Learning to Flourish

MOORFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Complaints Policy

Listening to concerns and resolving issues together

School	Moorfield Primary School, Wellington Road, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 7QU
School status	Foundation maintained school (URN 123435)
Policy owner	Governing Body
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Proposed effective date	10 November 2026, subject to Governing Body approval
Next review	November 2027, or earlier if legislation or DfE guidance changes
Publication	School website

Status of this document

This is a full replacement for the Complaints Policy reviewed in March 2026. It has been drafted for Governing Body consideration and approval on 10 November 2026.

Prepared with reference to DfE maintained-school complaints guidance and the July 2026 DfE guidance on bullying and harassment of school staff.

At a glance

Stage	Who deals with it?	Target response	Next step
Informal concern	Usually class teacher or appropriate member of staff	As promptly as practicable	Formal complaint if required
Stage 1 - formal	Headteacher, or appropriate governor where complaint concerns Headteacher	Normally within 15 school days	Request Stage 2 within 10 school days
Stage 2 - review	Impartial panel of normally 3 governors	Panel arranged normally within 20 school days	DfE after school procedure ends

Our approach

Dialogue is key to resolving issues. We will listen carefully, take concerns seriously and work with parents and carers towards a fair resolution. Feedback can lead to genuine learning and improvements for children and families. Clear response times and respectful communication help everyone take part constructively.

1. Purpose and legal framework

1.1 Moorfield Primary School welcomes feedback, concerns and complaints from parents, carers and others. Open and respectful dialogue is key to resolving issues: we will listen carefully, seek to understand different perspectives and work together towards a fair resolution. Genuine learning can occur when people share their experiences and give feedback. This helps us recognise what is working well, identify mistakes and improve our practice. Complaints will be considered fairly, impartially, proportionately and as promptly as circumstances allow.

1.2 Under section 29 of the Education Act 2002, the Governing Body must establish and publicise procedures for dealing with complaints about the school and services it provides where no separate statutory procedure applies. The Governing Body has had regard to Department for Education (DfE) best-practice guidance for maintained schools.

1.3 Moorfield Primary School is a foundation school. The Governing Body is therefore the employer of school staff and recognises its responsibilities for staff welfare, health and safety, workload and working conditions. A welcoming complaints process and a safe, respectful working environment support one another. The school will respond appropriately to abuse, intimidation, harassment or persistently unreasonable demands.

1.4 The Governing Body will ensure that people can raise concerns and complaints without fear of disadvantage. Parents, carers, pupils and staff should feel listened to and treated with dignity. The school will support everyone involved while continuing to meet its responsibilities to all pupils.

1.5 This policy should be read alongside relevant school policies, including safeguarding and child protection, behaviour, SEND, equality, data protection, staff grievance/disciplinary procedures and any parental code of conduct or acceptable-use arrangements.

2. Definitions and who may complain

2.1 A concern is an expression of worry or doubt about an issue for which reassurance or clarification is sought. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken, a failure to act, or a service provided by or on behalf of the school.

2.2 Complaints are not limited to current parents or carers. Any person may complain about a facility or service provided by the school, unless a separate statutory process applies.

2.3 A complainant may use a third party or advocate. The school will normally require written authority before sharing personal information with that person.

2.4 The school will make reasonable adjustments where required by the Equality Act 2010, including accepting complaints in an alternative format where a written complaint would place a disabled person or someone with a communication difficulty at a substantial disadvantage.

3. Core principles

- **Early resolution and dialogue.** Wherever appropriate, we encourage an early conversation with the person best placed to help. Listening, asking questions and clarifying misunderstandings can prevent concerns from escalating. Informal resolution is encouraged but is not a compulsory barrier to making a formal complaint.
- **Fairness and impartiality.** A person with a material conflict of interest or prior involvement that would create a reasonable appearance of bias will not determine the complaint.
- **Proportionality.** The scope and depth of an investigation will be proportionate to the seriousness and complexity of the issues raised.

