

Reviewed: September 2026
Next Review Date: September 2027

Signed by:

Headteacher

Mrs Claire Jones

Date: September 2026

Co-Chairs of Governors

Mrs Joanna Potter and Mrs Danielle Smith

Date: September 2026

Euxton Primrose Hill Primary School

Complaints Policy



Courage • Ambition • Respect • Excellence

Together we will make a difference

The Policy and Procedures for Handling Complaints at Euxton Primrose Hill Primary School

Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Euxton Primrose Hill Primary School about any provision of facilities or services that we provide.

Unless a complaint is dealt with under a separate statutory procedure (such as appeals relating to admissions or exclusions), the school will use this complaints procedure.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A concern may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.

A complaint may be defined as 'an expression 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 the complaints procedure. Euxton Primrose Hill Primary School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

Where a complainant wishes to make a formal complaint, they should make this clear to the school. **Formal complaints should be submitted using the school's Complaint Form**, or in an equivalent written format containing the information requested on the form.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, Mrs Claire Jones, Headteacher, will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, Mrs Claire Jones will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

We understand, however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Euxton Primrose Hill Primary School will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern can be raised in person, in writing or by telephone. Concerns may also be raised by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, provided that they have appropriate consent to do so.

Concerns should normally be raised with the class teacher or Headteacher in the first instance. The school will make every reasonable effort to resolve concerns promptly and informally wherever possible.

Where a complainant wishes to make a formal complaint, they should make this clear to the school. **Formal complaints should be submitted using the school's Complaint Form**, or in an equivalent written format containing the information requested on the form.

A formal complaint should clearly set out what the complaint is about, including the specific issue(s) being raised and relevant information such as dates and individuals involved where known. The

complainant should also clearly state the outcome or resolution they are seeking. Where a complaint includes more than one issue, each issue should be clearly identified.

If the information provided is unclear or insufficient to establish the specific complaint being made, the school may contact the complainant to seek clarification before beginning the investigation. The school will provide reasonable assistance to any complainant who requires support to complete the Complaint Form or access the complaints procedure.

Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. Governors have no power to act on an individual basis, and approaching individual governors may prevent them from being able to consider the complaint impartially at Stage 2 of the procedure.

Complaints about members of staff, the Headteacher, individual governors, the Chair of Governors or the governing body should be made in accordance with the arrangements set out below.

Complaints against school staff, the Headteacher or governors

Complaints about a member of school staff (other than the Headteacher) should be made in writing to the Headteacher via the school office. Please mark correspondence Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Headteacher should be made in writing to the Chair of Governors via the school office. Please mark correspondence Private and Confidential. The Chair of Governors will ensure that the complaint is investigated by an appropriately independent person who has had no prior involvement in the matter.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, Vice-Chair, an individual governor or the governing body should be made in writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body via the school office. Please mark correspondence Private and Confidential.

Where a complaint involves the Chair or Vice-Chair, or where the complaint concerns the whole governing body or a significant proportion of governors, an appropriately independent investigator or independent committee will be appointed, as appropriate, to ensure that the complaint is considered fairly and impartially.

No person should investigate or determine a complaint where they have had prior involvement in the matter complained about or where there is an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

Anonymous complaints

Anonymous complaints will not usually be investigated. However, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Time scales

A formal complaint should normally be raised within **three months** of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents has occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents.

The school will consider complaints made outside this timeframe where there are exceptional circumstances. The decision as to whether a complaint can be considered outside the usual timeframe will be made by the Headteacher or, where appropriate, the Chair of Governors.

Under Lancashire County Council Guidelines, a formal school complaint is normally expected to be complete within 20 school days. However, if the complaint is complex and the school cannot meet this timeframe, an update will be issued explaining why more time is required and updated timeframe for completion.

Complaints received outside of term time

Complaints received outside of term time will be considered to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

The timescales set out in this policy are intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with promptly and fairly. Where it is not possible to meet a stated timescale, the complainant will be informed of the reason for the delay and provided with a revised timescale.

Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers complaints about any provision of facilities or services provided by Euxton Primrose Hill Primary School, other than complaints that are dealt with under separate statutory procedures.

Where a complaint includes matters that fall within this complaints procedure alongside matters that are dealt with under a separate statutory procedure, the school will determine the appropriate route for each element and, where possible, will explain this to the complainant.

The following matters are outside the scope of this complaints procedure and should be dealt with through the relevant procedure or organisation:

Exceptions	Who to contact
• Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs • School re-organisation proposals	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Lancashire County Council.
• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). www.lancshiresafeguarding.org.uk . MASH: 0300 123 6720. LADO: 01772 536694.
• Exclusion of children from school*	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions . <i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i> https://www.primrosehillschool.org.uk/policies/ .
• Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for

	whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus. Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.
• Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
• Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
• Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
• National Curriculum - content	Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against Euxton Primrose Hill Primary School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Other investigations and legal action

If another organisation or body is investigating matters relating to a complaint, for example the police, local authority safeguarding teams, social care or a tribunal, the school will consider whether continuing with the complaints procedure could interfere with or prejudice that investigation.

Where appropriate, the school may pause or suspend the complaints procedure, or delay consideration of particular aspects of the complaint, until the external investigation or proceedings have concluded.

The school will inform the complainant where the complaints procedure is being paused and, where possible, provide an indication of when it is expected to resume.

Where only part of a complaint is subject to an external investigation, the school will consider whether it is appropriate and possible to continue investigating the remaining matters.

Any safeguarding or child protection concern will continue to be managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures and relevant statutory guidance, regardless of whether the complaints procedure is paused.

If a complainant commences legal proceedings against Euxton Primrose Hill Primary School in relation to their complaint, the school will consider whether it is appropriate to suspend the complaints procedure, or any part of it, until the legal proceedings have concluded.

The decision to pause or suspend the complaints procedure will be made on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the circumstances and the need to ensure that the complaints process remains fair and does not interfere with any external investigation or legal proceedings.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Euxton Primrose Hill Primary School aims to resolve the complaint fairly and, where appropriate, restore the relationship between the school and the complainant.

The outcome of a complaint will be based on the evidence available and the findings of the investigation. A complaint may be upheld in whole, upheld in part or not upheld.

If appropriate, we 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 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, together with an indication of the timescale within which any changes will be made;
- an undertaking to review school policies or procedures in light of the complaint; and/or
- an apology.

Where a complaint identifies that an error has been made, the school will consider what action, if any, is appropriate to put matters right and reduce the likelihood of a similar issue occurring in the future.

Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wishes to withdraw their complaint, they should confirm this in writing to the school.

Where a complaint is withdrawn, the school will record the withdrawal and normally take no further action under the complaints procedure.

However, where the information contained within a withdrawn complaint raises a separate safeguarding, child protection or other statutory concern, the school will take any action required under the relevant procedure, regardless of the withdrawal of the complaint

Stage 1

Formal complaints should be submitted to the Headteacher via the school office, unless the complaint is about the Headteacher. In such cases, the arrangements set out in the section Complaints against school staff, the Headteacher or governors will apply.

Formal complaints should be submitted using the school's Complaint Form, or in an equivalent written format containing the information requested on the form.

In order for the school to proceed with a formal complaint, the complainant must clearly identify what their complaint is about and the outcome or resolution they are seeking. Where the complaint includes more than one issue, each issue should be clearly identified.

The complainant should provide relevant information to support their complaint, including dates, names of individuals involved and details of any steps already taken to try to resolve the matter, where known.

Where the information provided does not clearly identify the complaint or the outcome being sought, the school may contact the complainant to seek clarification before commencing the investigation.

The school will provide reasonable assistance to any complainant who requires support to complete the Complaint Form or otherwise access the complaints procedure. Reasonable adjustments will be considered in accordance with equality law.

