CHILTERN LEARNING TRUST

# COMPLAINTS POLICY

## Procedure for Raising Concerns and Complaints

### Purpose

The procedures outlined in this policy are in place to enable any complaint to be raised in the appropriate way so that they can be resolved as quickly as practically possible.

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| Committee: Trust Board | Date agreed by Trustees: December 2024 |
| Review Cycle: 2 years | Review Date: December 2026 |

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# CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

## 1. Aims

Policies for the Chiltern Learning Trust are designed to support the ethos, aims and vision of the Trust and each school within it as outlined in the Strategic Intents and School Improvement Plan (SIP).

The Board of Trustees welcome feedback, both positive and negative, about how we are doing. Where someone has a concern or complaint we will endeavour at all times to deal with the issues responsively and reasonably and if necessary put things right as quickly as possible. This policy implements a structured process for the resolution of concerns and complaints.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial.
- Respect complainants' desire for confidentiality.
- Treat complainants with respect and courtesy.

We try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed as detailed within this policy.

To support this, we will make sure we publicise the existence of this policy and make it available on the Trust and school website.

## 2. Legislation and Guidance

Springfield Primary School aims to meet its statutory obligations when responding to complaints from parents of pupils at the school, and others.

## 3. 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

## 4. 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.

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.

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.

## 5. Stages of Complaint (Excluding Complaints Against The Headteacher Or Governors)

In this policy, "school days" refers to weekdays, excluding weekends, bank holidays, and school holidays.

### 5.1 Stage 1: Informal

(i) The school will take informal concerns 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. There are many occasions where concerns are resolved straight away through the class teacher, form tutor, year leader, subject leader, other members of senior staff, depending on whom the parent first approached, without the need to resort to a formal complaints' procedure, and this is preferable for all concerned. If the complainant is unclear who to contact or how to contact them, they should contact the school office at office@springfieldprimaryschool.org.uk or 01234 306000

(ii) Although this stage involves dealing with the issue or concern informally it may prove helpful later, although not essential at this stage, for the person responding to make a basic record of the issue or concern raised, which may include brief notes of conversations (face to face or over the telephone), and the responses made.

(iii) The individual who raised the issue or concern should be informed of the action to be taken to address it. It may be helpful to confirm undertakings given about future action or monitoring in writing. The school will aim to acknowledge informal issues or concerns within 5 school days, and provide a response within 10 school days.

(iv) If the person is dissatisfied with the response they have been given, they should be provided with a copy of the Trust's complaints policy and be informed about how to take their complaint to Stage 2, by referring it to the Headteacher or their representative, in writing by completing the form available in Appendix 2. The request to escalate should not be any later than 20 school days after the outcome at stage 1.

### 5.2 Stage 2: Formal

(v) Formal complaints must be made to the Headteacher (unless they are about the Headteacher), via the school office at office@springfieldprimaryschool.org.uk

If the complaint is directly about the Headteacher, it should be referred to the Chair of the Local Governing Board via the school office (the process is detailed in stage 3, section iii). If the complaint is about a Governor of the Local Governing Body, it should be referred to the Chair of Trustees, Chiltern Learning Trust via: pa.ceo@chilternlearningtrust.org

Formal complaints can be raised by:

- Letter or email
- Over the phone
- In person
- By a third party acting on behalf of the complainant

It is advised that a formal complaint is raised in writing, the complaint form (Appendix 2) should be used for this purpose.

The complainant will be asked to provide details such as relevant dates, times, alongside copies of any relevant documents they feel would resolve the complaint.

(vi) If the complainant requires assistance raising a formal complaint, they can contact the school office via: at office@springfieldprimaryschool.org.uk or 01234 306000.

(i) The issue is referred to the Headteacher or their representative for investigation. The Headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 5 school days. With this response, the Headteacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unsolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The Headteacher can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

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

**During the investigation, the Headteacher (or investigator) will**:

- If necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish (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).
- 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 20 school days of the receipt of the complaint.

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

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 the school will take to resolve the complaint. The response will specify whether the complaint has been upheld, upheld in part or rejected.

Possible outcomes for a complainant at this stage may include:

- There is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion so the complaint cannot be upheld.
- The complaint is not substantiated by the evidence.
- The matter has been investigated fully and substantiated in part or in full and the appropriate action has been taken. Where appropriate, this action will be communicated to the complainant. Should the action include any formal process

relating to staff regarding their conduct or capability, details will not be shared with the complainant. The Trust will protect the professional confidentiality of its employees regarding private employment matters, consistent with its legal obligations under their contract of employment.

(ii) After consideration of the complaint by the Headteacher, the matter is now concluded. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome; to proceed to the next stage of the complaint's procedure, they should request a review of the complaint by the Chair of the Local Governing Body.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and wishes to take the matter further they can escalate the complaint to stage 3. The complaint form (appendix 2) should be used for this purpose. The complaint will only be considered if the relevant procedures at stages 1 and 2 have been followed.