- **Clarity.** The school will help clarify the issues and the outcome sought. Overlapping points may be grouped so that the response is clear and addresses the substance of the complaint fairly.
- **Confidentiality.** Information will be shared only where necessary and lawful. The school will explain its findings as openly as it can while respecting confidential employment information, staff disciplinary outcomes and the personal data of other pupils and families.
- **Learning from feedback.** Feedback and complaints can offer valuable opportunities for genuine learning, whether or not a complaint is upheld. Where something has gone wrong or could have been handled better, the school will acknowledge this, apologise where appropriate and identify practical improvements. Where appropriate, we will explain what we have learned and what will change. An acknowledgement or apology does not necessarily amount to an admission of unlawful or negligent conduct.
- **No disadvantage.** A pupil will not be treated less favourably because a parent, carer or other person has raised a concern or complaint in good faith.

4. Working together and arranging communication

4.1 We value the partnership between school and home and recognise that concerns about a child can be deeply felt. Staff will give concerns appropriate time and attention while maintaining teaching, safeguarding and support for all pupils. Clear communication arrangements help everyone know what to expect.

4.2 Everyone raising a complaint is entitled to a fair process. We will explain who will respond and the expected timescale. Using the agreed contact route and allowing time for a considered response helps us investigate thoroughly and avoid duplication. Meetings and further correspondence will be arranged where they help progress the matter.

4.3 The school will identify the member of staff best placed to help and consider whether a meeting, telephone conversation or written response would be most useful. We will take account of communication needs and reasonable adjustments. Appointments may be needed because staff have teaching and other responsibilities.

4.4 Where contact becomes difficult to manage, the school will consider arrangements that support constructive communication while protecting teaching, safeguarding and staff wellbeing. Any restrictions will follow the safeguards in section 15.

Working through differences

Parents and carers may disagree with a school policy, professional judgement or decision. We will listen to their perspective, explain the reasons for our approach and consider whether changes would improve practice. A fair review may confirm the original decision, and agreement may not always be possible. We will continue to work respectfully with the family and support their child. No pupil will be disadvantaged because a concern or complaint has been raised.

5. Matters outside this complaints procedure

5.1 Some matters are governed by separate statutory or specialist procedures. These are summarised in Appendix 1. Where a complaint contains both in-scope and out-of-scope matters, the school may separate the issues and explain which procedure applies to each.

5.2 Complaints about the application of the school's behaviour policy are normally within this procedure. Complaints about a suspension or permanent exclusion itself follow the statutory exclusion process.

5.3 Where a complaint about a member of staff raises an employment or disciplinary issue, the school may address that issue under its internal procedures. The complainant will be told that the matter has been considered but will not be given confidential information about any disciplinary action or employment outcome.

6. Time limit for bringing a complaint

6.1 A complaint should normally be raised within three months of the incident complained about, or, where there is a series of related incidents, within three months of the most recent incident.

6.2 The school will consider exceptional circumstances and will not operate the time limit as an inflexible blanket rule. Relevant factors may include illness, bereavement, safeguarding concerns, disability, delayed awareness of material facts, or another compelling reason why the complaint could not reasonably have been raised earlier.

6.3 Complaints made substantially outside the three-month period may be declined where it would no longer be reasonable or practicable to investigate fairly. Reasons will be given.

6.4 Complaints received during school holidays or outside term time will normally be treated as received on the first school day after the holiday. Where a response period would otherwise run substantially through a school closure, the school may set a reasonable revised date and will tell the complainant.

6.5 If legal action is commenced against the school in relation to the subject of a complaint, the school will consider whether the complaints procedure should be suspended until those legal proceedings have concluded. Any decision to suspend will be made for a clear reason and communicated to the complainant.

7. Raising an informal concern

7.1 Many concerns can be resolved through an early, open conversation. We encourage parents and carers to tell us when something is worrying them, so that we can listen and understand the issue. A classroom concern would normally be raised with the class teacher; a wider or more serious operational concern can be raised with an appropriate senior leader or the school office.

7.2 Informal resolution may include clarification, a telephone call, an agreed meeting, an explanation, corrective action or an apology where appropriate. The school will consider the most helpful way to discuss the concern, taking account of the circumstances and communication needs. A written or telephone response may sometimes resolve the issue without a meeting.

7.3 A complainant may move directly to a formal complaint if they wish. The school will not insist on informal resolution as a condition of entering Stage 1.

