role is not to consider disciplinary action against individual members of staff. Such matters will be addressed through the school's internal employment procedures where appropriate.

Outcome letter

The Chair of the Complaints Committee will provide a written decision to the complainant and the school within ten school days of the hearing wherever possible.

The decision letter will:

- summarise the complaint
- outline the evidence considered
- explain the findings reached
- identify whether the complaint was upheld, partially upheld or dismissed
- explain the reasons for the decision
- identify any recommendations or actions arising from the complaint
- explain any further rights of referral available

The decision of the Complaints Committee represents the final stage of the school's complaints procedure.

Complaints concerning the whole Governing Body

If the complaint concerns:

- the Chair and Vice Chair jointly
- the majority of the Governing Body
- the entire Governing Body

Stage 2 will be heard by a panel consisting entirely of independent governors.

The determination of that panel will constitute the final stage of the school's complaints procedure.

5 Next steps

If the complainant believes that the school has not handled their complaint in accordance with this published procedure, or has acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of its duties under education law, they may refer the matter to the Department for Education once all stages of this procedure have been completed.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of the complaint or overturn decisions made by the school.

Instead, it will consider whether the school has:

- complied with education legislation
- followed statutory requirements
- followed its published complaints procedure
- acted reasonably in the circumstances

Ofsted does not normally investigate individual complaints from parents. However, information arising from complaints may be taken into account during inspection activity or where wider concerns are identified.

Complaints may be referred to:

Department for Education

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Telephone: 0370 000 2288

Website: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

6 Unreasonable or vexatious complaints

6.1 Definition of unreasonable or vexatious complaints

A complaint may be considered unreasonable or vexatious when the behaviour of the complainant, rather than the complaint itself, hinders the school's ability to investigate or resolve the matter properly, or has a disproportionate impact on staff time and wellbeing.

Examples may include when a complainant:

- refuses to clearly identify the concerns despite reasonable requests for clarification
- refuses to cooperate with the complaints process
- repeatedly raises substantially the same complaint after it has been fully considered
- changes the substance of the complaint as the investigation progresses
- insists upon unrealistic outcomes
- submits excessive amounts of correspondence
- refuses to accept that certain matters fall outside the scope of the complaints procedure
- makes repeated or unjustified allegations against staff or governors

6.2 Unacceptable behaviour

A complaint may also be regarded as unreasonable where it is pursued in a manner that is:

- aggressive
- intimidating
- threatening
- abusive
- offensive
- discriminatory
- knowingly false
- malicious

The school will not tolerate conduct that causes distress, fear or harm to staff, governors, pupils or members of the wider school community.

6.3 Managing unreasonable behaviour

Where possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will seek to resolve concerns informally before implementing formal restrictions.

Where such behaviour continues, the school may:

- restrict communication to a specified format
- require communication through a single point of contact
- limit the frequency of communication
- decline to respond to duplicated issues
- close correspondence where the complaints process has been exhausted

Any restrictions imposed will be:

- proportionate
- reasonable
- time limited
- regularly reviewed

6.4 Review of restrictions

Where restrictions are imposed, the complainant will be informed in writing of:

- the reasons for the restriction
- the nature of the restriction
- the duration of the restriction
- how the restriction may be reviewed

Restrictions will normally be reviewed after six months.

6.5 Serious incidents

In circumstances involving:

- threats
- violence
- intimidation
- harassment
- serious abuse

the school may take immediate action to protect pupils, staff and governors.

Such action may include:

- involvement of the police
- restrictions on access to school premises
- legal action where appropriate

The school reserves the right to invoke its visitor management procedures, health and safety procedures and any relevant risk assessments to safeguard staff and pupils.

6.6 Equality and fairness

The school will ensure that decisions relating to unreasonable complainant behaviour are based solely on conduct and not on any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

The school remains committed to ensuring that all complainants are able to access a fair and equitable process.

6.7 Right to complain

Nothing in this section removes any individual's right to raise a genuine concern or complaint.

This section exists solely to ensure that the complaints process can be administered fairly, efficiently and safely for all parties involved.

7 Complaint records, confidentiality and data protection

7.1 Records of complaints

The school will maintain a written record of all formal complaints and the outcomes reached.

Records will include:

- the date the complaint was received
- the nature of the complaint
- correspondence relating to the complaint
- notes of relevant meetings and interviews
- evidence considered
- decisions reached
- actions taken
- recommendations made

7.2 Confidentiality

All parties involved in the complaints process are expected to respect confidentiality.

Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with legal obligations.

The school expects all participants to refrain from sharing information relating to complaints on social media or through other public forums.

7.3 Data protection

Personal information collected during the complaints process will be processed in accordance with:

- UK GDPR
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Freedom of Information Act 2000

- the school's data protection procedures

Complaint records will be retained securely in accordance with the school's records retention schedule.

8 Monitoring and review

8.1

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this complaints procedure.

The Headteacher will maintain a record of all formal complaints received and their outcomes.

An anonymised annual report will be presented to the Governing Body and will include:

- the number of complaints received
- the stage at which complaints were resolved
- general themes arising from complaints
- lessons learned
- actions taken to improve practice

The purpose of monitoring is to support continuous improvement and ensure compliance with statutory guidance.

8.2

The Governing Body will ensure that this policy remains consistent with:

- Department for Education guidance
- relevant legislation
- safeguarding requirements
- Equality Act 2010 requirements
- good governance practice

8.3

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if:

- legislation changes
- Department for Education guidance changes
- learning from complaints identifies the need for amendments
- the Governing Body determines a review is necessary

Appendix 1 – Complaint Form

Please complete and return this form to the School Office, marked Private and Confidential.

Email: office@stpetersedgmond@stpetersedgmond.co.uk

The school will acknowledge receipt within five school days and explain the next steps.

Your details

Name:

Pupil's name (if applicable):

Relationship to pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone number:

Email address:

Details of complaint

Please provide full details of your complaint, including:

- what happened
- when it happened
- who was involved
- any actions already taken to resolve the matter

Desired outcome

What outcome are you seeking from this complaint?

Supporting documentation

Please list any documents enclosed in support of your complaint.

Signature:

Date:

Official use only

Date received:

Date acknowledged:

Complaint referred to:

Reference number:

Outcome:

Privacy notice

Information supplied through this complaints process will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Information will only be used for the purpose of investigating and responding to the complaint and will be retained in accordance with the school's records retention schedule.