The Headteacher will record the date the formal complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt in writing, either by letter or email, within five school days.

During the investigation, the Headteacher (or investigator) will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation;
- consider relevant records and other information relating to the complaint; and
- ensure that the complaint is investigated fairly, objectively and impartially.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Headteacher will aim to provide a formal written response within twenty school days of the date of receipt of the formal complaint.

If the Headteacher is unable to meet this deadline, the complainant will be provided with an update explaining the reason for the delay and given a revised anticipated response date.

The response will detail the actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions the school will take to resolve the complaint.

The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint to Stage 2 should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome.

Complaints about the Headteacher or a member of the governing body

Where a complaint is about the Headteacher, the complaint should be submitted to the Chair of Governors via the school office and marked Private and Confidential.

The Chair of Governors will arrange for the complaint to be investigated by a suitably skilled and appropriately independent person who has had no prior involvement in the matter complained about.

Where a complaint is about an individual governor, including the Chair or Vice-Chair, the complaint should be submitted to the Clerk to the Governing Body via the school office and marked Private and Confidential.

A suitably skilled and appropriately independent person will be appointed to investigate the complaint at Stage 1. No governor who has had prior involvement in the matter, or who has a conflict of interest, should investigate or determine the complaint.

Where a complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice-Chair;
- about the entire governing body; or
- about the majority of the governing body,

Stage 1 will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the governing body or, where appropriate, an external person with no prior involvement in the matter.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the investigator will provide a formal written response to the complainant, setting out the findings, decision and reasons for the decision, together with details of how the complainant can escalate the complaint to Stage 2 if they remain dissatisfied.

The same principles regarding the submission of a formal complaint, including clearly identifying the matters complained about and the outcome being sought, apply to complaints made about the Headteacher or governing body.

Stage 2 – Governing Body Complaints Committee

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 2 – consideration by the Governing Body's Complaints Committee. This is the final stage of the school's complaints procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 2 should normally be made to the Clerk to the Governing Body, via the school office, within ten school days of receipt of the Stage 1 response.

The Clerk will record the date the Stage 2 request is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing, either by letter or email, within five school days.

Requests received outside of this timeframe will only be considered where exceptional circumstances apply.

The Clerk will arrange for the complaint to be considered by a Complaints Committee consisting of at least three governors who have had no prior involvement in the complaint or the circumstances surrounding it and who are able to consider the complaint impartially.

Prior to the meeting, the governors will decide amongst themselves who will act as Chair of the Complaints Committee.

The Clerk will aim to convene a meeting within twenty-five school days of receipt of the Stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the Clerk will provide the complainant with an anticipated date and keep them appropriately informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates without good reason, the Clerk may decide when the meeting will take place. The meeting may then proceed in the complainant's absence, based on the written submissions available.

If there are fewer than three suitable governors from Euxton Primrose Hill Primary School available, the Clerk will seek appropriately independent governors through another local school or through the Local Authority's Governor Services team, where available, to make up the committee. Alternatively, an entirely independent committee may be convened.

The Complaints Committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting the parties to a meeting or through written representations. In making this decision, the committee will be sensitive to the complainant's needs and will ensure that the process is fair and accessible.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone with them to provide support. This may be a relative or friend. The school does not normally encourage legal representatives to attend complaints meetings. However, there may be circumstances where legal representation is appropriate.

Where a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be accompanied or supported by a trade union representative or, where appropriate, legal representative.

Representatives of the media are not permitted to attend complaints meetings.

At least ten school days before the meeting, the Clerk will:

- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that reasonable efforts are made to identify a date convenient to all parties where the complainant is invited to attend;
- ensure that the venue and proceedings are accessible and that reasonable adjustments are considered where required; and
- request copies of any further written material that either party wishes the committee to consider, normally at least seven school days before the meeting.

Any written material submitted for consideration will normally be circulated to the relevant parties at least five school days before the meeting, subject to any necessary redactions to protect confidentiality, personal data or the rights of individuals.

