

# Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School



## Complaints Procedure

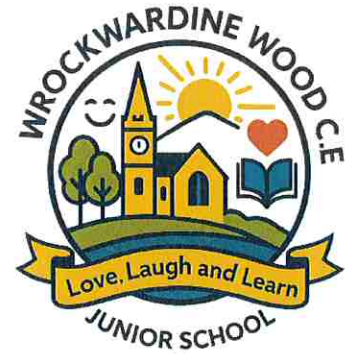
**Date Approved: May 2026**

**Approved by: Tracey Cartwright, Head Teacher**

**Review Date: May 2027**

# Complaints Procedure

## Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School



### Introduction

This policy describes the procedures for dealing with school complaints. The policy also sets out our aims and objectives. The policy is informed by Parentkind guide for parental complaints. This outlines the importance of working together to resolve issues:

- Most issues can be resolved quickly when you know who to speak to and what to expect.
- The best way to resolve concerns is through clear, respectful communication. – It suggests Five steps to making a complaint

### School Complaints – 5 steps:

1. What kind of issue is it? Is it feedback? Is it a concern? Or is it a complaint?
2. Who in the school should I go to? Often issues can be best resolved by the person closest to your child. Discuss with the teacher; raise to a middle leader; escalate it with the headteacher.
3. How do I raise my complaint? Follow one level at a time, start with facts and stay objective, be positive, suggest a clear outcome.
4. When to expect a response: Talks about a school's policies but majors on you can trust that the school is following their policy.
5. Once you have fully followed your school's complaint procedure, you may still feel you need action from your school – Governors, DfE or Ofsted.

We will be using these steps and the guidance from Parentkind to inform our response and we would welcome parents using the parent guide to support and guide them. This can be found in the appendix to this policy or on line at: [Parent guide to school complaints | Parentkind](#)

## Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we 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. Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, Mrs Cartwright, Head Teacher, will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, Mrs Cartwright 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, Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior 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 or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf on a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher or headteacher. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 2 of the procedure.

Complaints against school staff (except the headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to Mrs Cartwright (the headteacher) via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the headteacher should be addressed to Mrs L Cotton (the Chair of Governors), via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

## **Anonymous complaints**

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

## **Time scales**

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

## Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

## Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admissions to schools</li> <li>• Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs</li> <li>• School re-organisation proposals</li> </ul>	<p>Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Telford and Wrekin Local Authority.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (Glenn Ashbrook-LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or Family Connect.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion of children from school*</li> </ul>	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions">www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions</a>.</p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whistleblowing</li> </ul>	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>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: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>.</p> <p>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.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff grievances</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff conduct</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p>

	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.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities</li> </ul>	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Curriculum - content</li> </ul>	Please contact the Department for Education at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>

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 Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior 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.

## Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one 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 and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.

## Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

### Stage 1

Formal complaints must be made to the headteacher (unless they are about the headteacher), via the school office. This may be done in person, in writing (preferably on the Complaint Form), or by telephone.

The headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.

Within this response, the headteacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The headteacher can consider whether a face-to-face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

*Note: The headteacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but not the decision to be taken.*

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.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the headteacher will provide a formal written response within 15 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the headteacher is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

The response will detail any 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 Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School will take to resolve the complaint.

The headteacher will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

If the complaint is about the headteacher, or a member of the governing body (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 1.

Complaints about the headteacher or member of the governing body must be made to the Clerk, via the school office.

If the complaint is:

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

Stage 1 will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the governing body or Lichfield Diocese. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

## **Stage 2**

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 – a meeting with members of the governing body's complaints committee, which will be formed of the first three, impartial, governors available. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the Clerk, via the school office, within 10 school days of receipt of the Stage 1 response.

The Clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 15 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

The complaints committee will consist of at least three governors with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Committee. If there are fewer than three governors from Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School available, the Clerk will source any additional, independent governors through another local school or through their LA's Governor Services team, in order to make up the committee. Alternatively, an entirely independent committee may be convened to hear the complaint at Stage 2.

The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate.

For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

*Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.*

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least 10 school days before the meeting, the Clerk will:

- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least 5 school days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 3 school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the

procedure.