8. Making a Stage 1 formal complaint

8.1 Formal complaints should normally be sent to the school office and clearly marked “Formal Complaint - Private and Confidential”. They may be submitted by email or letter, or recorded by the school following a telephone or face-to-face complaint where an alternative format is appropriate.

8.2 A formal complaint should, so far as possible, identify:

- what happened or failed to happen
- the date(s) and people involved, where known
- the specific issue(s) the complainant wants investigated
- what steps have already been taken to resolve the matter
- what outcome the complainant is seeking

8.3 If a complaint covers several issues or needs clarification, the school will work with the complainant to identify the main concerns and the outcome sought. A numbered summary may help, and assistance will be offered where needed. Overlapping points may be considered together, provided the substance of the complaint is fairly addressed and the scope of the investigation is explained.

8.4 Anonymous complaints will normally be considered at the Headteacher’s discretion, taking account of seriousness, credibility, safeguarding implications and whether sufficient information exists to investigate.

9. Stage 1 - formal investigation

9.1 Complaints about members of staff will normally be investigated and determined by the Headteacher or a suitably senior member of staff delegated by the Headteacher. The Headteacher remains responsible for ensuring the process is fair.

9.2 A complaint about the Headteacher will be handled by the Chair of Governors or another suitably skilled and impartial governor. A complaint about the Chair, an individual governor, or the whole Governing Body will be handled as set out in section 11.

9.3 The school will normally acknowledge a Stage 1 complaint within 5 school days and aim to provide a written outcome within 15 school days of receipt. Where the complaint is complex, involves absence of relevant persons, overlaps with another process or reasonably requires more time, the school will explain the delay and set a revised target date.

9.4 The investigator will keep an open mind, consider relevant evidence and seek to understand the perspectives of those involved. They may review documents, speak with relevant people, seek clarification and meet the complainant where this would help. Enquiries will focus on the issues needed to reach a fair and proportionate conclusion.

9.5 The written Stage 1 response will normally state whether the complaint is upheld, partly upheld or not upheld, explain the reasons in sufficient detail, identify any appropriate action, and explain how to request Stage 2.

10. Stage 2 - Governing Body complaints panel

10.1 A complainant who remains dissatisfied may request Stage 2 within 10 school days of the Stage 1 response. The request should explain why the Stage 1 outcome is disputed and what aspect of the complaint the panel is asked to reconsider.

10.2 Stage 2 will normally be heard by a panel of three governors who have had no material prior involvement and can act impartially. Where necessary, suitably independent governors from another school may be used in accordance with the applicable governance arrangements.

10.3 The panel will consider the complaint afresh. It is not limited to checking whether Stage 1 followed the correct procedure.

10.4 The Governance Professional will normally acknowledge the Stage 2 request within 5 school days and aim to convene the panel within 20 school days. If this is not practicable, the complainant will be given a reason and a revised timetable.

10.5 The Governance Professional will set reasonable deadlines for written material. Unless the circumstances justify a different arrangement, the papers to be considered will be circulated to the complainant, the school and the panel at least 5 school days before the meeting. Late material may be accepted or refused by the panel chair where necessary to ensure fairness.

10.6 The complainant may present their case in person or in writing. Legal representation is not normally necessary because the panel is not a court or tribunal, although representation may be permitted where fairness reasonably requires it.

10.7 If reasonable efforts have been made to offer a practicable date and the complainant refuses or is unable to attend, the panel may proceed in their absence and determine the complaint on the information available.

10.8 The panel may uphold, partly uphold or reject the complaint; recommend changes to systems or practice; require appropriate remedial action; or conclude that no further action is required. The outcome and reasons will normally be sent in writing within 5 school days of the panel meeting.

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

10.10 Where a panel meeting is held, an appropriate written record or minutes will be kept. The complainant will normally be provided with a copy, subject to any lawful and necessary redactions to protect personal data, confidential employment information or the rights of third parties.