The Complaints Committee will consider the complaint and relevant evidence presented to it. The committee will normally consider evidence that relates to the complaint as defined at Stage 1.

The committee will not normally consider a new complaint that has not previously been investigated at Stage 1. Any genuinely new complaint should be raised through Stage 1 of this procedure.

Where new information or evidence is provided that is directly relevant to the existing complaint, the Chair of the Complaints Committee will decide whether it is appropriate for the committee to consider it at Stage 2 or whether further investigation is required. Where necessary, the Chair may adjourn the meeting to allow relevant information to be considered fairly.

The meeting will be held in private.

Meetings will not normally be electronically recorded. Where a recording is requested as a reasonable adjustment because of a disability or special need, the school will consider the request and agree appropriate arrangements in advance. Any recording arrangements will be agreed with all relevant parties beforehand.

The Complaints Committee will consider the complaint and all relevant evidence presented and will reach a decision based on the information available to it.

The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part; or
- not uphold the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action, if any, to be taken to resolve the complaint; and
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems, policies or procedures to prevent similar issues arising in the future.

The Chair of the Complaints Committee will aim to provide the complainant and Euxton Primrose Hill Primary School with a full written explanation of the committee's decision and the reasons for it within fifteen school days of the meeting.

The response will confirm that the school's complaints procedure has been completed and will advise the complainant of the appropriate next steps should they remain dissatisfied.

Next Steps

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after completing the school's complaints procedure, they may contact the Department for Education (DfE) if they believe that:

- the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with its published complaints procedure; or
- the school acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of its duties under education law.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of the complaint or overturn decisions made by Euxton Primrose Hill Primary School. Its role is generally to consider whether the school has followed the appropriate complaints procedure and complied with relevant education legislation and statutory policies.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/complaints-procedure>
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Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it to the school office, marked for the attention of the Headteacher. If you require assistance to complete this form, please contact the school office.

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address: Postcode: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number:
What is your complaint about? Please clearly explain what your complaint is about. Include relevant dates, events, people involved and any action you have already taken to try to resolve the matter, where known.

If you are raising more than one issue, please list each issue separately.

What outcome or resolution are you seeking?

Please explain what you would like the school to do to resolve your complaint. Please be as specific as possible.

Supporting information

Are you attaching any paperwork or other information in support of your complaint?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please give details:

Previous discussions

Have you previously raised this concern with anyone at the school?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please provide details, including who you spoke to and when:

Declaration

I confirm that the information provided in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and that I have clearly identified the matters about which I am making a formal complaint and the outcome I am seeking.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date complaint received:

Received by:

Complaint referred to:

Date acknowledgement sent:

Stage:

Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to their complaint if they:

- explain the complaint clearly and fully at the earliest possible stage;
- clearly identify the specific issue(s) being complained about and the outcome or resolution they are seeking;
- provide relevant information and supporting evidence where available;
- co-operate with the school in seeking a resolution to the complaint;
- respond promptly to reasonable requests for information, clarification or meetings;
- provide any additional information requested within the timescales agreed;
- ask for assistance or reasonable adjustments where needed;
- treat all those involved in the complaints process with respect and courtesy; and
- respect the confidentiality of the complaints process and refrain from publishing details of the complaint or individuals involved on social media.

Investigator

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint and to conduct a fair, objective and impartial investigation by:

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint;
- establishing clearly what has happened and who has been involved;
- interviewing the complainant, where necessary, to establish what has happened and to clarify any relevant points;
- interviewing staff, children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint, where appropriate;
- considering relevant records, documents and other information;
- analysing the information available and identifying the key findings of fact; and
- **keeping the investigation within the agreed scope of the complaint, unless further relevant issues are identified and it is appropriate to clarify or address these.**

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in questioning where necessary;
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note-taker to record minutes of meetings;
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending the outcome of the complaints process;
- be mindful of the timescales for responding to the complaint;
- liaise with the complainant and complaints co-ordinator, where appropriate, to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right; and
- prepare a comprehensive report for the Headteacher or Complaints Committee that sets out the relevant facts, findings and, where appropriate, recommendations for action to resolve the complaint.