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

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss 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 to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 10 school days.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School.

If the complaint is:

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

Stage 2 will be heard by a committee of independent governors.

The response will detail any 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 Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School will take to resolve the complaint.

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

## **Next Steps**

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 2.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School. They will consider whether Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus), by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for Education  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD.

## Complaint Form

Please complete and return to Mrs Cartwright, Head teacher who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

<b>Your name:</b>
<b>Pupil's name (if relevant):</b>
<b>Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):</b>
<b>Address:</b>
<b>Postcode:</b>
<b>Day time telephone number:</b>
<b>Evening telephone number:</b>
<b>Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.</b>

**What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?**

**Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Official use**

**Date acknowledgement sent:**

**By whom:**

**Complaint referred to:**

**Date:**

# Roles and Responsibilities

## Complainant

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

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint
- ask for assistance as needed
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

## Investigator

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
  - sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved
  - interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint
  - consideration of records and other relevant information
  - analysing information
- liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal
- be mindful of the timescales to respond
- prepare a comprehensive report for the headteacher or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

The headteacher or complaints committee will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

## **Complaints Co-ordinator** (this could be the headteacher / designated complaints governor or other staff member providing administrative support)

The complaints co-ordinator should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- liaise with staff members, headteacher, Chair of Governors, Clerk and LAs (if appropriate) to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure
- be aware of issues regarding:
  - sharing third party information
  - additional support. This may be needed by complainants when making a complaint including interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person
- keep records.

## **Clerk to the Governing Body**

The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the committee and should:

- ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties (if they are invited to attend) and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example: stage 1 paperwork, school and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale
- record the proceedings
- circulate the minutes of the meeting
- notify all parties of the committee's decision.

## **Committee Chair**

The committee's chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint meeting, should ensure that:

- both parties are asked (via the Clerk) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting
- the meeting is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy
- complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person
- the remit of the committee is explained to the complainant
- written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR.

If a new issue arises it would be useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it; this may require a short adjournment of the meeting

- both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting or verbally in the meeting itself
- the issues are addressed
- key findings of fact are made
- the committee is open-minded and acts independently
- no member of the committee has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- the meeting is minuted
- they liaise with the Clerk (and complaints co-ordinator, if the school has one).

## Committee Member

Committee members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so

No governor may sit on the committee if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.

- the aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant

We recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.

- many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting

Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child.

- extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child/young person and present during all or part of the meeting

Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated.

The committee should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.

If the child/young person is the complainant, the committee should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the child/young person's parent is the complainant, the committee should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child/young person needs to attend.

However, the parent should be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child/young person to attend a part of the meeting that the committee considers is not in the child/young person's best interests.

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

# Wrockwardine Wood CE Junior School



## Parental Concerns Policy 2025-2027

Updated: December 2025

Review Date: December 2027

Reviewed by the Headteacher

T Cartwright.



## **Parental Concerns**

If you have a concern regarding your child, we would like to outline the process which you should follow to raise that concern with the school.

### **Step 1**

Speak with the Class Teacher via DoJo. DoJo messages will only be read between 8am and 9am and 3:30pm-5pm. An acknowledgement will be sent to you within 24 hours. Alternatively, you can leave a message with the school office for the Teacher to call you back within 24 hours.

### **Step 2**

If you feel that your concerns have not been addressed, you should contact the school office via email or phone call. The office staff will take a note of your concern and pass it to a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Pastoral Team. You will receive an acknowledgement within 24 hours.

### **Step 3**

If you are not satisfied with the response to this, you should contact the Head Teacher via email [h3129@taw.org.uk](mailto:h3129@taw.org.uk) or telephone the school office to make an appointment to speak with the Head Teacher. The

Head Teacher will respond to you within 24 hours. Face to face appointments may need to be booked outside of this timescale due to existing commitments.

#### Step 4

If you are not happy with the outcome of step 3 the next step is to follow the school complaints policy which can be found on the school website under Our School, School Policies.