11. Complaints about the Headteacher or Governing Body

- **Headteacher.** Stage 1 will be considered by the Chair of Governors or another suitably skilled and impartial governor; Stage 2 by an impartial panel.
- **Chair of Governors or individual governor.** The complaint should be sent to the Governance Professional, who will arrange consideration by a suitably skilled and impartial governor at Stage 1 and an impartial panel at Stage 2.

- **Chair and Vice-Chair together, or the whole Governing Body.** The Governance Professional will determine an appropriate independent route. This may include an independent investigator at Stage 1 and governors from other schools at Stage 2.

11.2 Governors who may be required to hear a Stage 2 complaint should not be given detailed information about an ongoing complaint in advance. This protects the independence of any later panel.

12. Respectful communication during the complaints process

12.1 The school recognises that raising a concern can be upsetting or stressful. Firm disagreement, criticism or persistence does not by itself amount to unacceptable conduct. Staff and governors will listen courteously and respond respectfully, and the same consideration is expected from everyone involved. The aim is to make it possible for all parties to speak, be heard and work towards a resolution.

12.2 To keep discussions safe and constructive for everyone, the following conduct is unacceptable:

- threats, violence, intimidation, harassment or aggressive behaviour
- shouting at, swearing at, insulting or personally abusing staff, governors, pupils or other families
- discriminatory, prejudicial or degrading comments
- repeatedly targeting individual staff members through personal comments, accusations or hostile messages rather than using the published process
- contacting staff through personal telephone numbers, private social-media accounts or other non-school channels
- publishing or circulating material online in a manner that bullies, harasses or intimidates staff
- recording meetings or conversations without the informed consent of all parties, except where a different arrangement has been agreed as a reasonable adjustment or where the school determines that exceptional circumstances apply
- refusing to leave the premises when reasonably instructed, or behaving in a way that places pupils, staff or visitors at risk

12.3 A meeting or telephone call may be ended if conduct becomes abusive, threatening or so disruptive that constructive discussion is no longer possible. A further meeting may be offered with additional safeguards, or communication may be moved to writing.

12.4 Staff, including the Headteacher, will not be expected to manage bullying or harassment alone. Staff may be supported by a colleague, senior leader, HR adviser or recognised trade union representative as appropriate.

13. Staff protection and the Governing Body's role as employer

Governing Body commitment

The Governing Body is committed to a complaints process in which families feel heard and concerns are investigated fairly. As employer, it also has a responsibility to protect staff from bullying, harassment, threats, abuse and unsafe conduct, and to support reasonable workloads. These responsibilities will be met together through fair, proportionate decisions and respectful communication.

13.1 The Governing Body recognises the legal duty, so far as reasonably practicable, to protect employees' health, safety and welfare at work, and the need to respond appropriately to bullying and harassment by parents, carers or others, including online conduct.

13.2 Where conduct towards staff raises a welfare or safety concern, the school may take protective action separately from the merits of the complaint. A person may therefore continue to have a complaint considered while being required to use a restricted communication route or, in serious cases, being restricted from the school site.

13.3 Openness to feedback and protection from bullying or harassment are both essential. The school will consider the substance of a complaint fairly while addressing any concerns about behaviour separately and proportionately.

13.4 Incidents of bullying or harassment affecting staff will be recorded through the school's appropriate HR, safeguarding, behaviour or incident-reporting arrangements. The Headteacher will provide proportionate anonymised

or thematic information to the Governing Body about staff wellbeing and workforce safety, and serious or systemic concerns will be escalated promptly. Reporting will be managed so far as possible without compromising the impartiality of governors who may later be required to hear a complaint.

14. Responding to unreasonable patterns of contact

14.1 The school will focus on the behaviour and the particular complaint or pattern of contact, not label a person as a "serial complainant". A person may raise a genuinely new complaint at any time, and it will be considered on its own merits.

