



Complaints Policy 2025–2026

This is a whole School policy applying to all members including EYFS

Policy Authors	Kylie McGregor
Date Reviewed by Authors	September 2025
Next Review Date	September 2026
Approved by:	Mrs Anne Fletcher

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Introduction

This policy outlines the procedures for handling complaints at the school and complies with Part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014. It applies to all complaints, including those related to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

The school maintains a written record of all complaints—whether resolved informally, formally, or through a panel hearing—and the actions taken as a result, regardless of whether the complaint is upheld.

This policy is:

- Published on the school website without login or password barriers.
- Available to current and prospective parents upon request.
- Reviewed annually by the Governing Body.
- Inclusive in language: titles such as Chair, Vice Chair, Head of School, and Bursar are used in a non-gender-specific manner.

2. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by a parent or guardian regarding:

- The school as a whole.
- A specific department or member of staff.
- A perceived failure to act or unfair treatment.

All complaints are treated seriously and confidentially. Pupils will not be penalised for complaints raised in good faith, regardless of the outcome.

This policy does not cover exclusions, staff grievances, or disciplinary procedures, which are addressed under separate policies.

3. Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

Most complaints are resolved quickly and informally.

- Parents should initially contact their child's class teacher.
- If unresolved, the teacher may refer the matter to the Head of School.
- A written record of all concerns and complaints is maintained, including the date received and resolution status.
- If unresolved within seven working days (term time), parents will be advised to proceed to Stage 2.

- Complaints against the Head of School should be directed to the Chair of Governors.

4. Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- Complaints should be submitted in writing to the Head of School.
- The Head will acknowledge receipt and determine the appropriate course of action.
- A meeting or phone call will usually occur within seven working days (term time).
- Further investigation may be required.
- Written records of all meetings and communications will be kept.
- A written decision with reasons will be provided once all facts are established.
- If the complaint concerns the Head of School, the Chair of Governors will lead the investigation and respond in writing.
- If parents are dissatisfied, they must notify the school in writing within 28 days of receiving the Stage 2 outcome if they wish to proceed to Stage 3. If no such request is received, the matter will be considered closed.

5. Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- Parents wishing to escalate to Stage 3 must contact the Clerk to the Governors (Bursar) within 28 days of the Stage 2 outcome.
- A Complaints Panel will be convened within 10 working days.
- The Panel will consist of three members not previously involved in the matter, including one independent member with no connection to the school's governance, staff, or proprietorial body.
- Parents will be offered the opportunity to attend the hearing and may be accompanied by one other person. Legal representation is permitted with advance notice.
- The Panel may resolve the complaint or recommend further investigation.
- A written decision and reasons will be provided within five working days of the hearing. If further investigation is needed, a revised timeframe (not exceeding 15 working days) will be communicated.
- A copy of the findings and recommendations will be provided to the complainant, the person complained about (if applicable), and made available for inspection by ISI, the Head, Chair of Governors, the proprietor or the Secretary of State under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

- The Panel's decision marks the conclusion of the school's internal complaints procedure.

6. Timeframes

- Complaints are acknowledged within five working days during term time, and ten working days during holidays.
- Stages 1 and 2 are typically completed within 20 working days during term time.
- Stage 3 is completed within a further 20 working days.
- The full process should ideally conclude within 40 working days during term time.
- 'Working days' refers to Monday–Friday during term time.

7. Record Keeping

The school maintains a comprehensive written record of all complaints, including:

- Date of issue
- Name of parent and pupil
- Description of the issue
- Stage of resolution
- Outcome (upheld or not)
- Investigation notes
- Witness statements
- Staff involved
- Correspondence (emails, phone records)

Records remain confidential except where disclosure is required by law or inspection bodies. ISI may request a summary of complaints and actions taken during any specified period.

- EYFS complaints are retained for at least three years.
- Non-EYFS complaints are retained for a minimum of six years.

8. EYFS Complaints

- EYFS-related complaints are investigated and outcomes shared within 28 days.
- Records are retained for at least three years and made available to Ofsted and ISI upon request.

- Parents may contact ISI directly if they believe EYFS requirements are not being met:
 - ISI: 020 7600 0100
 - Email: concerns@isi.net

9. External Escalation

If parents remain dissatisfied after Stage 3, they may contact:

- Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)
- Department for Education (DfE)

ISI does not investigate individual complaints but may consider them in the context of regulatory compliance. Complaints may inform inspection judgments.

10. Annual Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Governing Body to ensure continued compliance and effectiveness.

11. Complaint Statistics

- Stage 2 Complaints (2024–2025): One complaint registered under the formal procedure.

12. Data Protection

The school complies fully with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). All complaint records are handled in accordance with these regulations.