Kidderminster Primary Schools' Alliance
KPSA

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Chaddesley Corbett Endowed Primary School, Comberton Primary School, Cookley Sebright Primary School, Offmore Primary School, St Catherine's CE Primary School

Complaints Policy

Adopted by Comberton Primary School

Comberton Primary School
A caring community for all to shine

This policy is reviewed at least annually by the governing body.

Last reviewed on Date: October 2026

Next Review Date: October 2027

Chair of Governors: Jude Bylett

Headteacher: Deena Frost

Agreed by FSB on 16.11.26

Complaints Policy

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Statement of intent

Comberton Primary School aims to resolve all complaints at the earliest possible stage, and where possible, informally, and is dedicated to continuing to provide the highest quality of education possible throughout the procedure.

This policy has been created to deal with any complaint against a member of staff or the school as a whole, relating to any aspects of the school or the provision of facilities or services. It is designed to ensure that the school's complaints procedure is straightforward, impartial, non-adversarial, allows a full and fair investigation, respects confidentiality and delivers an effective response and appropriate redress.

Any person, including a member of the public, is able to make a complaint about the provision of facilities or services that the school provides. This policy outlines the procedure that the complainant and school must follow. Once a complaint has been made, it can be resolved or withdrawn at any stage.

1. How to Raise a Concern or Complaint – Overview of procedure

Most concerns can be resolved quickly by speaking to the right member of staff. Our Complaints Procedure is outlined below.

Stage 1: Informal Concern

Speak to:

- Your child's class teacher, or
- A member of the office team
- Another member of staff where appropriate

We will listen to your concern and try to resolve it informally. If your concern remains unresolved, you may move to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Formal Written Complaint

Complete a Complaint Form and send it to:

- The Headteacher

If your complaint is about the Headteacher:

- Send the complaint to the Chair of Governors via the school office.

You will receive a written response following an investigation. If you remain dissatisfied, you may move to Stage 3.

Stage 3: Review by the Chair of Governors

Write to the Chair of Governors explaining:

- Why you remain dissatisfied, and
- Why you believe the Stage 2 decision should be reviewed.

If the complaint concerns the Headteacher, the Vice Chair will undertake this review.

You will receive a written response. If you remain dissatisfied, you may move to Stage 4.

Stage 4: Complaints Appeal Panel (CAP)

A panel of governors independent of the earlier stages will review:

- Whether the complaint was handled fairly.
- Whether the policy was followed correctly.
- Whether the outcome was reasonable.

The panel's decision is the final stage of the school's complaints procedure.

2. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Education Act 2002
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- Immigration Act 2016
- The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018

This policy has also due regard to guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE 'Best practice guidance for school complaints procedures 2020'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Data Protection Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

3. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy:

Concern
A concern is an expression of worry, dissatisfaction or doubt for which clarification, reassurance or action is sought. Concerns should normally be raised informally through Stage 1 of this procedure.

Complaint
A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the actions of the school, a member of staff, or a lack of action, where the complainant is seeking a formal response. Complaints will normally be considered through Stages 2 to 4 of this procedure.

Grievance
A grievance is a concern raised by a member of staff relating to their employment. Staff grievances are managed through the school's Grievance Policy and are not covered by this complaints procedure.

Unreasonable Complaints
The school is committed to dealing fairly and impartially with all complaints. In a small number of cases, a complainant's behaviour may become unreasonable. The school's approach to managing unreasonable complaints is set out in Section 10 of this policy.

Duplicate Complaints
A duplicate complaint is a complaint about the same issue that has already been considered through this procedure. The school will not normally reinvestigate the same complaint unless significant new evidence is provided.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The Complainant

The complainant should:

- Raise concerns or complaints as soon as possible.
- Explain clearly what has happened and what outcome they are seeking.
- Provide any relevant information requested during the investigation.
- Treat all staff and governors involved in the process with courtesy and respect.
- Respect the confidentiality of the process.

The Investigator (Stage 2)

At Stage 2, the Headteacher will normally investigate the complaint. Where the complaint concerns the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will undertake this role, or another impartial Governor.

The Investigator is responsible for establishing the facts, gathering relevant evidence, considering the complaint fairly and impartially, and providing a written response.

The Reviewer (Stage 3)

At Stage 3, the Chair of Governors will review the Stage 2 investigation and outcome. Where the complaint concerns the Headteacher, the Vice Chair of Governors will undertake this role, or another impartial Governor.