The Headteacher or Complaints Committee will determine whether to uphold the complaint in whole or in part, or not uphold the complaint, and will communicate the decision to the complainant together with the appropriate escalation details.

Complaints Co-ordinator

The Complaints Co-ordinator should:

- ensure that the complainant is appropriately updated at each stage of the complaints procedure;
- liaise with staff members, the Headteacher, Chair of Governors, Clerk and Local Authority, where appropriate, to ensure the smooth and effective running of the complaints procedure;
- ensure that the complaint is clearly recorded and that its scope is understood by those responsible for investigating it;
- be aware of issues relating to the sharing of third-party information and confidentiality;
- consider whether additional support or reasonable adjustments may be needed by complainants when making or progressing a complaint, including interpretation support or support where the complainant is a child or young person; and
- keep appropriate records of complaints and their progress.

Clerk to the Governing Body

The Clerk is the main administrative contact for the complainant and the Complaints Committee and should:

- ensure that all people involved in the complaints procedure are aware of their relevant legal rights and duties, including those arising under education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR);
- ensure that the Stage 2 process is administered fairly and impartially;
- arrange the date, time and venue of the Complaints Committee meeting, ensuring that the arrangements are accessible and that reasonable adjustments are considered where required;
- liaise with the complainant and the school as appropriate regarding the arrangements for the meeting;
- collate relevant written material, including the Stage 1 paperwork and any submissions from the complainant or school;
- ensure that relevant papers are circulated to the appropriate parties within the timescales set out in this policy, subject to necessary redactions to protect confidentiality and personal data;
- record the proceedings of the Complaints Committee meeting;
- ensure that accurate minutes are maintained;
- notify the complainant and relevant school representatives of the committee's decision; and
- maintain appropriate records relating to the complaints process.

Committee Chair

The Chair of the Complaints Committee, who will be nominated by the committee in advance of the complaint meeting, should ensure that:

- both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity, via the Clerk, to provide any additional information relevant to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting;
- the meeting is conducted fairly, respectfully and in a non-adversarial manner;
- the complainant and all other participants are treated with respect and courtesy;
- complainants who may not be used to speaking at a formal meeting are put at ease;
- the remit of the Complaints Committee is clearly explained to those attending;
- the committee considers only matters that fall within the scope of the complaint being considered at Stage 2, while allowing relevant new information relating to the existing complaint to be considered where appropriate;
- written material is made available to those attending, where appropriate, subject to confidentiality, data protection and the privacy rights of individuals;
- both the complainant and the school have a fair opportunity to present their case and seek clarification, either through written submissions or verbally at the meeting;
- key findings of fact are identified and the committee reaches its decision objectively and impartially; and
- the meeting is appropriately minuted.

Committee Member

Committee members should be aware that:

- the Complaints Committee must be independent and impartial and should be seen to be so;
- no governor may sit on the committee if they have had prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it, or if they have a conflict of interest;
- the aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint fairly and, where possible, achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant;
- the committee's decision should be based on the evidence available and the findings reached during its consideration of the complaint;
- the complainant may not be satisfied with the outcome if the committee does not find in their favour. The committee's role is to consider the complaint fairly and impartially and reach a reasoned decision;
- complainants may feel nervous or inhibited in a formal setting, and appropriate care should be taken to ensure that the process is respectful and accessible;
- where the complainant is a child or young person, additional care should be taken to ensure that they do not feel intimidated or disadvantaged by the process;
- the committee should respect the views of a child or young person and give them appropriate consideration;
- where a child or young person is the complainant, the committee should establish in advance whether any additional support is required to enable them to present their complaint;
- where a parent or carer is the complainant and wishes their child to attend all or part of the meeting, the committee should consider whether the child's attendance is appropriate and in their best interests;
- the welfare and best interests of the child or young person should remain a primary consideration throughout the complaints process.