### 5.3 Stage 3 (formal): Review by the Chair of the Local Governing Body

(i) The complainant requests a review of their complaint by writing to the Chair of the Local Governing Body (LGB) via: office@springfieldprimaryschool.org.uk attaching the complaint form (appendix 2). The request to escalate should not be any later than 20 school days after the outcome of Stage 2.

(ii) Complaints to the Chair will be acknowledged within 7 school days. The Chair may need to hold interviews with the Headteacher or their representative and possibly other members of staff and notes will be kept of those meetings.

(iii) You will receive a written response, via the Clerk to the Local Governing Body (LGB) from the Chair of the Local Governing Body detailing their findings and recommendations within 20 school days of receipt of the complaint. The letter conveying the Chair's findings will include details of the next stage of the procedure. This stage should also serve as the first point at which complaints specifically about the Headteacher or their representative, the actions of the Local Governing Body (LGB) or an individual Governor should be considered (should the complaint be about the Chair, the Vice-Chair should undertake the investigation).

(iv) In acknowledging any complaint, the Chair may need to explain the powers of the Local Governing Body (LGB) in the matter in question and the extent to which it may or may not be possible to achieve the outcome desired by the complainant. For example, a parent may be unhappy with their child's class placement. Whilst the Local Governing Body (LGB) can look at whether the decision about the class placement was made in a fair, reasonable and consistent way, they do not have the powers to change the placement. In such instances it is important that the complainant is made aware at the outset of the scope of the investigation. However, where it is not within the remit of a Local Governing Body (LGB) to change a decision, it may make a recommendation for the Headteacher or their representative to consider.

### 5.4 Stage 4 (formal): Submit the Complaint to an Independent Reviewer

**Chiltern Learning Trust's Complaints Committee**

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

(i) Complaints only rarely reach this formal level, but it is important that Trust is prepared to deal with them when necessary.

In order to escalate the complaint to stage 4 the complainant must articulate clearly why the findings and recommendations at Stage 3 are improper or unreasonable or based on a flawed process. The complaint can be escalated to Chiltern Learning Trust, this should not be any later than 10 school days after the outcome of Stage 3. However, it should be noted that Chiltern Learning Trust will not, unless circumstances are truly exceptional, overturn a decision or the Local Governing Body (LGB) when due process has been applied. To submit the complaint to an independent reviewer the complaint form (appendix 2) should be completed.

(ii) Complainants should complete the complaints form and send it to the Company Secretary of Chiltern Learning Trust via post: Redgrave Children's and Young People's Centre, Redgrave Gardens Luton, Beds LU3 3QN or via email pa.ceo@chilternlearningtrust.org

(iii) The Company Secretary (or person delegated by the company Secretary) will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 3 school days.

(iv) The Headteacher or their representative should also be informed immediately that a complaint has been received and consulted about the proposed date of the hearing. On issuing notification of the date and time of the hearing, the Company Secretary will need to advise the complainant and the Headteacher or their representative that any written documentation they wish the committee to consider will need to be submitted in time to be circulated to committee members five days prior to the hearing. The committee will not accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

(v) Where the Company Secretary receives a complaint under these procedures, they would make provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the Chiltern Learning Trust and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint and ensures that one member of the panel is independent of the management and running of the school. They will aim to arrange for the complaints committee to meet within 10 school days from receipt of the letter.

(vi) Notification of the hearing should also include details of the way in which the hearing will be conducted. The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversation are not permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. The hearing will be minuted and the Company Secretary will keep copies of all relevant correspondence and notes on file and confidential. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken. If the panel is held remotely all participants must agree to the use of remote access and have

access to the technology to join the meeting remotely. The meeting will be minuted as if it was held live. The meeting must not be recorded by any party present.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The focus of attention for the panel will be to consider any issues presented that relate to the process by which the complaint was considered in previous steps. The complainant should not seek to present new information or have the details of the complaint re-heard. 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 Trust will inform those involved of the decision in writing within 10 school days of the hearing.

(vii) The Headteacher and or Chair of the Local Governing Body (LGB) may also be invited to attend the panel meeting to provide them with an opportunity to respond to the additional issues raised by the complainant. The complainant should be advised that they may be accompanied by a relative or friend to provide support. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions where 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/or legal representation. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

(viii) The findings of the committee should be notified to the complainant in writing within 10 school days of the hearing.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

### 6.1 The Complainant

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

- Follow these procedures, explaining the complaint in full as early as possible.
- Cooperate with the school or Trust throughout the process, and respond promptly to requests for information or meetings, or in agreeing the details of the complaint.
- Ask for assistance as needed.
- Treat all those involved in the complaint with respect.
- Do not publish details about the complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

### 6.2 The Investigator

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint. They will:

- Conduct sensitive and thorough interviewing with an open mind of all relevant parties, keeping notes of interviews/meetings.
- Consider records and any written evidence and keep these securely.
- Be mindful of the timescales to respond.