14.2 The school will consider the context, communication needs and impact of contact before deciding whether it is unreasonable. The following patterns may require action, particularly where they persist or cause significant disruption:

- repeated contact making substantially the same points after those points have been answered or the complaints procedure has concluded
- an excessive volume or frequency of emails, calls, messages, meetings or contact with multiple staff members about the same matter
- refusal to identify the substance of the complaint, despite reasonable assistance to do so
- continually changing the basis of a complaint or adding new issues in a way that prevents a fair and proportionate conclusion, where those issues could reasonably be raised separately
- insisting on unrealistic, unlawful or unattainable outcomes, or outcomes outside the school's powers
- insisting on immediate responses, same-day meetings, access to named staff or responses outside reasonable working arrangements
- refusing to accept a clear answer while offering no material new evidence, and repeatedly demanding that the same matter be reopened
- pursuing a complaint through contact that is abusive, harassing or so frequent that it significantly disrupts the school's work
- contact apparently intended primarily to cause disruption, annoyance or disproportionate administrative burden rather than to secure a practical resolution
- using complaints or information requests as a means of continuing a dispute after the substance has been reasonably addressed

14.3 Complex questions, strong disagreement, criticism of the school or the exercise of a right to contact an MP, DfE, Ofsted or another lawful body will not by themselves be treated as unreasonable.

15. Communication restrictions and tailored communication plans

15.1 Where the frequency, volume, manner or route of contact causes significant disruption or an unreasonable burden on staff, the Headteacher may introduce a tailored communication plan to help the matter progress constructively. The person will retain a reasonable route to raise material issues and progress any live complaint, whether or not the procedure has concluded.

15.2 Before imposing a communication restriction, where practicable, the Headteacher will explain what aspect of the contact is considered unreasonable and give the complainant a reasonable opportunity to change it. This warning step may be omitted where conduct is threatening, abusive, discriminatory or harassing, creates an immediate welfare or safety concern, or where delay would itself cause significant disruption.

15.3 Measures may include one or more of the following:

- a single named point of contact or a single school email address
- written communication only, except in an emergency or where an agreed reasonable adjustment applies
- a requirement that issues are consolidated into one communication rather than sent as multiple messages
- a reasonable limit on frequency of non-urgent contact - for example, no more than one consolidated communication in a five-school-day period, unless a safeguarding, medical or similarly urgent matter reasonably requires earlier contact
- responses being provided at agreed intervals rather than message by message

- appointments only, with no expectation of unscheduled access to staff
- contact being restricted to specified times or channels
- a requirement that a third party or advocate communicates on the person's behalf where this would assist constructive communication
- no substantive response to correspondence that simply repeats a point already answered, other than a brief reference to the previous response where appropriate

15.4 Restrictions will be proportionate, recorded in writing, explain the reasons, identify the permitted route of contact and state when the arrangement will be reviewed. Significant or longer-term restrictions imposed by the Headteacher will be reviewed or endorsed by the Chair of Governors. They will normally be reviewed at least termly.

15.5 Communication restrictions do not override statutory rights to information or separate rights under data protection or freedom of information law. Those requests will be handled under the relevant legal framework.

16. When the school may stop responding about a closed matter

16.1 The school may decide that substantive correspondence about a particular matter will cease where all of the following apply:

1. the school has taken every reasonable step to address the concern or complaint;
2. the complainant has received a clear statement of the school's position and the available next steps; and
3. the complainant continues to contact the school repeatedly making substantially the same points without material new evidence.

16.2 The case for ending substantive correspondence is stronger where communications are abusive or aggressive, contain personal insults or threats, or there is evidence that contact is intended to cause disruption or inconvenience.

16.3 The decision will be communicated in writing. Further correspondence on the same closed matter may be read and retained but need not receive a substantive response. A genuinely new complaint or material new evidence will still be considered reasonably.

16.4 Stage 2 completes the school's local complaints procedure. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, the school will explain the available external routes in section 21. A further internal review is not normally available, but material new evidence or a genuinely new complaint will be considered on its own merits.

16.5 A complainant may withdraw a complaint at any stage. The school will normally ask for the withdrawal to be confirmed in writing. Withdrawal will normally close the complaint, but the school may continue to take any action required under safeguarding, staff employment, health and safety or other statutory procedures where the underlying information makes that necessary.

17. Duplicate complaints and complaint campaigns

17.1 Where a complaint has been fully considered and a spouse, partner, relative or other person subsequently raises substantially the same complaint on the same facts, the school may explain that the issue has already completed the local process. Any genuinely new aspect will be considered.

