



# THE BENTLEY WOOD TRUST

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE for Parents/Carers of Pupils at The Bentley Wood Trust

**GB Committee Responsible:**

**Reviewed by:**

**Review Date:**

**Approved by HR Committee**

**Ratified by the Board:**

**Next Review Date:**

**Board of Directors**

Naseema Akbar and Louise Kelly

**09 January 2026**

**APS: 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

**BWHS: 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026**

**19<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

**January 2027**

## 1. Introduction and statement of intent

The Bentley Wood Trust (TBWT), comprising of Bentley Wood High School and Aylward Primary School, takes all concerns or complaints seriously. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage reduces the number of formal complaints and reflects the commitment to working effectively with all members of the community. The two schools within the trust aim to meet their statutory obligations when responding to complaints from parents of pupils at the school, and others.

### When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- be impartial and non-adversarial
- facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel, where necessary
- address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response
- respect complainants' desire for confidentiality
- treat complainants with respect and courtesy
- make sure that any decisions we make are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate, in line with the principles of administrative law
- keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process
- consider how the complaint can feed into school improvement evaluation processes

We try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed. The school will aim to give the complainant the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full. To support this, we will make sure we publicise the existence and make it available on the school website. Throughout the process, we will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and make any reasonable adjustments needed to accommodate individuals.

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

It is also based on [best practice guidance for academies complaints procedures](#) published by the Department for Education (DfE). This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

### The difference between a concern and a complaint

- It is important to distinguish between a “concern” and a “complaint”. Most concerns can be made informally to the initial member of staff and be resolved without the need to go through the formal complaint procedures. Initial concerns should be made with the school as soon as possible to allow for a proper investigation if the need should arise.
- 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’*.

## 2. How to raise a concern

- A concern should be made, in writing, where possible, but can be made verbally, such as in a meeting.
- Concerns should initially have been raised with an appropriate member of staff; this may be the **class teacher /Head of Department/Phase Leader/ Head of Year/Subject Leader**. If the issue remains unresolved after having conducted meetings and/or phone calls to try to resolve the situation, the next step is to begin a formal process.
- 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 later stages of the procedure.
- At this informal stage there is **no need** to complete a form for a concern.

### Example Concerns

- A parent queries whether their child is receiving adequate challenge in a specific subject.
- Uncertainty regarding the application of school rules or disciplinary procedures from misunderstanding or misrepresentation of an incident which has taken place inside or outside the classroom.
- Where a parent believes their child has been misunderstood or treated unfairly and feels it necessary to raise

the matter so that steps may be taken to restore goodwill.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the school will refer to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, 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.

### 3. How to Raise a Formal Complaint – Appendix A Diagram 1 How to Raise a Complaint and Appendix B- Complaint Resolution Overview

#### Example Complaints

- A concern not being resolved, e.g. Allegations that the school failed to address bullying incidents reported multiple times to the Head of Year or Phase Leader.
- Where an individual has serious disquiet over an incident that has taken place or decision made in the school and believes the school has fallen short of appropriate standards.

#### 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 ideally **within 10 working school days** and certainly **within 3 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. If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example, the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact 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 the 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.

#### Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by **The Bentley Wood Trust** other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below:

Exceptions- Not in scope of this procedure	Who to contact
<b>Admissions to schools</b> <b>Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs</b> <b>School Re-Organisation Proposals</b>	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with <b>Harrow Local Authority</b> . Harrow Council School Admissions Team on 0208 901 2620 or <a href="http://www.harrow.gov.uk/schooladmissions">www.harrow.gov.uk/schooladmissions</a>  Please read BWHS and APS school admission policies

<p><b>Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation</b></p>	<p>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).</p>
<p><b>Exclusion of children from school*</b></p>	<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><b>Please refer to BWHS and APS Behaviour Policies</b></p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i></p>
<p><b>Whistleblowing</b></p>	<p>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: <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>
<p><b>Staff grievances</b></p>	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.</p>
<p><b>Staff conduct</b></p>	<p>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.</p>
<p><b>Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities</b></p>	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.</p>
<p><b>National Curriculum - content</b></p>	<p>Please contact the Department for Education at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a></p> <p>Parents and carers can withdraw their child from any aspect of Religious Education (RE), including the Daily Act of Collective Worship (DACW). They do not have to explain why.</p> <p>If parents or carers are not satisfied with the handling of a request to withdraw their child from RE or the DACW, you should advise them to follow your complaints procedure.</p> <p>The right of withdrawal does not apply to other areas of the curriculum where religious matters may be spontaneously raised by pupils or arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship.</p>
<p><b>Complaints received from people who are not parents of children at the school</b></p>	<p>These will be handled respectfully and expediently but are not covered by this policy.</p>

## 4. Resolving Complaints

At each stage in the procedure, both schools in *The Bentley Wood Trust*, want 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.