The Reviewer will consider whether the complaint was investigated appropriately, whether the evidence supports the conclusions reached, and whether the proposed outcome was reasonable.

Complaints Appeal Panel (Stage 4)

The Complaints Appeal Panel (CAP) is the final stage of the school's complaints procedure.

The panel's role is not to re-investigate the complaint but to review whether the complaint was handled fairly, reasonably and in accordance with the school's complaints procedure. The panel may uphold the complaint in whole or in part, not uphold the complaint, or make recommendations for future improvement.

Clerk to Governors

The Clerk supports the complaints process by arranging meetings, managing correspondence, distributing paperwork and keeping an official record of proceedings.

5. Making a complaint

Anyone may raise a concern or complaint about the provision of facilities or services provided by the school, including parents, carers, former parents and members of the public.

Concerns and complaints should normally be raised as soon as possible after the event giving rise to them. Complaints should usually be submitted within three months of the incident or, where there is a series of related incidents, within

three months of the most recent incident. The school may consider complaints submitted outside this timescale, but only where there are exceptional circumstances.

Concerns may be made in person, by telephone, in writing, by email or through a third party acting on behalf of the complainant. The school will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. Formal complaints must be made in writing, using the form provided.

The school is committed to considering all complaints fairly and will make reasonable adjustments where required to enable complainants to access and participate in the complaints process. This may include providing information in alternative formats, assistance in completing forms or meetings in accessible locations.

The school encourages complainants to follow the stages set out in this policy. Most concerns can be resolved informally at Stage 1 without the need to enter the formal complaints procedure. Complaints that remain unresolved may be progressed through Stages 2 to 4

If your complaint is about...	Contact
Classroom issue or day-to-day concern	Class Teacher (directly or via the school office)
General school matter	School Office
An unresolved concern at Stage 1	Head teacher
Headteacher	Chair of Governors via the Clerk
Governor	Clerk to Governors
Governing Board	Clerk to Governors

6. Complaints procedure

Stage one: Informal concern made to a member of staff

Most concerns can be resolved quickly and informally.

In the first instance, concerns should normally be raised with the member of staff most closely involved, usually the class teacher. Concerns may also be raised with a member of the office team, who will direct the matter to the most appropriate person. Concerns can be raised in person, by telephone or by email/letter. Please do not include sensitive personal information or name other children in general messages.

Where appropriate, concerns may be raised with the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher. However, concerns will normally be addressed by the member of staff best placed to consider the matter and may be delegated accordingly.

The school will listen to the concern, seek any necessary information and work with those involved to try to reach a resolution. The school aims to resolve concerns within 15 school days.

Parents should not approach individual governors about concerns or complaints. Governors do not have authority to act on individual matters and may need to remain impartial should a complaint progress to a later stage of the procedure.

If the concern remains unresolved, or the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may progress the matter to Stage 2.

Stage two: Written complaint made to the headteacher

If a concern cannot be resolved at Stage 1, a formal complaint **must be submitted in writing** using the school's Complaint Form. The Complaint Form helps to ensure that the school clearly understands the issues being raised, any steps already taken to resolve them, and the outcome being sought.

The Headteacher will normally investigate the issues identified within the complaint form. If the complaint is about the Headteacher, it should be emailed to the Clerk to Governors, who will forward it to the Chair of Governors. The complaint must include the resolution sought (see Complaint Form format in this policy for guidance) If the complaint concerns a governor, an appropriately skilled governor will be appointed to undertake the investigation. Complaints about the Chair, Vice Chair or the Governing Board as a whole may be referred to an independent investigator.

The complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 5 school days. The investigator may seek further information, request a meeting with the complainant, and gather any relevant evidence before reaching a decision.

The school aims to complete Stage 2 within 15 school days of receiving the Complaint Form. Where this is not possible due to the complexity or nature of the complaint, the complainant will be informed of the reason for the delay and given a revised timescale.

Once the investigation is complete, the complainant will receive a written response. The response will explain whether the complaint is:

- **Upheld** – the complaint is supported by the evidence.
- **Partially upheld** – some aspects of the complaint are supported by the evidence, but not all.
- **Not upheld** – the complaint is not supported by the evidence.

Where appropriate, the investigator may offer an apology, identify actions to address the complaint, improve practice to reduce the likelihood of similar issues arising in the future.