Parentkind



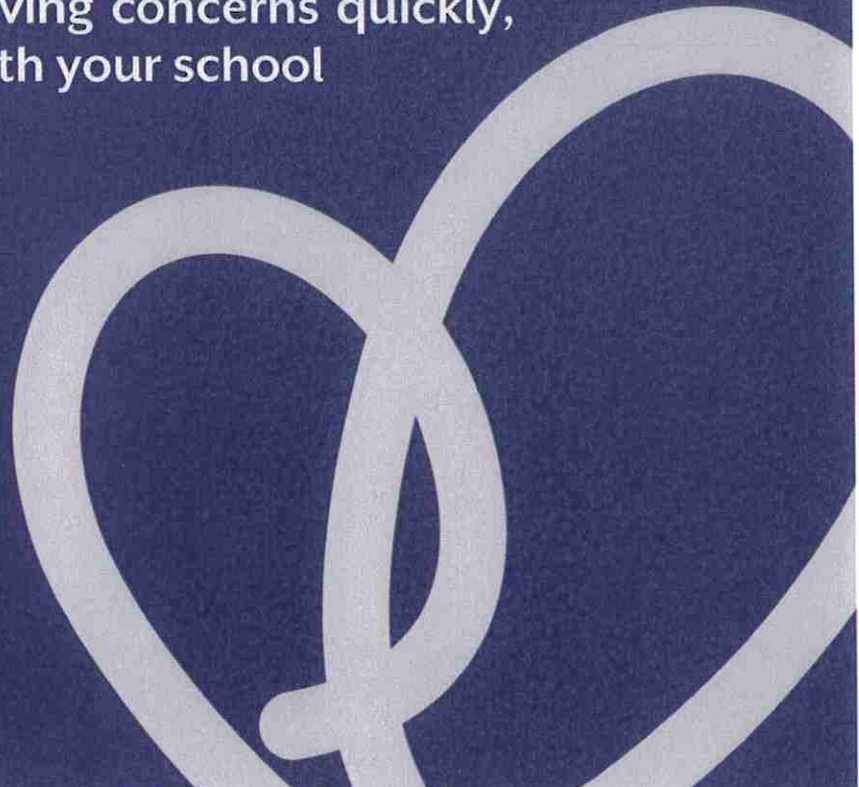
IET  
IMPROVING  
EDUCATION  
TOGETHER



# Parent guide to school complaints

Your checklist to resolving concerns quickly,  
easily and positively with your school

2025/26



# Working together to resolve issues

Parents and schools share the same goal: supporting children's education. Sometimes questions or concerns arise. This guide gives you clear steps to share your views and resolve issues quickly and positively.

## Why this matters

We know you value clear communication and want your feedback to make a difference.

When the process feels unclear or slow, it can be frustrating and leave you feeling unsure about what to do next. By giving you simple, transparent steps for raising issues, we aim to help you feel heard and supported.

## How this guide helps

Most issues can be resolved quickly when you know who to speak to and what to expect.

This guide will support you to follow your school's complaint procedure. Our goal is to keep the focus on your child's education while building positive, supportive partnerships between you and the school.

# Five steps to making a school complaint

When issues come up, you need to know how to raise these with the school to get an outcome that supports you and your child.

Relationships between parents and schools last for several years. Ensuring mutual trust and respect is essential to making them work in the best interests of your child.

Let's build parent and school partnerships based on our shared commitment to a great education for all. We know these matters are incredibly important to parents, but everything is founded on good intentions.

The best way to resolve concerns is through clear, respectful communication.



## Five steps to making a school complaint



# What kind of issue is it?

Complaints come in different shapes and sizes. The best first step is to identify what kind of issue it is, to make sure you can get the quickest action with your school.

### Is it feedback?

*You need to be heard*

Sometimes you will want to share your voice with your school without needing them to respond, but you expect them to listen and take it on board. Feedback is often sought by schools who want to hear and adapt to parents' views.

### Is it a concern?

*You need an answer*

Sometimes you have a worry or doubt over an important issue and you are looking for reassurance. Schools should take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

### Is it a complaint?

*You need action*

Sometimes you are dissatisfied with the school's actions or lack of action. Your school will have a formal complaints procedure that is available to you (likely published on their website) with the steps you need to take to complain.