## 5. Understanding the different Stages

### Stage 1

Where a concern remains unresolved, a complaint should be made within Stage 1, in writing. Our school template **Complaint Form (Appendix C)** is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact at **BWHS Paola Boyadjian Operations Manager and at APS Marion Tam School Business Manager**

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.

### Stage 1 Complaint heard by a member of staff

- It is in the interests of everyone that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The experience of the first contact between the complainant and the *school* can be crucial in determining whether their complaint will escalate.
- The first part of the **Complaint Form must be completed (Appendix C)**. This ensures that there is no conflict in determining what the complaint consists of and the action taken by members of staff.
- Staff need to be sensitive to any potential actual or perceived conflicts of interest or difficulties of a particular member of staff being involved in hearing and investigating the complaint.
- The member of staff hearing the complaint will respond to the complainant- this may be in person, by phone call or in writing.
- It is normally expected that complaints will be acknowledged within **3 working school days**, and the Stage 1 process completed within **15 working school days**. If it is clear that the process is going to take longer than this, the reasons for this should be explained to the complainant.
- If the complaint is resolved, the complaint form and the written response should be passed on to the headteacher for retention.

### Stage 2 Complaint heard by an appropriate senior member of staff appointed by the Headteacher

- If the complainant feels the complaint raised has been unresolved at Stage 1 by the school and wishes to take the matter further then it can be escalated to Stage 2. The complainant must complete the second part of the complaint form stating they remain unsatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1.
- The designated senior member of staff (Investigating Officer) will consider both the original complaint and the process followed during Stage 1.
- The designated senior member of staff may formally reject a complaint if, in their judgement, the complaint:
  - o was received too long after the alleged incident for a realistic investigation to take place
  - o does not identify specific actions or incidents that are capable of being investigated
  - o refers only to issues that have already been determined
  - o raises only minor matters that should have been resolved in discussion with the staff member involved
- The designated senior member of staff will put their judgement and rationale, including details of the process followed, in writing to the complainant.

- It is normally expected that the Stage 2 process would be completed within **15 working school days** of the Headteacher initiating Stage 2. If it is clear that the process is going to take longer than this, the reasons for this should be explained to the complainant.
- If the complaint is resolved, the complaint form and the written response should be passed on to the headteacher for retention.

### **Stage 3 Complaint heard by a Review Panel**

- Stage 3 represents the final step in the complaints process. It offers the complainant the opportunity to present their case to an independent Review Panel. The panel is tasked with reviewing how the complaint was handled at earlier stages and ensuring that the school adhered to its complaints policy and statutory obligations. The focus is on fairness, transparency, and resolution.
- The complainant must complete the third part of the complaint form stating they remain unsatisfied with the outcome.  
The request must include:
  - o specific reasons for dissatisfaction with the Stage 2 response
  - o a clear statement of the issues they wish the panel to address
  - o the desired outcome or resolution they are seeking

The complainant must submit a written request for a **Review Panel (Clerk to the Governors)** within **10 working school days** of receiving the Stage 2 outcome.

- New issues cannot be raised at Stage 3. The panel will only consider matters outlined in the initial complaint or issues stemming directly from Stages 1 and 2.

The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the request within **3 working school days** and provide an outline of the next steps and timelines.

The Chair of the Local Governing Body may reject the request for a **Review Panel** Hearing if, in their judgement, the request:

- is vexatious or abusive and/or
- refers only to issues that have already been reasonably determined and with no reasonable basis (such as new information) upon which an appeal hearing could reach a different decision.

The hearing will be arranged within **15 working school days** of receiving the 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.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least **5 working school days** before the date of the meeting. The Chair of the Local Committee, or a nominated Governor, will convene a **Review Panel**.