The response will also explain how the complaint may be escalated to Stage 3 if the complainant remains dissatisfied.

Stage three: Review by the Chair of Governors (or another impartial Governor)

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following the Stage 2 outcome, they may request a review by writing to the Chair of Governors. The request should explain why they remain dissatisfied with the outcome or handling of the complaint.

The Chair of Governors will review the Stage 2 investigation, the evidence considered and the outcome reached. The review will consider whether the complaint was handled fairly, reasonably and in accordance with this policy. New evidence will not normally be considered at this stage. Where the Chair of Governors has already been involved in the complaint, the review will be undertaken by the Vice Chair.

The complainant will receive a written outcome within 20 school days of the request being received. The outcome will explain the reasons for the decision and provide details of how to escalate the complaint to Stage 4 if the complainant remains dissatisfied.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following the Stage 3 review, they may request consideration by the Complaints Appeal Panel (Stage 4).

Stage four: Complaints appeal panel (CAP) meeting

Stage 4 is the final stage of the school's complaints procedure. If the complainant remains dissatisfied following the Stage 3 review, they may request consideration by the Complaints Appeal Panel (CAP) by writing to the Clerk to the governing board.

The clerk will acknowledge the request within 5 school days and arrange for the complaint to be considered within 20 school days where reasonably practicable. The CAP will normally consist of three governors who have had no prior involvement in the complaint. Where this is not possible, an independent panel will be arranged.

The panel's role is to review whether the complaint was handled fairly, reasonably and in accordance with this policy, rather than to reinvestigate the complaint from the beginning.

The panel will decide whether the complaint will be considered through written representations or at a panel meeting. In making this decision, the panel will take account of the circumstances of the complaint and the needs of those involved.

Where a meeting is held, the complainant may be accompanied by a supporter. Relevant paperwork must be submitted in advance and will be shared with all parties before the meeting. Legal representation will not normally be permitted.

Within 10 school days of reaching its decision, the panel will provide the complainant with a written outcome explaining its findings, any recommendations and any further options available. The decision of the CAP concludes the school's complaints procedure.

7. After the School's Complaints Procedure Has Concluded

The Complaints Appeal Panel (Stage 4) is the final stage of the school's complaints procedure.

If a complainant remains dissatisfied after completing all stages of the procedure, they may refer the matter to the Secretary of State for Education. The Secretary of State will not normally re-investigate the complaint or overturn the school's decision simply because the complainant disagrees with the outcome.

The Secretary of State may consider whether the school has acted lawfully and reasonably, and whether the school's complaints procedure has been followed correctly.

Complaints can be submitted using the Department for Education's online complaints form or in writing to:

Ministerial and Public Communications Division
Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Exceptional circumstances where the school's complaints procedure may not apply are set out in Section 11 of this policy

8. Interviewing witnesses

Where necessary, the investigator may speak to pupils, staff or other witnesses to establish the facts of a complaint. Interviews with pupils will be conducted sensitively and with appropriate safeguards in place. The school will ensure that any interviews do not prejudice ongoing police, safeguarding or LADO investigations. Staff may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative where appropriate. All interviews will be conducted fairly and impartially.

9. Record keeping

The school will keep a written record of all formal complaints, including the issues raised, the outcome of the investigation and any actions taken. Records will be held securely and confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Complaint records will only be shared with those who need access to them as part of the complaints process, or where disclosure is required by law.

10. Matters Outside This Procedure

Complaints not covered by this procedure

Some matters are covered by separate statutory procedures and will not be considered under this complaints policy. These include:

- Admissions.
- Statutory SEND assessments.
- School reorganisation proposals.
- Pupil exclusions.
- Child protection and safeguarding matters.
- Staff grievances.

- Whistleblowing concerns.
- Complaints about third-party providers using school premises.

These matters will be dealt with under the relevant legislation, guidance or school policy. Further information is available from the school office on request.

Complaints relating to how the school delivers the curriculum, including RE and RSHE, may be considered under this procedure. Complaints about the content of the National Curriculum should be directed to the Department for Education

Complaints about staff conduct

Complaints about staff conduct are usually managed through the school's disciplinary procedures. Complainants **will not** be informed of any disciplinary action taken against an individual member of staff but will be informed that the matter has been addressed.

