



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Policy review: September 2026

Next Review: September 2027

1. Purpose

At Fens Primary School, we are committed to maintaining positive relationships with pupils, parents, carers and the wider community. We welcome concerns and complaints as an opportunity to improve the quality of education and services we provide.

We aim to resolve concerns as quickly, fairly and informally as possible. Where concerns cannot be resolved informally, this procedure provides a clear framework for managing formal complaints.

This policy fulfils the Governing Body's responsibility to establish a complaints procedure under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002.

2. Principles

The school will ensure that complaints are:

- Heard fairly and objectively.
- Handled sensitively and confidentially.
- Investigated thoroughly and without bias.
- Resolved as quickly as possible.
- Considered in accordance with the principles of natural justice.
- Recorded appropriately.

Complainants will not be discriminated against or treated unfavourably because they have raised a concern or complaint.

3. Scope of this Procedure

This procedure applies to complaints from:

- Parents and carers.
- Members of the public.
- Community users of school facilities.

This procedure does not apply to matters where there are separate statutory procedures, including:

- Admissions.
- School exclusions.
- Child protection and safeguarding referrals.
- Staff disciplinary matters.
- Staff grievances.
- Whistleblowing.
- SEND tribunal matters.
- Freedom of Information requests.

- Data protection complaints.

The Headteacher will advise complainants where an alternative statutory process applies.

Timescale for Raising Complaints

Complaints should normally be raised within **three months** of the incident occurring, or within **three months** of the complainant becoming aware of the matter.

The school may consider complaints outside this timescale where exceptional circumstances apply.

Stage 0: Informal Resolution

Most concerns can be resolved quickly through discussion with the relevant member of staff.

The school encourages complainants to raise concerns as soon as possible with:

- The class teacher.
- The relevant member of staff.
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Staff will seek to resolve concerns informally and promptly.

If the matter remains unresolved, a formal complaint may be made.

Stage 1: Formal Complaint to the Headteacher

A formal complaint should:

- Be submitted in writing.
- Clearly explain the nature of the complaint.
- Include relevant dates, facts and supporting information.
- State the outcome being sought.

The Headteacher (or an appropriately delegated senior leader where necessary) will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint within **five school days**.
- Investigate the complaint.
- Meet with relevant parties where appropriate.
- Provide a written response, normally within **ten school days**.

Where the complaint is particularly complex or additional investigations are required, the complainant will be informed of the reason for any delay and provided with a revised timescale.

Where the complaint concerns the Headteacher, the complaint should be submitted in writing to the Chair of Governors.

Stage 2: Governor Complaints Panel

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the Stage 1 outcome, they may request a Governor Complaints Panel.

The request must:

- Be made in writing.
- Be submitted within **ten school days** of receiving the Stage 1 response.
- Explain why the complainant remains dissatisfied.

The school will arrange a Governor Complaints Panel hearing within **twenty school days** of receiving the request, wherever reasonably practicable.

The Governing Body will convene a panel of governors who have had no prior involvement in the matter.

The panel will normally consist of:

- Three governors who have had no prior involvement in the complaint.
- Where this is not possible, suitable alternatives will be appointed in accordance with Department for Education guidance.

The panel will:

- Review all available evidence.
- Hear from both parties where appropriate.
- Reach a conclusion based on the evidence.
- Decide whether the complaint should be:
 - Upheld in full;
 - Upheld in part; or
 - Not upheld.

The complainant will receive the panel's written decision within **five school days** of the hearing.

The Complaints Panel is the final stage of the school's complaints procedure.

If the complainant believes that the school has not followed its published complaints procedure correctly, they may refer the matter to the Department for Education.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Promote informal resolution wherever possible.
- Investigate Stage 1 complaints.
- Ensure accurate records are maintained.
- Implement actions arising from upheld complaints.
- Report complaint trends to governors where appropriate.

The Chair of Governors

The Chair of Governors will:

- Receive complaints concerning the Headteacher.
- Arrange the Governor Complaints Panel where required.
- Ensure the policy operates fairly and effectively.

Governors

Governors serving on a complaints panel will:

- Act impartially.
- Have no prior involvement in the matter.
- Consider evidence fairly and objectively.
- Reach decisions in accordance with this procedure.

5. Record Keeping

The school will maintain a written record of:

- Formal complaints received.
- Investigations undertaken.
- Decisions reached.
- Actions implemented.

Records will be retained securely in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy and Records Retention Schedule.

A record of formal complaints and their outcomes will be retained in accordance with the school's records management procedures.

Complaint records may be reported to governors anonymously where appropriate to support school improvement and monitoring.

6. Unreasonable, Persistent or Serial Complaints

The school recognises that the vast majority of complaints are raised reasonably and in good faith.

However, a complaint may be considered unreasonable where a complainant:

- Repeatedly raises the same issue after all stages have been completed.
- Refuses to accept findings that have been properly reached.
- Uses abusive, threatening or aggressive behaviour.
- Makes excessive demands on staff time or school resources.

In such circumstances, the school may:

- Restrict methods of communication.
- Limit the frequency of contact.
- Decline to consider issues that have already been fully investigated.

Any decision to invoke this section will be made by the Headteacher in consultation with the Chair of Governors and will be communicated in writing.

7. Confidentiality

The school will:

- Respect the confidentiality of all parties involved.
- Comply with Data Protection legislation.
- Share information only where necessary and appropriate.

Records relating to complaints will only be accessible to those who have a legitimate role in the investigation or governance process.

8. Escalation Beyond the School

If a complainant believes that the Governing Body has not followed its complaints procedure correctly, they may contact the Department for Education.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of a complaint but may consider whether the school has complied with its published complaints procedure.

9. Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for this policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation, statutory guidance or Department for Education requirements change.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented consistently and effectively.

Approval

Signed: _____ **Headteacher**

Date: _____

Signed: _____ **Chair of Governors**

Date: _____