This Panel will

comprise at least 3 individuals, none of whom will have been directly involved in previous consideration of the complaint. At least 1 member of the Panel will be independent of the management and running of the School and at least one member of the Panel will be a Governor of the school concerned. The panel will have the power to determine the complaint. The Panel members will elect their Chair.

The appeal hearing will be heard in private, will give careful consideration to the substance of the complaint, consider all the views expressed and decide the outcome. The complainant may be accompanied by a friend/colleague. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending will be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

**The panel can:**

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- decide on appropriate action to resolve the complaint

- recommend changes to the (***Bentley Wood High School or Aylward Primary School***) systems or procedures

The decision of the panel is binding. The decision must be communicated within **15 working school days** of the hearing.

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the school’s complaints procedure, they can refer their complaint to the Department for Education (DfE). The DfE will check whether the complaint has been dealt with properly by the school. The DfE will not overturn a school’s decision about a complaint, but will intervene if a school has:

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

If the school’s complaints procedure is found to not meet regulations, the school will be asked to correct its procedure accordingly. For more information see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/3283/schedule/made>

We will include this information in the outcome letter to complainants.

If the **Review Panel** makes any recommendations regarding changes to school processes as a result of the investigation, the Headteacher will be responsible for reviewing these recommendations and implementing them where appropriate. Acceptance of recommendations will be at the Headteacher’s discretion unless the investigation reveals processes that do not comply with statutory, Funding Agreement, or DfE/ESFA requirements when the Headteacher will be required to ensure compliance as soon as possible.

**If the complaint is about the Headteacher**, the Chair of Governors will investigate the complaint

**If the complaint is:**

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

Stage 3 will be heard by a completely independent committee panel.

Complaint form is filled in and sent to:				
Complaint about	BWHS	APS	Investigator	Stage 3 Panel
Staff member	Operations Manager	School Business Manager	Headteacher	2 local governors and an independent panel member
headteacher	Genevieve Dobey (Governance professional/Clerk)		Chair of Governors	2 local governors and an independent panel member
Governor			Chair of Trustees	Independent committee panel
trustee			Independent investigator	Independent committee panel

## 6. Dealing with vexatious, persistent or unreasonable concerns or complaints

The school is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening. (Please refer to the schools Positive Communication Policies).

The school defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the

frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums

### **Steps we will take**

We will take every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns and give them a clear statement of our position and their options. We will maintain our role as an objective arbiter throughout the process, including when we meet with individuals. We will follow our complaints procedure as normal (as outlined above) wherever possible.

If the complainant continues to contact the school in a disruptive way, we may put communications strategies in place.

We may:

- give the complainant a single point of contact via an email address. complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached
- ask the complainant to engage a third party to act on their behalf, such as Citizens Advice
- put any other strategy in place as necessary

If the behaviour continues, the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it.

### **Stopping Responding**

We may stop responding to the complainant when all of these factors are met:

- we believe we have taken all reasonable steps to help address their concerns
- we have provided a clear statement of our position and their options
- the complainant contacts us repeatedly, and we believe their intention is to cause disruption or inconvenience

Where we stop responding, we will inform the individual that we intend to do so. We will also explain that we will still consider any new complaints they make. In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from our school site.

### **Duplicate Complaints**

If we have resolved a complaint under this procedure and receive a duplicate complaint on the same subject from a partner, family member or other individual, we will assess whether there are aspects that we hadn't previously

considered, or any new information we need to take into account. If we are satisfied that there are no new aspects, we will:

- tell the new complainant that we have already investigated and responded to this issue, and the local process is complete
- direct them to the DfE if they are dissatisfied with our original handling of the complaint

If there are new aspects, we will follow this procedure again.

### **Complaint Campaigns**

Where the school receives a large volume of complaints about the same topic or subject, especially if these come from complainants unconnected with the school, the school may respond to these complaints by:

- publishing a single response on the school website
- sending a template response to all of the complainants

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

### **Learning Lessons**

The Governing Board will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the Headteacher/ Senior Leadership Team or relevant person where appropriate, and respecting confidentiality, to determine whether there are any improvements that the school can make to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

### **Record Keeping and Confidentiality**

The school will record the progress of all complaints, including information about actions taken at all stages, the stage at which the complaint was resolved, and the final outcome. The records will also include copies of letters and emails, and notes relating to meetings and phone calls.