Exceptional circumstances

Normally, complainants are expected to complete the school's complaints procedure before referring a matter to the Department for Education. However, the school may suspend or defer consideration of a complaint where the matter is subject to an ongoing safeguarding, social care, police or other external investigation, or where legal proceedings have commenced.

11. Managing serial and unreasonable complaints

The school is committed to considering all complaints fairly, impartially and in accordance with this policy. Most complaints are raised reasonably and are resolved through constructive communication. The school will not normally limit contact with complainants; however, staff are entitled to work in an environment free from abuse, intimidation and unreasonable demands.

To help complaints be resolved promptly, complainants are encouraged to keep correspondence clear, concise and focused on the key issues they wish the school to investigate. Lengthy, repetitive or unfocused submissions may make it more difficult to identify the matters requiring investigation and may delay the outcome of the complaint.

A complaint or the complainant's behaviour may be considered unreasonable where a person:

- refuses to clearly identify the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to engage with the complaints process whilst expecting the matter to be resolved;
- repeatedly raises issues that fall outside the scope of this procedure;
- seeks to change or expand the complaint significantly as the investigation progresses;
- submits excessive, repetitive or irrelevant information and expects all information to be individually addressed;
- repeatedly raises the same complaint after the school's procedure has been completed;
- seeks outcomes which are unrealistic or beyond the school's authority;
- makes excessive demands on staff time through frequent correspondence, telephone calls or meetings;
- uses abusive, offensive, threatening or discriminatory language;

- makes unfounded allegations about staff involved in handling the complaint;
- knowingly provides false or misleading information;
- publishes inaccurate, confidential or inflammatory information about the complaint on social media or other public forums.

Where concerns arise about a complainant's behaviour, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will, where appropriate, explain those concerns and seek to resolve the matter informally before any restrictions are applied.

In exceptional circumstances, where a complainant's behaviour places a disproportionate burden on the school or its staff, the school may:

- require communication through a single point of contact;
- limit the frequency or method of communication;
- decline to respond to issues that have already been fully investigated and answered;
- implement a communication plan for a specified period.

A complaint will not be considered unreasonable simply because a complainant asks complex questions.

The school will cease responding where:

- every reasonable step has been taken to address the complaint;
- the complainant has been provided with a clear outcome and explanation;
- the school's complaints procedure has been exhausted; and
- further contact consists substantially of the same issues without significant new information.

Any decision to restrict contact or cease responding will be confirmed in writing and reviewed periodically.

Where behaviour is abusive, threatening or aggressive, the school may take further action to protect staff and pupils. This may include reporting incidents to the police, restricting access to the school site or implementing a formal barring order.

12. Complaints campaigns

A complaints campaign occurs when the school receives a large number of complaints relating to the same issue.

Where complaints are received from individuals who are not directly connected to the school, the school may publish a single response on its website rather than respond individually.

Where complaints are received from individuals connected to the school, such as parents or carers, the school will decide whether individual or collective responses are most appropriate, taking into account the nature of the complaint and the volume of correspondence received.

13. Barring from the premises

School premises are private property and the Headteacher or Chair of Governors may take reasonable steps to protect pupils, staff and visitors, including restricting access to the site.

Where an individual's behaviour gives cause for concern, they may be asked to leave the premises and may have their permission to enter the site withdrawn either temporarily or permanently.

Any decision to bar an individual will be confirmed in writing, including the reasons for the decision and details of any review arrangements. The individual will be given an opportunity to make representations before a longer-term decision is confirmed, where circumstances permit.

14. Availability

This policy will be published on the school's website. A printed copy can be made available on request.

15. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required by changes in legislation, statutory guidance or operational need.

Information arising from complaints will be considered by leaders and governors to identify trends, improve practice and inform future policy development.

Appendix 1: Written Complaint Form (1)

Please complete and return this form to Mrs D Frost Headteacher.

If your complaint is about the headteacher please complete and return this form for the attention of Mrs J Bylett, Chair of Governors.

Place this form in an envelope and mark as Private and Confidential for the attention of the relevant person and hand in at the school office.

OR The headteacher will receive your complaint by completing this form electronically.

