

Crown Meadow First School and Nursery



Complaints Policy

September 2025

This policy is reviewed at least annually by the governing body and SLT and was

Last reviewed on Date: September 2025

Next Review Date: September 2027

Print Name: Tess Davis

Signature(*Chair of Governors*)

Print Name: Hilary Allan

Signature: (*Head Teacher*)

Aims

Our school's values are Empathy, Diversity, Curiosity, Independence and Resilience. We use this to spell out PRIDE, meaning that we try to do our best and try make things better, every day. Below we summarise how our values relate to the complaints procedure.

- **Empathy:** we will ensure that all members of the school community - child/children, parents, carers, and staff, feel heard, understood, and valued when raising a concern, thereby providing a complaints process that is approachable, compassionate and free from fear of blame or retaliation.
- **Diversity:** we will handle complaints fairly and equitably, with a clear commitment to challenging prejudice, promoting equality, and protecting against discrimination. We will recognise complaints as opportunities to listen deeply, reflect on school practices and grow in understanding of the diverse needs and experiences of child/children, families and staff.
- **Curiosity:** we will treat complaints as valuable feedback that can spark innovation, reflection and new ways of thinking about policies, practices, and relationships.
- **Independence:** we will offer a transparent and structured complaints procedure that allows issues to be reviewed fairly and independently at each stage. This will demonstrate the school's independence in evaluating complaints by being open to challenge, reviewing outcomes objectively and being willing to make changes when needed.
- **Resilience:** we will help child/children, parents, carers, and staff navigate the complaints process with encouragement and care, building confidence and emotional resilience. We will use feedback and complaints to drive ongoing improvement, showing the school's ability to adapt, recover and grow stronger from criticism.

Crown Meadow will promote respectful communications and relationships at all times and with all stakeholders and we expect this to be reciprocated. Crown Meadow will not tolerate any form of communication, which it regards to be abusive, with its staff and will act to ensure that communications with the school are appropriate and respectful, including where necessary involving the governing board and wider services as necessary.

Our school aims to meet its statutory obligations when responding to complaints from parents of children 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
- Ensure 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 will 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 of this policy 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.

Policy and Procedure for responding to complaints

Since 1 September 2003 Governing Bodies (GBs) of all maintained schools and maintained nursery schools in England were required, under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides.

This policy is also based on guidance for schools on complaints procedures from the Department for Education (DfE), including the model procedure.

In addition, it addresses duties set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework with regards to dealing with complaints about the school's fulfilment of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements. See Appendix D

The law also requires the procedure to be publicised.

The school publishes details of its Complaints Procedure in the following ways:

The school website

On request via the office email address

A paper copy can be provided on request.

Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at Crown Meadow First School and Nursery. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Crown Meadow 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.

What is the difference between a concern and a complaint?

For the purpose of this policy, we adopt the DfE explanation of the difference between a concern and a complaint:

A **concern** is defined as "an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought"

A **complaint** is defined as "an expression or statement 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. Crown Meadow takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. It may be the case that the provision or clarification of information will resolve the issue.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the Headteacher will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the Headteacher 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, Crown Meadow 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 of a complainant, as long as they demonstrate in writing 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 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 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

The complainant must raise the complaint within 3 months of the incident. If the complaint is about a series of related incidents, they must raise the complaint within 3 months of the last incident.

We will consider exceptions to this timeframe in circumstances where there were valid reasons for not making a complaint at that time and the complaint can still be investigated in a fair manner for all involved.

Timeframes will work on the principle of school working days, for the reason that staff and children may not always be available for interview and investigation during weekends and holidays and the investigation is likely to be carried out by employees within their directed and paid working time.

When complaints are made out of term time, we will consider them to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period. Where complaint procedures timelines stretch over holidays, we will apply the principle of "school working days" and, unless directed otherwise by the Local Authority, will not include weekends and school holidays in timeframes.

If at any point we cannot meet the timescales we have set out in this policy, we will:

- Set new time limits with the complainant
- Send the complainant details of the new deadline and explain the delay.