## **7. Responsibilities**

### **The Local Governing Body is responsible for:**

- approving the school policy, procedures, and guidelines
- ensuring the **Review Panel** for Stage 3 complies with the appropriate processes
- monitoring the level and nature of complaints and review the outcomes annually or earlier if so determined by the Chair

### **The Chair of the Local Governing Body is responsible for:**

- receiving complaints at Stage 3 of the complaints procedure
- convening the **Review Panel** for Stage 3, or appointing another Governor to convene the Complaints Panel and ensuring this is done within the required timeframes
- checking that the correct procedure is followed

### **The Chair of the Complaints Panel at Stage 3 is responsible for ensuring that:**

- the parties understand the procedure
- the issues are addressed
- key findings of fact are established
- complainants are put at ease
- the hearing is conducted as informally as possible
- the panel is open-minded and acts independently
- no member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome, or has been involved in the issues previously
- all parties have the chance to be heard
- any written material is seen by all parties
- related Child Protection and Data Protection rules are observed and maintained

### **The Headteacher is responsible for:**

- the effective implementation of this policy and procedures
- maintaining an accurate and up-to-date list of all written complaints received, which school(s) they relate to, the date of receipt of the complaint, the current stage of the complaint and which stage of this procedure they were resolved in accordance with (and whether this was through the formal procedure or a panel hearing)

- where a complaint is escalated to them at Stage 2, identifying who will investigate the complaint
- advising Governors and Trustees about the composition of Panels for Stage 3
- ensuring that actions taken as a result of a complaint, including any lessons learned, are logged so that they can be monitored and implemented
- reporting to the Governors and/or Trustees about the number and nature of complaints, as well as actions taken in response and lessons learned
- ensuring that the policy and procedure is monitored and reviewed, with recommendations for revision to Governors and/or Trustees as appropriate

### **BWHS Paola Boyadjian Operations Manager & APS Marion Tam School Business Manager**

To retain, in a confidential manner except when requested by the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them, the material relating to complaints, including Complaint Forms, all written judgements from stages 1, 2 and 3 and the requests from the complainant to initiate stages 2 and 3, so they can be made available as appropriate.

#### **All staff are responsible for:**

- listening to any concerns brought to them by parents and students
- reassuring them that they will be dealt with as soon as possible by the appropriate member of staff
- for informing the relevant staff of the concerns being raised
- passing any complaints received from other people who are not parents or students to the Headteacher's PA/Office Manager

#### **Complaints about the school to the Department for Education (DfE)**

Individuals are able to complain to the ESFA, to make sure to make sure the school handles your complaint properly. The ESFA will only be able to consider your complaint if you can provide evidence that the school:

- does not have a complaints procedure
- did not provide a copy of its complaints procedure when requested
- does not have a procedure that complies with statutory regulations
- has not followed its published complaints procedure
- has not allowed its complaints procedure to be completed

The DfE complaints procedure can be accessed here: [Complain about a school to the Department for Education - GOV.UK](#)

#### **Review of Policy**

This policy shall be reviewed every year, sooner as necessary or appropriate.

# Appendix A- Diagram 1 How to Raise a Complaint

## Concern and Complaints Process

### Raise A Concern

1: Raise concern verbally or in writing with the appropriate staff member (e.g., class teacher, Head of Year, Phase Leader).

*Example Concerns: Teaching quality, misunderstanding school rules, or minor behavioural incidents.*

2: Staff member listens, investigates, and attempts resolution through:

- Discussion.
- Explanation or clarification.
- Possible minor adjustments

**Outcome:** If resolved → End process. If unresolved → Proceed to Formal Stage 1.

### Formal Stage 1 (Complaint Heard by Member of Staff)

1: Submit a formal written complaint using the first part of the Complaint Form. Form includes:

- Details of the complaint.
- Actions taken so far.
- Desired resolution.

2: A staff member (not previously involved) hears the complaint and investigates.

3: The school responds to the complainant in writing or through a meeting within 15 school days.

**Outcome** If resolved → End process. If unresolved → Proceed to Formal Stage 2.

### Formal Stage 2 (Complaint Heard by Senior Staff)

1: The Headteacher designates a senior staff to hear and investigate. Complainant completes second part of the Complaint Form

2: A senior staff member investigates the original complaint and reviews the handling of Stage 1.

The investigation may include:

- Meetings with the complainant.
- Reviewing written records.
- Consulting other staff members.

3: Provide a written outcome within 15 school days.