# 2

## Who in the school do I go to?

Often issues can be best resolved by the person closest to your child. Who is best to hear your view at your school?

### Discuss with their teacher/form tutor

Go to them first for anything that directly involves your child's classroom experience. Teachers know your child best and can usually sort things quickly.

Examples: homework, friendships, behaviour, day-to-day concerns.

### Raise to a middle or senior leader

Take it here if the issue is wider than just one lesson, or if it can't be resolved by the teacher. Leaders have oversight across classes and can coordinate support.

Examples: bullying, additional support, repeated behaviour issues.

### Escalate it with the headteacher

Go here for whole-school issues, serious concerns, or if earlier steps haven't worked. The head is responsible for the school and final decisions before governors are involved.

Examples: safeguarding, school policies, staff conduct, health and safety.

**Remember - always check your school's complaint policy.**

# 3

## How do I raise my complaint?

Concerns are best resolved in discussion with your school. Complaints are best resolved when documented with your school. Follow these tips as you raise your issue.

### Follow one level at a time

Start with a query aimed at resolving things quickly with those closest to your child, and only escalate if you truly need to.

### Keep a record

Note when you've spoken to a teacher or leader, so you can show you have followed the right steps.

### Suggest a clear outcome

Be clear on what you are looking for from the school and ensure it is realistic, so they can see if it is possible.

### Start with the facts

Write down what happened, when, and who was involved. Be clear, relevant and avoid long stories.

### Stay objective

Avoid accusations against individuals, direct your issue toward the processes or decisions that led to the issue.

### Be positive

Make your complaint constructive, focused on solutions, and trust your school to listen.

# 4

## When to expect a response?

Different schools have different policies for handling complaints. You can trust that they are following their policy as they look into your complaint.

### Check the school's policy for timescales

Your school's complaints policy will be published on their website. Schools will normally outline how long they expect an outcome to take in that policy. Your school's policy should always be the best guidance to follow.

### Ask for a written acknowledgement

If you have written a formal complaint to your school, they will usually acknowledge it quickly. Normally they will detail the timescales for investigating and responding to you and may ask for more details.

### Complaint resolution times will vary

Complex complaints may take weeks of investigation. You may not always get updates, but trust that the school is following their policy, investigating and deciding the best action. You should always get a response to your complaint.

# 5

## Where to escalate a complaint?

Once you have fully followed your school's complaint procedure, you may still feel you need action from your school and there are a few ways that may apply to you. It's best to check who it should be escalated with to get it resolved quickly: contacting several people at once could slow things down.

### Is it for your school's governing body or trustees?

To be considered if you are unhappy with the school's response. Schools will normally have an escalation process that allows parents to seek a further review of their complaint by a panel which may involve governors or trustees.

### Is it for the Department for Education (DfE)?

To be considered if you are unhappy with the way your complaint has been handled or the school is preventing you from following the complaints process. In some circumstances, DfE can consider if the school has followed relevant statutory guidance and education law.

### Is it for Ofsted?

Ofsted do not resolve disputes between parents and schools. They may keep your complaint on file for their next inspection but don't always provide a response to parents.

# How complaints go wrong

Tensions can run high when you're concerned about your child, but some approaches make matters worse.

## Using social media

Sharing your complaint on social media can be harmful to those involved and will not lead to a quicker resolution.

## Building a crowd

Other parents may share your views, but your complaint should be specific to you and your child.

## Targeting people

Making it personal to individual school staff members can take things too far, keep it to challenging school policy.

## Behaving aggressively

Abusive and aggressive behaviour will never be tolerated by a school and can lead to consequences for you.

## Only use AI with caution

AI doesn't always get it right when citing laws and can make a complaint more complex than necessary.

## Lacking partnership

Having a good relationship with your school is important and it benefits all to move on after complaints are resolved.

The outcome of a formal complaint is often a resolution, where parents and the school have worked together to listen and take action to support the child's education.