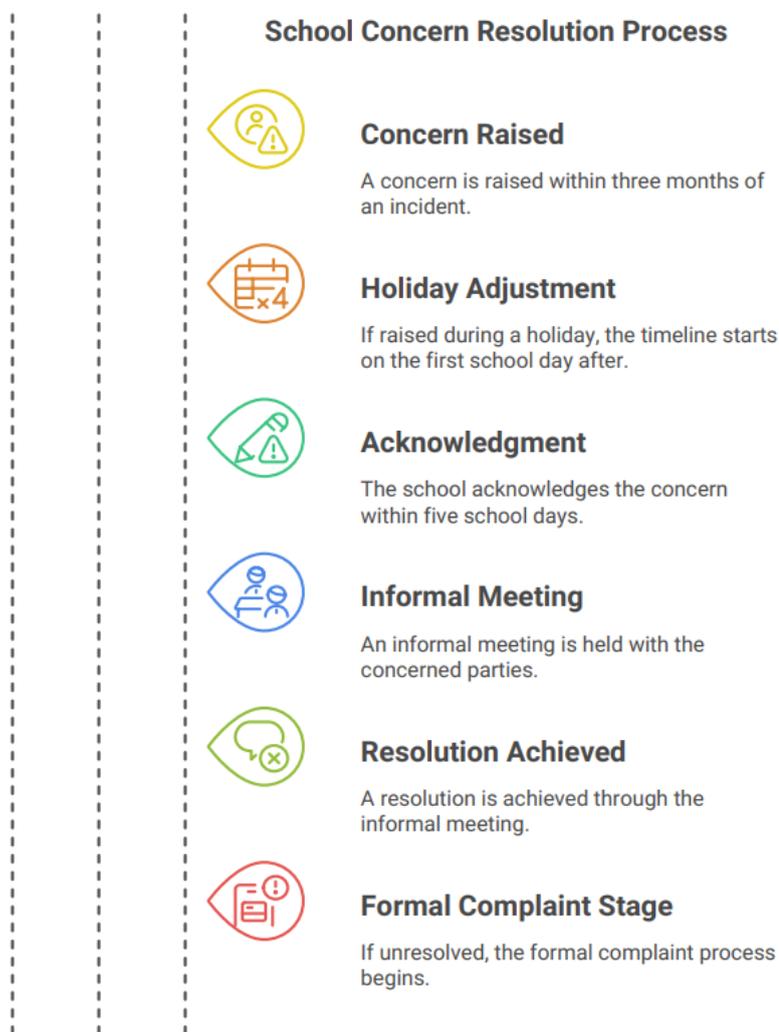
Concerns

Concerns should be raised with either the Class Teacher or Headteacher. The concern should be addressed to the relevant member of school staff or the Headteacher, either in person or by letter, telephone or email. If the person raising the concern is unclear who to contact or how to contact them, they should contact the school office. In most cases, a concern can be resolved through informal means. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

A complaint will follow formal procedures: we try to resolve concerns by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, then formal complaints procedures will be followed.

The school will acknowledge concerns within 5 school days, which will confirm how the school intends to proceed, including an indication of the anticipated timescale.

The informal stage may involve a meeting between the person raising a concern and a member of the Senior Leadership Team, which may include the Headteacher. A written response will be provided by the school within 5 school days following the informal meeting. If the concern is not resolved informally, the next step is to make a formal complaint, which would need to be submitted in writing using Appendix A.



Our School Complaints Procedure

All complaints must be in writing, either electronically via our Complaints Form (available via our school office) or on paper using Appendix A.

Our school will take complaints seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter quickly. It may be the case that the provision or clarification of information will resolve the issue.

In most cases, a complaint can be discussed with the complainant and may be deemed to be a 'concern' or can often be resolved immediately. A complaint will follow formal procedures.

Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This policy covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Crown Meadow 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"> • Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs • School re-organisation proposals 	<p>Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/schools-education-and-learning</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation 	<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 (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). https://www.safeguardingworcestershires.org.uk/home/wscp/professionals/allegations-lado https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/childrens-social-care/refer-childrens-social-care</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion of children from school* 	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions.</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"> • Whistleblowing 	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. Please refer to our Safeguarding Policies.</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: www.education.gov.uk/contactus.</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"> • Staff grievances 	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff conduct 	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's Safeguarding and Disciplinary Procedures, if appropriate.</p> <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.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school 	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct, or contact our school office if you are unsure who provides the service. We are here to help and guide you.</p>

premises or facilities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Curriculum - content 	Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

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 Crown Meadow 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.

Complaints about services provided by other providers who use school premises or facilities should be directed to the provider concerned.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Crown Meadow 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.

Principles for Investigation.

When investigating a complaint, we will try to clarify:

- What has happened
- Who was involved
- What the complainant feels would put things right

Stages of complaint (not including those complaints against the Headteacher or Governors)

We have adopted a 2-stage process for dealing with complaints:

- Stage 1 – formal investigation
- Stage 2 – review panel

Stage 1 – formal investigation

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 complainant should provide details such as relevant dates, times and the names of witnesses of events, alongside copies of any relevant documents, and what they feel would resolve the complaint.

If complainants need assistance raising a formal complaint, they can contact the school office.

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. Where possible, the Headteacher (or designated member of the senior leadership team) will call a meeting to clarify the complaint and seek a resolution.

The complainant may be accompanied to this meeting and should inform the school of the identity of their companion in advance. In certain circumstances, the school may need to refuse a request for a particular individual to attend any such meeting – for example, if there is a conflict of interest. If this is the case, the school will notify the complainant as soon as they are aware, so that the complainant has the opportunity to arrange alternative accompaniment.

The Headteacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but not the decision to be taken. The Headteacher (or other person appointed by the Headteacher for this purpose) will then conduct their own investigation.

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 10 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 that Crown Meadow 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. Our aim is to resolve complaints as efficiently as possible, for the greater good.

Stage 2 – review panel

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, 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 to the Governing Board, via the school office, or email clerk@crowmeadow.worcs.sch.uk 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 need the details of the complaint as set out above in Stage 1, as well as details from the complainant on how they feel the previous stage of the procedure has not addressed their complaint sufficiently and what they feel would resolve the complaint.

The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting and will give the complainant reasonable notice of the date of the complaints panel. They will aim to convene a meeting within 10 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 direct 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 Crown Meadow 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. We will make sure the governors we source are suitably skilled and can demonstrate that they are independent and impartial. 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.

Please 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 safeguarding and/or staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes of a complaint against a staff member will not be shared with the complainant.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

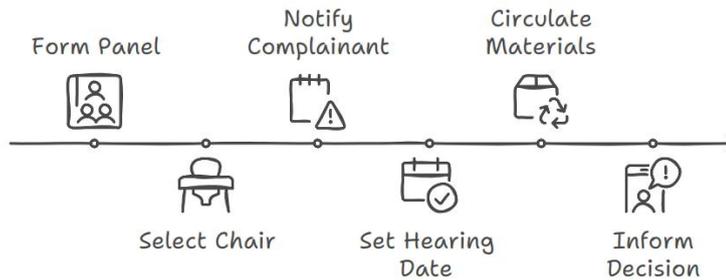
At least 5 school days before the meeting, the Clerk will:

- 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 5 school days before the date of the meeting.
- The complaints committee will not accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.
- The committee will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider additional evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. Further new complaints would need to be dealt with separately from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The complaints committee will have access to the existing record of the complaints progress to date.

The board will ensure that the hearing is attended by the Clerk to Governors to minute the meeting.

Review Panel Process



At the meeting

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless required as part of reasonable adjustments. 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.

At the review panel meeting, the complainant and representatives from the school, as appropriate, will be present. Each will have an opportunity to set out written or oral submissions prior to the meeting.

At the meeting, everyone will have the opportunity to give statements and present their evidence and witnesses will be called as appropriate to present their evidence.

The panel, the complainant and the school representative will be given the chance both to ask and reply to questions. Once the complainant and school representatives have completed presenting their cases, they will be asked to leave, and evidence will then be considered by the complaints committee.

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 the Headteacher with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 10 school days.