**Outcome:** If resolved → End process. If unresolved → Proceed to Formal Stage 3.

### **Formal Stage 3 (Review Panel Hearing)**

**1:** Submit a written request for a Review Panel within 10 school days of the Stage 2 outcome. Complainant completes third part of the Complaint Form

Request must include:

- Reasons for dissatisfaction.
- Specific issues to address and desired outcome.

**2:** Clerk acknowledges receipt and schedules a hearing within 15 school days.

Panel Composition: At least three members. One must be independent of school management.

**3:** Conduct the hearing:

The complainant presents their case

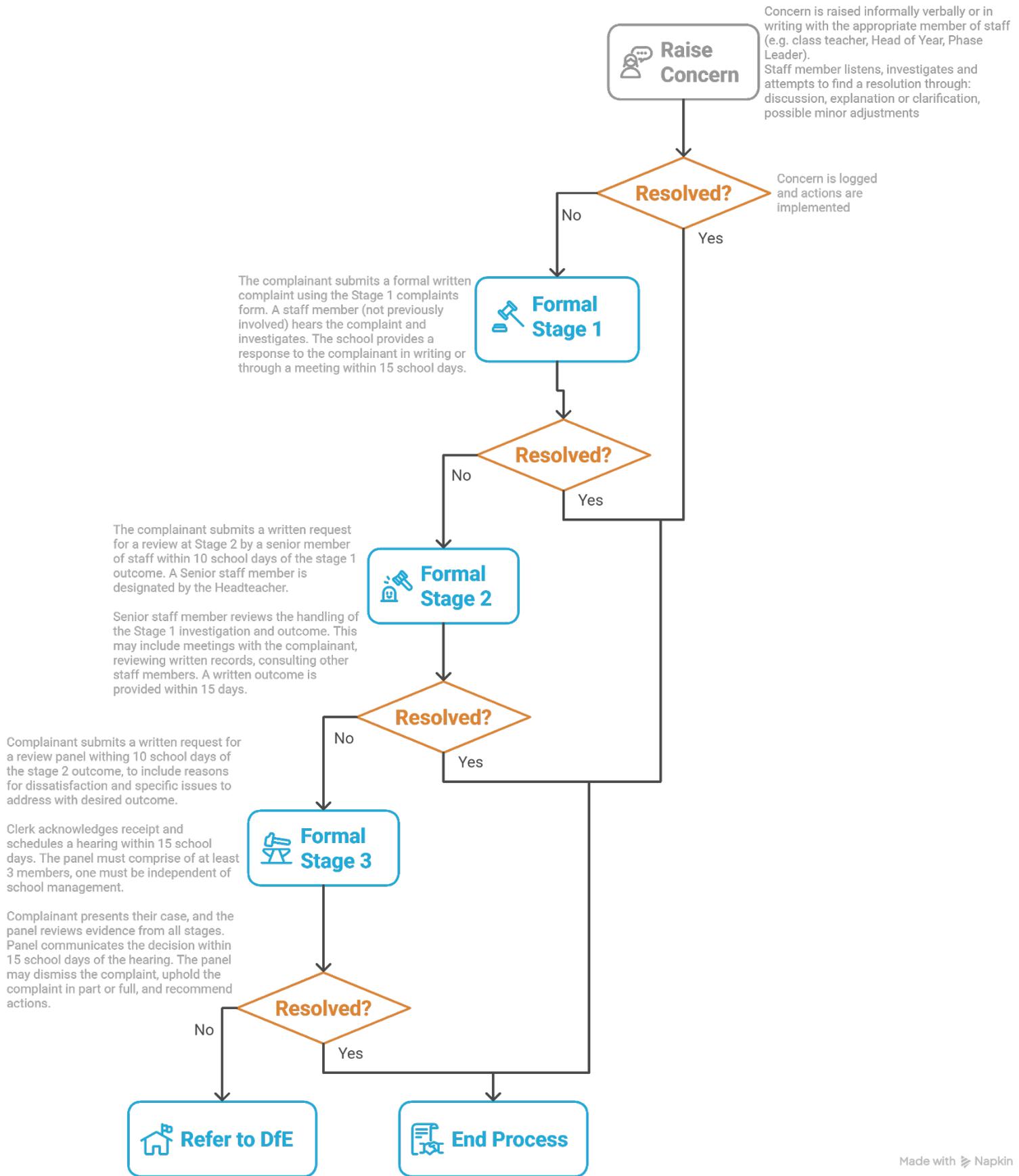
The panel reviews evidence from all stages.