17.2 Where the school receives a high volume of materially similar complaints, it may use a consistent or template response, publish a single factual response on the school website, or otherwise manage the correspondence collectively, while ensuring that any materially different individual issue is considered.

18. Social media, online campaigns and recordings

18.1 Concerns should be raised through the school's complaints route rather than by targeting individual staff members online. The school may ask for harmful, abusive, harassing or misleading material about individual staff to be removed and may use platform reporting routes or seek advice where appropriate.

18.2 The school respects lawful criticism and discussion, including online. The same expectations of safety and respect apply online as in person. Bullying, harassment, threats, intimidation and unlawful publication may be addressed separately from the complaint itself.

18.3 Audio or video recording of meetings should only take place with the informed consent of all parties. The school may refuse to accept covert recordings as evidence unless exceptional circumstances make it fair and necessary to consider them. Reasonable adjustments will be considered where recording is required to enable access to the process.

19. Access to the school site

19.1 Parents and carers are welcome on the school site in accordance with the school's usual visiting and safeguarding arrangements. Where behaviour causes a safety or welfare concern, a person may be asked to leave. In serious or repeated cases, access may be restricted or barred in accordance with the law and relevant DfE guidance.

19.2 A decision to bar a person from the site is separate from the merits of any complaint. The person will be given an opportunity to make representations, and a Headteacher decision to bar will be reviewed by the Chair of Governors or an appropriate governors' committee. Any confirmed bar will state its duration and review arrangements.

19.3 Where conduct may amount to a criminal offence or presents an immediate risk, the school may contact the police or other appropriate authority.

20. Confidentiality, records and data protection

20.1 The school will keep an appropriate record of formal complaints, their progress and outcome. Records will be stored securely and retained in accordance with the school's records-management and data-protection arrangements.

20.2 Notes may be made of meetings and telephone calls. Copies of written responses will be retained with the complaint record.

20.3 Complaint information will not normally be shared with the whole Governing Body while a complaint is live, because governors may later be required to sit impartially on a panel.

20.4 The school will comply with the UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018, Freedom of Information Act 2000 and other applicable information rights. Complaint correspondence is not automatically disclosable in full, particularly where it contains personal data relating to others or confidential employment information.

21. Department for Education and other external routes

21.1 After the school's complaints procedure has been completed, a complainant who remains dissatisfied may complain to the Department for Education. DfE does not normally reinvestigate the merits of the complaint; it considers matters such as whether the Governing Body has failed to perform a duty under education law or has acted unreasonably in exercising education functions.

21.2 DfE may become involved earlier in limited circumstances, including where a child is at risk of harm, a child is missing education, the school is preventing a complainant from progressing through its published procedure, or there is evidence that the school is acting unlawfully or unreasonably.

21.3 The current DfE route is the GOV.UK service "Complain about a school to the Department for Education" at www.gov.uk/complain-to-dfe. DfE also accepts supporting information by post at Ministerial and Public Communication Division, Department for Education, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD. Complain about a school to the Department for Education

21.4 Ofsted may consider qualifying complaints about the school as a whole, but it does not resolve individual disputes between a parent and a school. Other statutory routes may apply to matters listed in Appendix 1.

22. Monitoring, governance and review

22.1 The Headteacher will maintain an appropriate overview of formal complaints and may report anonymised themes, numbers, outcomes and learning to the Governing Body. Individual complaint detail will be withheld from governors who may need to sit on a Stage 2 panel.

22.2 The Governing Body will use feedback and complaints to identify learning and improve the school's practice. It will consider whether concerns reveal recurring issues, whether agreed improvements have been implemented and whether the complaints process is accessible and fair. It will also monitor the wellbeing and safety of those involved and the impact on staff workload.

22.3 This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation, DfE guidance, local arrangements or the school's circumstances change materially.