### **Where parents act unreasonably**

In extreme circumstances, there can be consequences for parents where there is bullying and harassing behaviour towards the school. If parents use abusive language, are threatening or use intimidation, the school could:

#### **Pause complaints**

Typically the first step is for the school to pause the complaints process until the unacceptable behaviour stops, and the school can resume the process.

#### **Issue a verbal or written warning**

This sets clear expectations for future conduct and the school may issue a communications plan to reduce risk of confrontation.

#### **Ban parents from school grounds**

In persistent or extreme cases of abusive behaviour, a school may take action by placing a ban on parents. The ban is usually issued in writing by the headteacher, though in some cases the local authority, academy trust or governing body may write one instead. Parents will have the right to appeal.

# Powering positive partnerships between families and schools

This guide has been created to further support parents. Built with wisdom, research and care by expert partners and members of the Improving Education Together board (IET), led by the Secretary of State for Education.

- Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)
- The Catholic Education Service
- The Confederation of School Trusts (CST)
- GMB Union
- The Local Government Association (LGA)
- The National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)
- The National Education Union (NEU)
- National Governance Association (NGA)
- The Sixth Form Colleges Association (SFCA)
- Unison
- Community Trade Union
- NASUWT
- The Department for Education
- Ofsted

# Get more insights, resources and support

Parentkind is on a mission to enrich the educational experience for every child - both at home and at school. We empower anyone with parental or educational responsibility with the knowledge, ideas and resources to give young people the very best start in life. As one of the largest federated charities in the UK, Parentkind has a network of 23,500 Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), parent councils and schools, and mobilises more than 100,000 volunteers to raise vital funds for schools.

[www.parentkind.org](http://www.parentkind.org)

This guide is not legal advice and is subject to future change.

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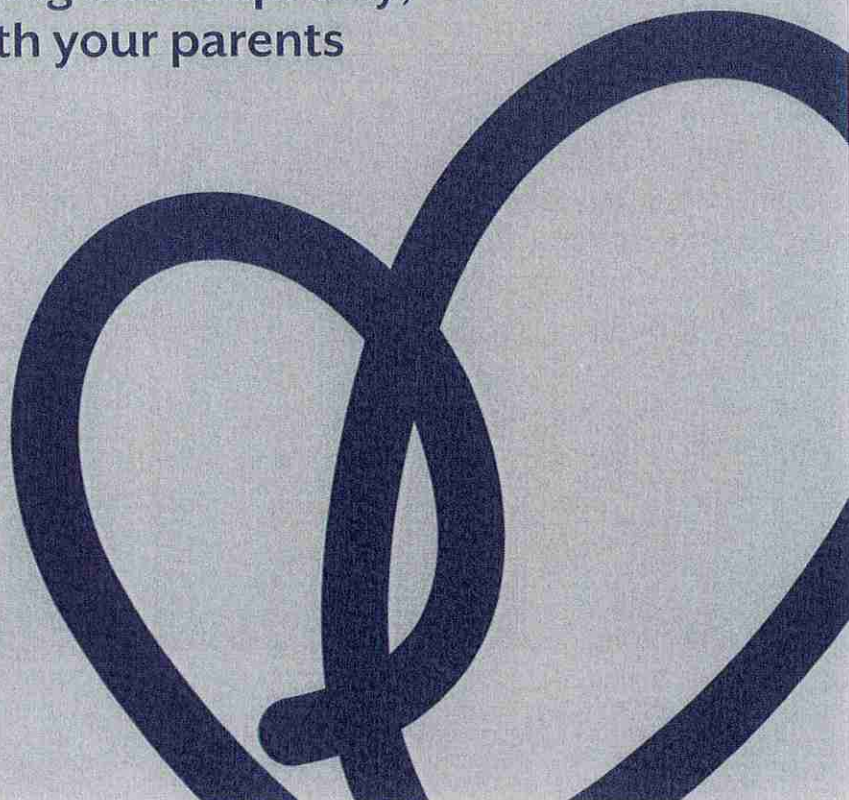
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# School guide to parent complaints

Your checklist to resolving issues quickly,  
easily and positively with your parents

2025/26



# Working together to resolve issues

*Parents and schools share the same goal: supporting children's education. Sometimes questions or issues arise. This guide gives you clear steps for listening and responding with empathy and understanding*

## Why this matters

We know you value constructive partnerships with parents, yet **87%** of parents would like to see improvements in how their child's school handles parent complaints and **95%** of teachers have never had formal training in how to resolve them.