Complaints against the Headteacher, a governor or the Governing Board as a whole.

Complaints that involve or are about the Headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors, via the school office, or email clerk@crowmeadow.worcs.sch.uk and marked as Private and Confidential, who will undertake Stage 1 of the complaints process.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole Governing Board should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Board via the school office, or email clerk@crowmeadow.worcs.sch.uk marked as Private and Confidential.

If the complaint is about a member of the Governing Board (including the chair or vice-chair), a suitably skilled and impartial governor will carry out the steps at stage 1.

If the complaint is about the governing body as a whole, then an independent investigator will carry out the steps in stage 1. They will be appointed by the Governing Board or local authority and will write a formal response at the end of their investigation.

If the complainant remains unhappy with the response from Stage 1 and wishes to proceed to the next stage of the procedure, they should inform the clerk to the Governing Board in writing within 10 school days of receiving the outcome of Stage 1. Requests received outside of this timeframe will be considered in exceptional circumstances.

The clerk will need the details of the complaint as set out above, as well as details from the complainant on how they feel the previous stage of the procedure has not addressed their complaint sufficiently, and what they feel would resolve the complaint. The clerk will acknowledge receipt of the request within 5 school days.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher or any member of the Governing Board (including the chair or vice-chair), a committee of members of the Governing Board will hear the complaint. They will carry out the steps at stage 2.

If the complaint is:

- Jointly about the chair and vice-chair
- The entire Governing Board
- The majority of the Governing Board

A committee of independent governors will hear the complaint. They will be sourced from local schools or the local authority and will carry out the steps at stage 2.

Next Steps

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure and is not satisfied with the outcome of the school's complaints procedure or that 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. For more information or to refer a complaint, see the following webpage: www.gov.uk/complain-about-school

The Department for Education will not reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Crown Meadow. They will consider whether Crown Meadow has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint. The DfE will look at whether the school's complaints policy and any other relevant statutory policies that the school holds, were adhered to. The DfE also looks at whether the school's statutory policies adhere to education legislation.

The DfE will intervene where a school has:

- Failed to act in line with its duties under education law
- Acted (or is proposing to act) unreasonably when exercising its functions

If the complaints procedure is found to not meet regulations, the school will be asked to correct its procedure accordingly.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: 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.

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

Unreasonable and Persistent complaints

Most complaints raised will be valid, and therefore we will treat them seriously. However, a complaint may become unreasonable if the person:

- Has made the same complaint before, despite it having already been resolved by following the school's complaints procedure
- Makes a complaint that is obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, defamatory, derogatory, abusive, insulting, offensive or repetitive
- Uses threats, coercion or ultimatums, verbally, physically or in writing in a manner designed to intimidate or influence school staff to take a preferred line of action or to force a desired outcome.
- Unreasonably insists on pursuing a complaint that is unfounded, or out of scope of the complainant's procedure
- Pursues a valid complaint, but in an unreasonable manner e.g. refuses to articulate the complaint, refuses to co-operate with this complaint's procedure, or insists that the complaint is dealt with in ways that are incompatible with this procedure and the timeframes it sets out
- Makes a complaint designed to cause disruption, annoyance or excessive demands on school time. Where a complainant has escalated their complaint to other bodies or organisations without seeking to resolve their complaint through the school complaints process first, the school may wait to consider their complaint until after the external processes have resolved.
- Dictates or seeks unrealistic outcomes or actions, or pursues a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value or which the school is unable to provide.

Steps we will take in response to unreasonable or persistent complainants:

- 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 appointed in consultation with the Local Authority
- Limit the number of times the complainant can make contact, such as a fixed number per term
- 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, advised and quality assured by the Local Authority

We may stop responding to the complainant regarding a specific complaint 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 had not

previously considered, or any new information we need to consider. 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 that 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 the complaints 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.

Record keeping and confidentiality

Our 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. This material will be treated as confidential and stored securely and will be viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint or on the review panel. This is except where the secretary of state (or someone acting on their behalf) or the complainant requests access to records of a complaint through a freedom of information (FOI) request or through a subject access request under the terms of the Data Protection Act, or where the material must be made available during a school inspection.