Prepare a comprehensive report to the Headteacher or complaints committee, which includes the facts and potential solutions. 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.

### 6.3 The Complaints Co-ordinator (school/Trust)

The complaints co-ordinator can be:

- The Headteacher
- The Chair of Governors
- The CEO
- 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, Trustees, Clerk and CEO as appropriate.

**The Clerk will:**

- Be the contact point for the complainant and the complaints committee.
- Arrange the complaints hearing, setting the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible.
- Collate any written material relevant to the complainant (for example; stage 2 paperwork, school and complaint submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale.
- Minute the proceedings and circulate the minutes.
- Notify all parties in writing of the committee's decision.

**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.

### 6.4 Local Chair of Governors (stage 3)

- Hold interviews with the Headteacher or their representative and possibly other members of staff (unless the complaint is regarding the Headteacher)
- Investigate complaints regarding the Headteacher or their representative.

- Make sure all parties see the relevant information, understand the purpose of the review, and are allowed to present their case.
- Review the complaint to establish how each stage of the complaint procedure has been followed. The Chair of Governors will only consider a review of the complaint if the relevant procedures at stage 1 and 2 have followed fully. Failure by the school or complainant to engage with stages 1 and 2 will result in the Chair of Governors referring the complaint back to the school for further investigation.

### 6.5 Chair of the Complaints Panel (stage 4)

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

- Both parties are requested to provide additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting.
- The remit of the panel is explained to the parties and each party has the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption.
- The issues are addressed and key findings.
- Key findings of fact are made.
- Parents or others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease.
- The hearing is conducted in a formal manner with each party treating the other with respect and courtesy.
- The panel is open minded and acting independently;
- No member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure;
- Each side is given the opportunity to state their case and ask questions;
- Written material is seen by all parties, providing it does not breach confidentiality or any individuals' rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR. If a new issue arises it would be useful to give all parties the opportunity to consider and comment on it; this may require a short adjournment to the meeting.
- The meeting is minuted.

## 7. Scope of this Complaints Procedure

All matters concerning the actions of staff and the implementation of school procedures are covered by this policy, except for those specified exceptions detailed below, each of which is subject to its own separate procedure/policy.

| **Exceptions** | **Who to Contact** |
|---|---|
| Admissions to schools | Concerns about admissions should be handled through the Local Authority's appeals process. Please refer to the Chiltern Learning Trusts Admissions arrangements available on our website. |
| Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation | Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our Safeguarding Policy, in accordance with the relevant statutory guidance. Please contact the school Safeguarding Officer in the first instance. 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. |
| Suspension and permanent exclusion* | Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at https://www.gov.uk/school-behaviour-exclusions/exclusions<br>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure. |
| Whistle-blowing | We have a Trust whistleblowing policy that applies to all employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The full policy can be found on the Trust website. |
| Staff grievances | Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the Trusts Grievance resolution policy and school's internal grievance procedures. |
| Staff conduct | Complaints regarding staff will be addressed through the school's internal disciplinary procedures, as deemed appropriate and outlined in the Trusts Code of Conduct for employees. While complainants will not be informed of any specific disciplinary actions taken against a staff member due to a complaint, they will receive notification that the matter is being addressed. |
| Complaints about services provided by other providers who use school premises or facilities | Providers should have their own procedures in place to handle complaints regarding their services. If you have a complaint about a service, please contact the provider directly. |

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|---|---|
| Withdrawal from the curriculum (parents and carers can withdraw their child from any aspect of religious education), including the daily act of collective worship. They do not have to explain why) | Please contact the Department for Education at www.education.gov.uk/contactus |

Complaints from parents of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) regarding the school's support fall under the scope of this policy. These complaints should initially be directed to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCO), who will then follow the procedures outlined in this complaints policy. The academy's SEND policy contains details about the rights of parents of pupils with disabilities who perceive discrimination against their child by the school.

If other bodies, such as the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams, or Tribunals, are conducting investigations related to the complaint, our adherence to the timescales outlined in the procedure may be affected, or the procedure itself may be temporarily suspended until these public bodies conclude their investigations.

If a complainant initiates legal action against the Trust/school regarding their complaint, we will assess whether to suspend the complaints procedure concerning their complaint until the legal proceedings have concluded.

Appendix 1 – Summary of Complaints Procedure
Appendix 2 – Complaint Form
Appendix 3 – Managing serial and unreasonable complaints

## 8. Further Recourse

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the Trust/school's complaints procedure, they can refer their complaint to the Department of Education (DFE).