This could indicate why there were **5 million formal parent complaints** made to UK schools in the last year.

## How this guide helps

Most queries that come into school can be resolved quickly and with minimal effort. Some complaints require a more structured response and can define future relationships with those parents and the wider parent community.

This guide holds practical advice to support school staff to resolve parent issues when they arise.

# Are you parent complaint-ready?

*Your critical first step -how your school sets expectations and enables parents to raise and resolve issues*

## **Being open**

School websites can bury complaint policies, sometimes taking parents up to six clicks to find them. Make it easy and set the tone of being open to feedback.

*Tip! Have a dedicated page on what you expect from parents, including when things go wrong.*

## **Being accessible**

School policies can often be written in an inaccessible or overcomplicated way. This can leave parents feeling frustrated and pushed out of their child's school life.

*Tip! Give parents insider information and context into school processes by sharing our parent guide to school complaints.*

## **Being personal**

Schools can inadvertently set written complaints as standard through their policy and communications, making the process impersonal and encouraging parents to vent their frustrations via written complaints.

*Tip! Pop a video on your parent page of your school team speaking with empathy on partnering through issues with an open door.*

## **Being transparent**

It is hard to build trust with parents when everything feels like it is behind closed doors. This may lead to misinformation and can shut down communication.

*Tip! Go on the front foot and report on how many parent complaints have been made and how quickly they were resolved.*

# Your parent complaint mindset

*Parents can feel high anxiety when it comes to issues involving their child. As schools, we have to meet them where they are to help power partnership*

## **Respond with care**

Parents may feel they have raised a complaint, even if the staff member did not interpret it that way. Always assume this is the case and respond with care.

## **Acknowledge their perspective**

Even if a concern seems inaccurate or unlikely, your response should acknowledge their perspective rather than force your own.

## **Tune into feelings over facts**

Even if a parent's facts are incorrect, pointing this out does not address their underlying issues with the school and can intensify the situation.

## **Emotions will be charged**

Emotions may be heightened. Parents may have sat with an issue for some time, building anxiety and protective instincts before raising it, sometimes unexpectedly.

## **Be aware of uncertainty**

There can often be a lack of clarity in a parent's issue through politeness, layered issues, unknown context or emotion.

## **Tone carries best when live**

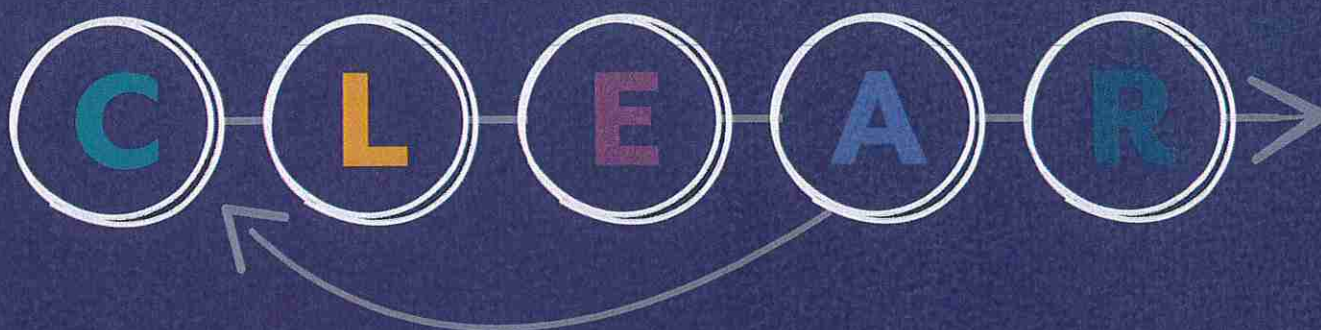
However you receive an issue, resolve it in-person or with a call. Go back on their email with the offer of a call to discuss.