Your name:	
Pupil's name (if relevant):	
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):	
Address and postcode:	
Day time telephone number:	
Email address:	
Please give details of your complaint, including who you have spoken to at the school about it.	
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?	
Are you including any additional evidence? If so, please give details.	
Signature: Date:	

Official use

Date received:

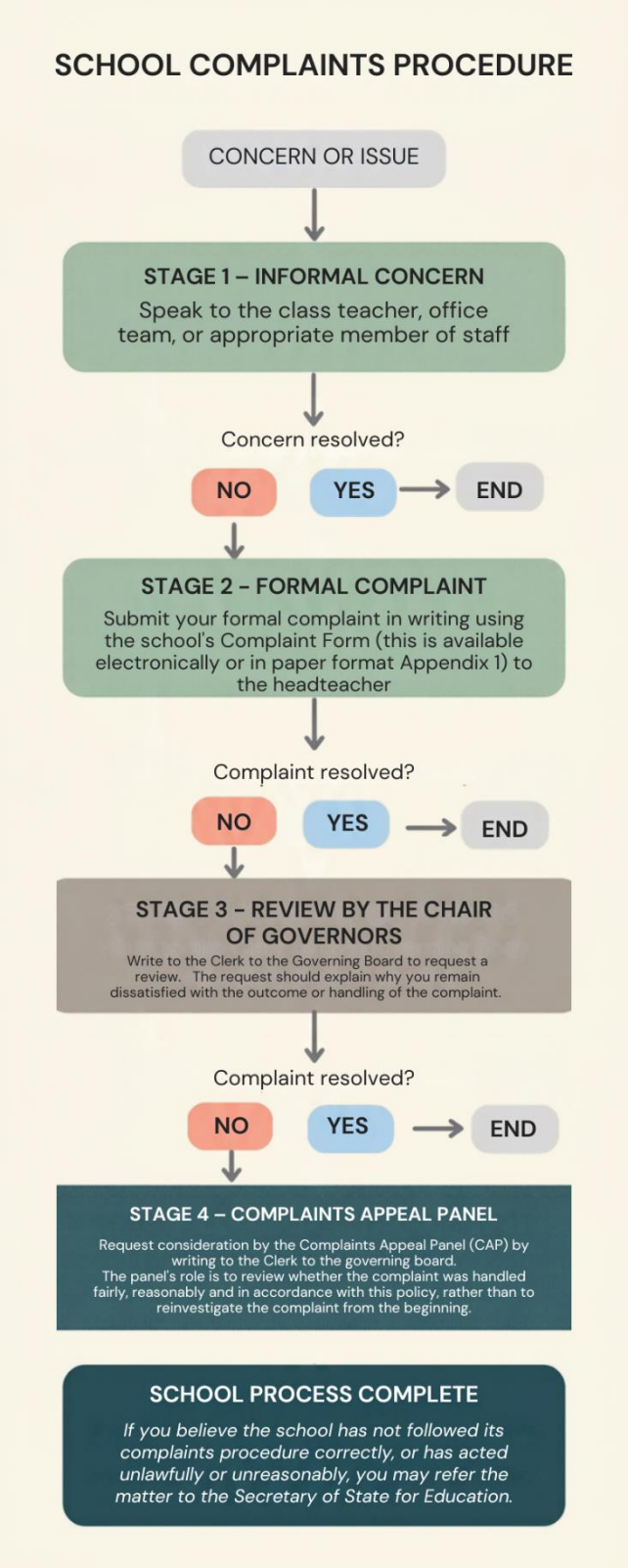
Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to (investigator):

Date response required by:

Appendix 2: Complaint Flow Chart



Appendix 3: Complaints Appeal Panel (CAP)

Purpose of the Panel

The panel's role is to review whether the complaint was handled fairly, reasonably and in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy. The panel is not normally expected to reinvestigate the complaint from the beginning.

Panel Membership

The panel will normally consist of three governors who have had no prior involvement in the complaint.

Where necessary, suitably skilled governors from other KPSA schools may be appointed to the panel in order to ensure independence and impartiality. Where it is not possible to convene an impartial panel from within the KPSA partnership, the school may seek alternative independent governors.

Timescales

The school aims to convene a Complaints Appeal Panel within 20 school days of receiving a valid Stage 4 request.

However, complainants should be aware that the availability of governors can occasionally affect timescales. This is particularly the case where independent governors are required to ensure impartiality. Where a delay is unavoidable, the complainant will be informed and provided with a revised timescale.