Decision communicated within 15 school days of the hearing.

Outcome, Panel may:

- Dismiss the complaint.
- Uphold the complaint in part or full.
- Recommend actions for resolution.
- Unresolved? → Refer to the Department for Education (DfE)

## School Complaint Resolution Process



## Appendix C- Complaint Form

### Complaint Form – All stages

If you require help in completing the form, please contact at **BWHS Paola Boyadjian Operations Manager** and at **APS Marion Tam School Business Manager**

<b>Your Name:</b>	
<b>Student's Name:</b>	
<b>Your relationship to the student:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Email address:</b>	
<b>Daytime number:</b>	
<b>Evening number:</b>	
<b>Mobile number:</b>	
<b>Please give details of your complaint:</b>	
<b>What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve the complaint? Who did you speak to and what was the response?</b>	
<b>What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?</b>	
<b>Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details:</b>	
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

<i>School use only</i>	
Date acknowledgement sent:	
Who sent acknowledgement:	
Signature	

Please complete the following, acknowledge the stages of the complaints procedure that have been followed and make any comments as necessary	
Stage 1 (complaint heard by staff)	Date: Signature:
Action taken as a result of the complaint	
<b>Stage 2</b> <b>If Stage 1 response was not satisfactory, please state why?</b>	
<b>What further Actions will need to be agreed in order to resolve this complaint?</b>	

<i>School use only</i>	
Date acknowledgement sent:	
Who sent acknowledgement:	
Signature	



<b>Stage 2 (complaint heard by staff)</b>	<b>Date:</b> <b>Signature:</b>
<b>Action taken as a result of the complaint</b>	
<b>Stage 3</b> <b>If Stage 2 response was not satisfactory, please state why?</b>	

What further Actions will need to be agreed in order to resolve this complaint?

*School use only*

Date  
acknowledgement  
sent:

Who sent  
acknowledgement:

Signature

Stage 3 (complaint  
heard by review panel)

Date:  
Signature:

Action taken as a  
result of the complaint

Parentkind



Department  
for Education

Ofsted  
raising standards  
improving lives



IET  
IMPROVING  
EDUCATION  
TOGETHER

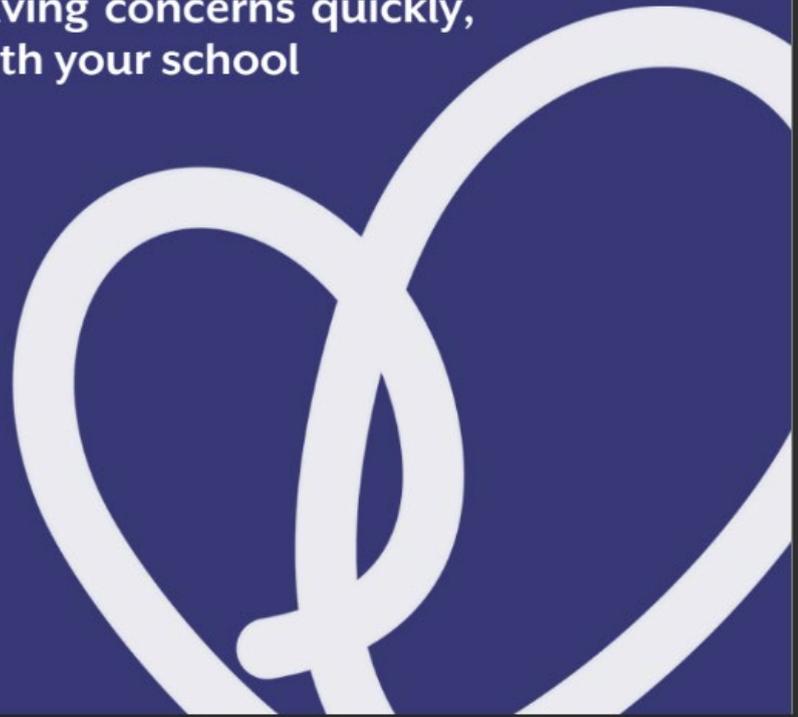


Parent-friendly  
schools

# 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.



# 1

## 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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Parent-friendly  
schools