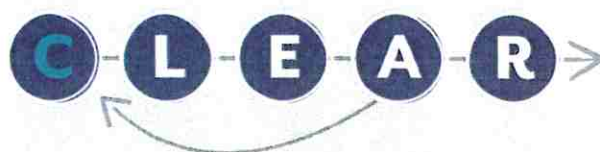
# Five steps to resolving a parent complaint

*Your guide to addressing parent issues immediately with five easy steps to partner in the resolution, together*

Relationships between parents and schools last for several years. Ensuring mutual trust and respect is essential in maximising the potential of strong parent partnerships. Many relationships can be made stronger by how you recognise and resolve the issues.

The best way to resolve issues is with a CLEAR approach to parent issues.





## **Categorise** **What type of issue is it?**

*Not all issues from parents are complaints, but should be given the same care. Taking a moment to categorise the issue can help prevent unnecessary escalation by focusing on what outcome the parent needs*

### **Is it feedback?**

*The parent needs to be heard*

Sometimes parents will want to share their voice with you and they expect you to listen and take it on board. Finding a way to close the feedback loop and showing how you responded demonstrates your value of their views.

### **Is it a concern?**

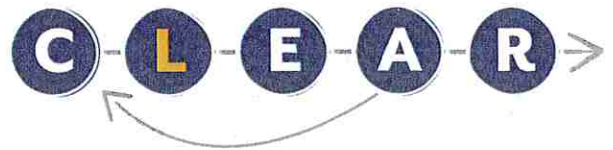
*The parents need an answer*

Sometimes parents have a worry or doubt about an important issue and are simply seeking reassurance. These informal concerns should be taken seriously, as a timely response can prevent escalation.

### **Is it a complaint?**

*The parents need you to act*

Parents may be dissatisfied with an action taken or not taken and seek change. They may have a desired outcome in mind, even if it is unreasonable. Staff should take time to explore expectations and negotiate an appropriate path forward.



## Listen Why is this an issue?

*When building a partnership, listening is the essential foundation on which trust is formed. Take the time and create the space to listen fully to a parent's concern, no matter how big or small it may seem*

### **Give time to listen without judgement**

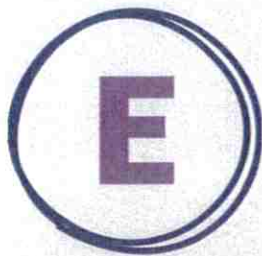
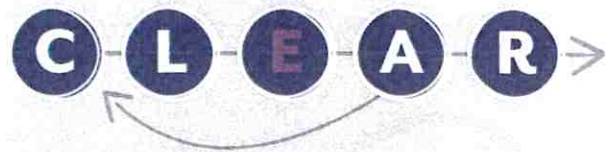
It can be tempting to respond immediately when a parent raises an issue. Pause. Listen. Give them time to share the full story before offering a response. Listen without judgement, bias or defensiveness—simply to understand their perspective. They chose to bring this issue to you, so give it the time it deserves.

### **Ask big, open questions**

Parents often come prepared with what they want to say. Your role is to help them explore further by asking thoughtful questions that show you are actively listening. Ask things like, "Tell me more," or "What did your child share with you?" Encourage them to explain, giving plenty of space and patience for their response.

### **Reflect back what you heard**

Often parents need reassurance that what has been said has actually been understood, particularly when its emotionally charged. Repeat back what you feel you have heard from the parent, encouraging them to clarify if you are mistaken.



## Empathise

### How does this feel?

*This step is an essential intake of breath as you consider the parents' feelings, motives and needs. Help them release the emotion in their issue by authentically sharing a human moment of empathy*

#### **Assess emotions**

Don't simplify parents' emotions - anger could actually be frustration or fear from their own school trauma or their protective instincts.

#### **Consider intentions**

Keep intentions in mind. Most parents act with positive intentions and hope for a constructive outcome, even if their approach doesn't come across that way.

#### **Decode motives**

Read between the lines of what is being said, and how it is shared, to work out what the parent truly needs from you.