What the Panel Paperwork Should Include

1. Core Documents

- The school's Complaints Policy (the version in force at the time of the complaint).
- The original written Complaint Form.
- Any additional documentation submitted as part of the Stage 2 complaint.
- The Stage 2 investigation outcome.
- The Stage 3 review outcome.
- Notes or outcome letters from earlier stages, including Stage 1 where relevant.
- The complainant's request for Stage 4 consideration, including:
    - the aspects of the complaint they believe remain unresolved;
    - the reasons they believe the complaint should be reviewed.
- A chronology or summary document showing:
    - key dates;
    - key actions taken;
    - how the complaint progressed through each stage of the procedure.

2. Evidence Relied Upon by the School

The panel should only consider evidence that:

- was relied upon during the original investigation or review; and/or
- is directly relevant to the issues identified in the Complaint Form.

Examples include:

- relevant school policies;
- correspondence relied upon during the investigation;
- investigation notes;
- records of meetings;
- anonymised witness information where appropriate.

3. Procedural Information

- Panel membership, including confirmation that members have had no prior involvement in the complaint.
- Details of whether the complaint will be considered through written representations or a panel meeting.
- The order of proceedings (where a meeting is held).
- The possible outcomes available to the panel.

What the Panel Should Not Consider

New Complaints

The panel should not consider new complaints that were not raised during Stage 2.

Where a complainant raises a new issue, the panel may advise that it is submitted separately through Stage 1 of the school's Complaints Procedure.

New Evidence Not Previously Shared

The panel should not normally consider:

- new witness statements;
- new allegations;
- new documents created after earlier stages to support an existing position;
- evidence that could reasonably have been submitted at Stage 2 or Stage 3;
- material that is not directly relevant to the complaint.

Purpose of the Review

The panel is not a fresh investigation.

Its role is to determine whether:

- the complaint was investigated appropriately;
- the process was followed correctly;
- the conclusions reached were reasonable based on the evidence available at the time; and
- any actions taken or proposed were proportionate and appropriate.

The CAP may:

- uphold the complaint in full;
- uphold the complaint in part;
- not uphold the complaint; and/or
- make recommendations to improve policy, procedure or practice.

Appendix 4: Guidance on Making an Effective Complaint

The school is committed to considering all complaints fairly, thoroughly and impartially. Following the guidance below will help us understand your concerns and investigate them as quickly as possible.

Before Making a Formal Complaint

Most concerns can be resolved informally through discussion with the member of staff most closely involved. Complainants are encouraged to follow each stage of the school's complaints procedure before escalating a concern further.

Writing Your Complaint

When making a formal complaint, please:

- Clearly explain what happened.
- Include relevant dates, times and factual information.
- Explain any steps already taken to resolve the matter.
- State the outcome you are seeking.
- Include only information that is relevant to the complaint.
- Submit any evidence that supports the matters being raised.

The Stage 2 investigation will normally be limited to the issues identified within the Complaint Form.

- Keeping Complaints Clear and Concise

Complaints are usually resolved more effectively when they are concise, focused and evidence-based.

Lengthy submissions, repeated information, excessive supporting documentation or material that is not directly relevant to the complaint may make it more difficult to identify the matters requiring investigation and may delay the outcome.

Where possible, complainants should focus on the key issues they wish the school to consider rather than providing a detailed account of every interaction or event.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Some complainants may choose to use AI or other writing tools to assist in drafting correspondence.

If AI is used, complainants should ensure that:

- the complaint accurately reflects their concerns;
- any factual information is correct;
- references to legislation, policy or guidance have been verified; and
- the complaint remains concise and focused on the issues requiring investigation.

The school will consider the substance of the complaint rather than how it was produced.

During the Investigation

Once a complaint has been submitted, complainants are asked to allow the investigation to proceed and avoid sending repeated correspondence about the same issues while enquiries are ongoing.

Where further information is required, the investigator will contact the complainant directly.

Respectful Communication

The school expects all communication to remain courteous and respectful throughout the complaints process.

Abusive, threatening, discriminatory or intimidating behaviour towards staff, governors or other members of the school community will not be tolerated and may result in restrictions being placed on communication in accordance with this policy.

The School's Commitment

The school will:

- treat all complaints seriously;
- consider complaints fairly and objectively;
- keep appropriate records;
- communicate outcomes clearly; and
- seek to resolve concerns at the earliest appropriate stage.

The purpose of the complaints procedure is to establish the facts, consider whether the school has acted appropriately, and identify any actions or improvements that may be required.

Parentkind have produced a ‘Parent Guide to school complaints’ that can be found by clicking on this link V8- Parent Complaint Guide