Serial, Persistent or Unreasonable Complaints and Communication

We recognise that complainants may need to raise concerns more than once, particularly where they feel that an issue has not been resolved. The school will not regard a complaint as serial or a complainant as unreasonable simply because they have exercised their right to use the complaints procedure or because they remain dissatisfied with the outcome.

Serial complaints

A complaint may be considered **serial** where:

- the same or substantially the same complaint has already been fully considered through the school's complaints procedure;
- the complaints procedure has been completed and the complainant has received a final response;
- no significant new information or evidence has been provided; and
- the complainant is seeking substantially the same outcome.

A genuinely new complaint, or significant new evidence relating to an existing complaint, will be considered appropriately rather than being dismissed simply because the complainant has previously complained.

The school will not normally consider a complaint to be serial until the relevant stage of the complaints procedure has been completed, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Persistent or unreasonable communication

The school may take proportionate steps to manage communication where a complainant's behaviour is having a significant and unreasonable impact on the school's ability to investigate or respond to a complaint fairly and effectively.

This may include, for example:

- repeatedly contacting the school about the same issue after a full response has been provided, without providing new information;
- repeatedly changing the substance of the complaint or introducing substantial new issues that cannot reasonably be considered within the current investigation;
- making excessive or repeated requests for information that are not relevant to the complaint;
- refusing to identify clearly the issues being complained about or the outcome being sought, despite reasonable support from the school to clarify them;
- contacting multiple members of staff about the same matter in a way that prevents the school from managing the complaint effectively; or
- using communication that is abusive, threatening, discriminatory or otherwise unacceptable.

The school will distinguish between **persistent disagreement with the school's decision** and unreasonable behaviour. A complainant will not be treated as unreasonable simply because they disagree with the outcome or ask for the decision to be reviewed through the appropriate stage of the procedure.

Managing communication

Before significant restrictions are placed on communication, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will consider the circumstances carefully and ensure that:

- the complaint has been properly considered and responded to;
- any genuinely new issues or evidence have been identified and considered;
- the complainant has been given a reasonable opportunity to explain their concerns;
- the proposed communication arrangements are proportionate and necessary; and
- the complainant is informed in writing of the arrangements and, where appropriate, when they will be reviewed.

Where appropriate, the school may:

- nominate a single member of staff as the main point of contact;
- require communication to take place through a particular channel, such as email or in writing;
- agree reasonable limits on the frequency or volume of communication;
- ask that correspondence is consolidated rather than sent in multiple separate messages; or
- ask the complainant not to contact individual members of staff directly about the complaint.

Any restrictions will be kept under review and will not prevent a complainant from raising a **genuinely new complaint**, providing significant new evidence, or raising a safeguarding concern.

Where communication contains threats of violence or other matters that may constitute a criminal offence, the school may refer the matter to the police or other appropriate agency.

Safeguarding

Nothing in this section prevents the school from taking action where information raises a concern about the safety or welfare of a child. Safeguarding concerns will continue to be dealt with under the school's safeguarding procedures and relevant statutory guidance, regardless of whether a complainant's communication is considered persistent or unreasonable.

Records and Confidentiality

The school will keep appropriate records of complaints, including the complaint, relevant correspondence and evidence, actions taken, decisions and the outcome.

Records will be stored securely and handled in accordance with the school's data protection obligations and relevant information governance requirements.

Information about a complaint will only be shared with those who need it for the purposes of investigating, responding to or managing the complaint, or where disclosure is otherwise required or permitted by law.

Where information relating to other individuals is included in complaint documentation, the school will consider whether it needs to be redacted or withheld before information is shared.

Complaints records will be retained in accordance with the school's record retention arrangements and will not be kept for longer than necessary.

Where a complaint raises a safeguarding concern, safeguarding records will be maintained in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures and relevant statutory guidance.