#### **Acknowledge emotions**

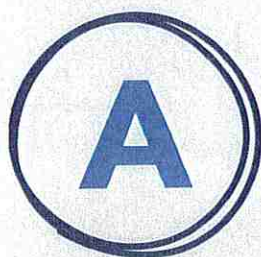
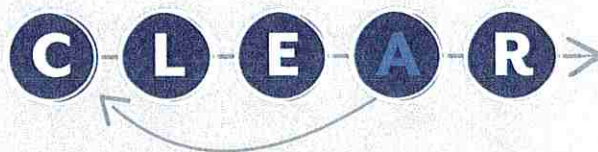
You can validate the emotions without validating their issue, "I can see you're frustrated and I would be too."

#### **Empathise on their issue**

"If I heard that from my child, I'd also be worried," or, "I am worried too, as this is not what we would want."

#### **Project positive emotions**

Your emotions should remain steady, guiding the interaction – not mirror the parent's. Resist the urge to match their emotional intensity.



## Ask Where can we agree?

*The best outcome is a shared agreement on what will happen next. Take the time to check that your proposed solution aligns with the parent's perspective. Together, you co-own the resolution and formalise it as a shared commitment*

### **Decide on your response**

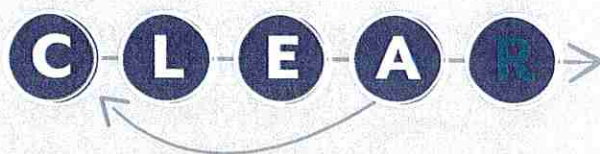
Consider the school's policy, any other parties involved, and frame a response that best addresses the situation. You may not be able to fully meet the parent's request immediately, but exploring the issue further is still an action you can agree on together in the moment.

### **Your suggestion as a yes/no question**

Giving the parent a choice is honouring them coming to you with this and empowers them with shared responsibility. Handle carefully and say "If I were to do [insert action], would that help?" or "If I were to share more on what happened, would that help?"

### **Be ready to be clear again**

Sometimes a parent may be unclear, your suggested action may not fit or there may be a misalignment. Go back to 'Categorise' the issue and work through the model again, peeling back another layer to ensure you are fully aligned.



# R

## Respond When can we action?

*The quickest way to damage trust and provoke a stronger reaction is to fail to keep your word. Take the time to document the discussion, follow through on your actions and close the loop with the parent*

### Document and share the issue

If this has been a call or a meeting, now is the time to document all CLEAR stages in writing for the parent. This is another key step in building a partnership and gives the parent an opportunity to refine or add any details that may have been missed. It also enables other members of the school team to continue from where you left off.

### Set the timeline and deliver the action

Schools should have service level agreements and policies outlining when a parent can expect a response. Be clear about this timeframe in your written communication and make sure to stick to it. When possible, under-promise and overdeliver when implementing the action, while keeping the door open for adjustments if circumstances change.

### Close out and celebrate

With busy school workloads, it can be hard to make time to fully close out an issue. However, if parents hear about the outcome from their child instead of you, the next issue may be sharper. Call the parent to explain what happened and celebrate their role in partnering with you to create positive change.

# The foundation of thriving schools is strong parent relationships

## Parent complaints are on the rise for the majority of schools

Share this guide with your school team to ensure everyone who interacts with parents can strengthen their ability to partner with purpose. Organise team training on handling parent issues collaboratively. We have free CPLD resources to support you. You can also use our parent guide to school complaints to encourage your parent community to approach the school openly with their concerns.

## When we get it right, it powers stronger school results

National research shows that when we have strong parent participation it can lead to real results for children, equivalent to four additional months of academic progress per child per year.

Effectively resolving issues with parents is an investment that directly benefits school outcomes.

# Get more insights, resources and support

## Parent-Friendly Schools

Supporting UK schools to raise parent practice and policy, partnering together to raise outcomes for children. With a range of accreditation, training, advisory and parent services, we support all schools to make change, for good.

[www.parentfriendlyschools.org](http://www.parentfriendlyschools.org)

References:

<https://www.parentkind.org.uk/research-and-policy/parent-research/school-complaints-report-2025>

This guide is not legal advice and is subject to future change.

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