Records of complaints will be kept securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with data protection law, our privacy notices and our record retention schedule.

The details of the complaint, including the names of individuals involved, will not be shared with the whole Governing Board in case a review panel needs to be organised at a later point. Where any member of the Governing Board is aware of the substance of the complaint before the review panel stage, they will be unable to participate in the complaints process to maintain impartiality and we will in that situation therefore arrange for an independent governor or panel to hear the complaint.

Complainants also have the right to request an independent panel if they believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings. The decision to approve this request is made by the Governing Board, who will not unreasonably withhold consent.

Learning lessons

The governing body will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the Headteacher and/or Senior Leadership Team 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.

Monitoring arrangements

The Governing Board will monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure in making sure that complaints are handled properly. The Governing Board will track the number and nature of complaints and review underlying issues. The complaints records are logged and managed by the Office Manager.

This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher, or a person designated by the Headteacher every 2 years.

At each review, the policy will be approved by the Full Governing Body.

Links with other policies

Policies dealing with other forms of complaints include:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures
- Admissions policy
- Suspension and permanent exclusion policy
- Staff grievance procedures
- Staff disciplinary procedures
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Positive handling policy
- SEND policy and information report
- Inclusion policy
- GDPR Statement and privacy notices

Appendix A

Complaints Form

Please complete and return to the school office who will acknowledge receipt.

Your name:	
Child's name:	
Your relationship to the child:	
Address:	
Contact telephone number:	
Please give details of your complaint: (You may continue on a separate piece of paper)	
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? (Whom did you speak to, when, and what was the response)	
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem?	
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.	

Signature:	Date:
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Official use:

Date acknowledgement sent:	
Complaint referred to:	
Date:	

Appendix B

Checklist for a panel hearing

The panel needs to take the following points into account:

- The hearing is as informal as possible.
- Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing at which they give their evidence.
- After the introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint and be followed by their witnesses.
- The Headteacher may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The Headteacher is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses.
- The complainant may question both the Headteacher and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The panel may ask questions at any point.
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
- The Headteacher is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
- The Chair explains that both parties will hear from the panel within a set time scale.

Appendix C

Complaint Roles and Responsibilities

The complainant

The complainant will get a more effective and timely response to their complaint if they:

- Follow these procedures
- Explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- Co-operate with the school throughout the process in seeking a solution to the complaint
- Respond to deadlines and communication promptly
- Ask for assistance as needed
- Treat all those involved with respect
- Do not approach individual governors about the complaint
- Refrain from publicising details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality

The 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

The complaints co-ordinator

The complaints co-ordinator can be:

- The Headteacher, deputy Headteacher, DSL or other member of the Senior Leadership Team
- The designated complaints governor
- Any other staff member providing administrative support

The complaints co-ordinator will:

- Keep the complainant up to date at each stage in the procedure

- Make sure the process runs smoothly by liaising with staff members, the Headteacher, chair of governors, clerk and local authority (LA)
- Be aware of issues relating to:
 - Sharing third-party information
 - Additional support needed by complainants; for example, 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

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

Appendix D

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Linked to Section 3.98 of the 2025 EYFS Statutory Framework

Crown Meadow establishes The Complaints Policy as our written procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints from parents and/or carers, and will keep a written record of any complaints, and their outcome.

Crown Meadow acknowledges our duty to:

- Investigate written complaints relating to how they are fulfilling the EYFS requirements.
- Notify the person who made the complaint of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint.
- Make a record of complaints available to Ofsted,

Crown Meadow makes clear to parents and/or carers the details about how to contact Ofsted, if they believe the provider is not meeting the EYFS requirements.

Parents and carers can notify Ofsted if they believe that our school is not meeting the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements, by:

- ✚ Calling 0300 123 4666
- ✚ Emailing enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
- ✚ Using the online contact form available by [clicking here](#) or visiting www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted#org-contacts

We will notify parents and carers if we become aware that our school is to be inspected by Ofsted. We will also supply a copy of the inspection report to parents and carers of children attending the setting on a regular basis.