The Department of Education cannot review or overturn decisions about complaints made by school. They can only investigate whether the school considered the complaint appropriately. The Department of Education will not overturn a school's decision about a complaint, but will intervene if a school or trust has:

- Not followed its own complaints procedure correctly or has delayed unduly, you can escalate the matter to the Department of Education.
- If you suspect the school has acted unlawfully or breached its funding agreement with the Secretary of State, you can contact the Department of Education

If the Trust/School did not deal with the complaint properly, it will be asked to re-investigate the complaint. If the Trust/Schools complaints procedure is found to not meet regulations, the Trust/Academy will be asked to correct its procedure accordingly.

For more information or to refer a complaint, see the following webpage:

https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school

## 9. Record Keeping

The Trust/School will document the progress of all complaints. This record will include details about actions taken at every stage, the point at which the complaint was resolved, and the final outcome. The records may also contain correspondence and notes from meetings and phone calls.

All such materials will be treated as strictly confidential and will only be accessible to those directly involved in the investigation or the appeal panel, as per the Data Protection Policy. Complaint records will be retained for a minimum of four years from the date of resolution, in accordance with the Retention Schedule.

## 10. Appendix 1

### FLOWCHART THROUGH THE STAGES

The informal stage 1 aims to resolve most issues/concerns through supportive discussions. If the complainant chooses to move to the formal stage, the flowchart below outlines each step, with full details in the policy. Where possible, the complainant should complete the complaint form (appendix 2) to submit their complaint.

| Stage | Action required |
|---|---|
| **Stage 1: Informal**<br>Informal discussion with the class teacher or other relevant member of the senior staff usually resulting in resolution of the issue. | The complainant is informed of the action to be taken to resolve the issue/concern. A decision should normally be provided within 10 school days. If the complainant remains unsatisfied they should be provided with a copy of the school's complaints procedures and information on how to proceed to stage 2 with their complaint. |

If the complaint is not resolved

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|---|---|
| **Stage 2: Formal**<br>The complaint is submitted, either verbally or in writing, to the Headteacher or their representative via the complaint form (appendix 2) | The Headteacher or their representative acknowledges receipt and arranges a meeting within 5 school days and provides a full written response within 20 school days. If necessary the complainant should be informed of how to escalate their complaint to stage 3 to be reviewed by the chair of the Local Governing Body (LGB). |

If the complaint is not resolved or if the complaint is about the Headteacher

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|---|---|
| **Stage 3: Formal**<br>A written complaint is submitted to the chair of the local governing body via the complaint form (appendix 2) | The school acknowledges receipt within 7 school days. The chair of the Local Governing Body (LGB) provides a full written response within 20 school days. Within the response, the complainant is provided with information on how to progress the complaint to stage 4. |

If the complaint is not resolved

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|---|---|
| **Stage 4: Formal**<br>Complainant writes to the company secretary of the Chiltern Learning Trust requesting that a complaints committee hear the complaint (complaint form available via appendix 2). | The Company Secretary acknowledges receipt within 3 school days. The Company Secretary arranges for a complaints committee to meet within 10 school days from receipt of letter and informs the complainant of findings within 10 school days of the hearing. |

If the complainant is not satisfied that the complaint has been dealt with properly

according to the school's procedure

If the complainant is not satisfied that the complaint has been dealt with properly and fairly

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|---|---|
| Complainant contacts the Department of Education | |

## 11. Appendix 2

### Complaint Form

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|---|
| **Your name:** |
| **Pupil's name (if relevant):** |
| **Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):** |
| **Address:**<br><br>**Postcode:**<br><br>**Mobile telephone number:**<br><br>**Landline telephone number:**<br><br>**Email address:** |

**What stage is your complaint currently at (please circle) 1 2 3 4**

**Please provide as much detail about the complaint as possible:**
***(Stage 4 only - please provide details of why the findings and recommendations at Stage 3 are improper or unreasonable or based on a flawed process).***

**What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint?**

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|---|
| **Who did you speak to and what was the response?** |
| **What specific actions can be taken to address this issue? For example, an apology, an explanation, an assurance of future prevention, or a review of relevant policies and procedures?** |
| **Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.** |
| **Signed:**<br><br>**Date:** |
| **Internal use only:** |
| **Date of acknowledgement:** |
| **Acknowledgement sent by:** |
| **Stage of complaint:** |
| **Next steps:** |
| **Date of referral:** |
| **Complaint referred to:** |

## 12. Appendix 3 – Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints

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

- 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 cooperate with the complaint's investigation process.
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaint's procedure.
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaint's procedure or with good practice.
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be considered 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, or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value.
- 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.

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, or email), as it could delay the outcome being reached. Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an '*unreasonable'* marking

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

- Write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it.
- Give the complainant a single point of contact via an email address.
- Limit the number of times the complainant can make contact, such as a fixed number per term. This will be reviewed after 6 months.
- 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.

**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 the school/Trust 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.