Appendix 1 - Matters outside this complaints procedure

Matter	Route / comment
School admissions / admission appeals	Use the statutory admissions and appeals route applicable to the school as admission authority. Complaints about admission appeal administration may fall to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
Statutory EHC needs assessment / local authority SEND functions	Raise with the local authority and use the relevant statutory SEND route, including appeal rights to the SEND Tribunal where applicable.
Matters requiring a child-protection investigation	Handled under safeguarding and child-protection procedures and relevant statutory guidance; referral may be required to the local authority designated officer or other safeguarding partners.
Suspension or permanent exclusion	Use the statutory suspension/permanent exclusion process. Complaints about application of the school behaviour policy may still fall under this complaints policy.
Staff grievance	Employees use the school's internal grievance procedure.
Whistleblowing by employees	Use the school's whistleblowing procedure and relevant prescribed-person routes.
Staff disciplinary matters	Any necessary employment action is dealt with under confidential internal procedures. The school will explain that the matter has been considered while respecting staff confidentiality.
Services delivered by an external provider on school premises	Use the provider's own complaints procedure unless the complaint concerns something for which the school remains directly responsible.
National curriculum content	Concerns about national curriculum content are for DfE. Complaints about the school's delivery of the curriculum may fall within this procedure.
Collective worship / statutory withdrawal rights	Use the route appropriate to the issue, including the local authority/SACRE where applicable. Complaints about handling a withdrawal request may fall within this procedure.
Freedom of information / data protection requests	Handled under FOI and data-protection law. A complaint about the school's handling of such a request follows the relevant review/ICO route rather than being converted into a school complaint.

Appendix 2 - Roles and responsibilities

Complainant	Explains the concern and outcome sought as clearly as possible; shares relevant information; takes part respectfully; uses agreed communication arrangements. Assistance is available where needed.

Investigator	Listens with an open mind; establishes the relevant facts fairly and proportionately; maintains confidentiality; explains the outcome and reasons; identifies opportunities for learning.
Headteacher	Oversees the effective operation of the procedure; deals with Stage 1 complaints where appropriate; protects staff and pupils; may implement proportionate communication restrictions.
Chair of Governors	Handles or arranges complaints about the Headteacher where appropriate; reviews significant communication restrictions; may review a Headteacher decision to bar a person from the site.
Governance Professional	Provides independent procedural advice; arranges Stage 2 panels; protects panel impartiality; keeps appropriate records of the governance process.
Stage 2 panel	Considers the complaint afresh, fairly and impartially; reaches a reasoned decision; may identify learning or remedial action.
Governing Body as employer	Ensures there is a compliant complaints procedure; protects employee health, safety, welfare, workload and working conditions; supports staff who experience bullying or harassment; monitors themes and school improvement.

Appendix 3 - Formal complaint form

This form is optional. A formal complaint can be made in another accessible format where appropriate.

Name

Relationship to the school / pupil (if applicable)

Preferred contact details

Date(s) of incident or issue

Who have you already spoken to?

What happened or failed to happen?

What evidence or information should the school consider?

What outcome are you seeking?

Any reasonable adjustment needed to access the complaints process?

Signature / confirmation

Date

Appendix 4 - Principal legal and guidance references

Education Act 2002, section 29 - Governing body duty to establish and publicise a complaints procedure.

DfE, Best practice guidance for school complaints procedures 2020 (updated 15 January 2021) - Current maintained-school complaints guidance, including timeliness, two-stage procedures, duplicate/serial complaints, communication strategies and barring.

DfE, Maintained schools: governance guide (updated 15 July 2026) - Current governance guidance, including complaints, staff wellbeing, workload, equality and the governing body's strategic responsibilities.

DfE, Preventing and tackling the bullying and harassment of school staff (published 9 July 2026) - Current guidance on parent/carer bullying and harassment, employer responsibilities, online conduct, warnings, barring and staff support.

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 - Employer duty, so far as reasonably practicable, to protect employee health, safety and welfare at work.

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 - Employer duties to assess and manage risks to employees, including risks arising from violence, bullying or harassment.

Equality Act 2010 - Equality duties and reasonable adjustments.

Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR - Lawful and secure processing of complaint information.

School Information (England) Regulations 2008, as amended - Requirement for maintained schools to publish their complaints procedure online.

Education Act 1996, sections 496/497 and 547 - Secretary of State intervention powers and statutory context for control of access to school premises.

This policy is intended to reflect the legal and guidance position current at September 2026. Where legislation or statutory guidance changes, the current legal requirements take precedence and the policy will be reviewed.