



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Policy reviewed and agreed by: Finance and Resources Committee
Date: Jan 2026
Next review: Jan 2028

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the procedure for handling concerns and complaints at the Federation of Goring C.E. Primary School and Stoke Row C.E. Primary School.

It aims to:

- be accessible, transparent and easy to understand;
- ensure concerns are dealt with fairly, consistently and in a timely way;
- build and maintain positive relationships between the federation and its community;
- follow the **Department for Education's guidance** on school complaints procedures;
- ensure every complainant receives a response and knows how to escalate if dissatisfied.

This policy applies to all complaints about the federation's provision of facilities or services, except where separate statutory procedures apply (e.g., admissions appeals, exclusions, safeguarding or staff grievances/disciplines).

2. Purpose of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Provide a clear and fair process for raising concerns and complaints
- Ensure complaints are handled promptly and consistently across both schools
- Promote early resolution wherever possible
- Protect the rights of all parties involved
- Ensure compliance with statutory requirements

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all complaints except those covered by separate statutory procedures, including:

- Admissions

- Exclusions
- Safeguarding concerns
- Special Educational Needs assessments
- Staff grievances or disciplinary matters
- Whistleblowing
- Data protection and freedom of information requests

Where a complaint falls outside this policy, the complainant will be directed to the appropriate procedure.

4. Definitions

Concern

An expression of worry or dissatisfaction raised informally with a member of staff, for which reassurance or resolution is sought.

Complaint

A formal expression of dissatisfaction about an action taken, or a lack of action, by the Federation.

The Federation encourages concerns to be raised early and resolved informally wherever possible.

5. Who Can Make a Complaint?

Any individual, including parents, carers, pupils, staff, neighbours, or members of the public, may make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services provided by the Federation.

6. Raising a Concern or Complaint

Concerns or complaints may be raised:

- In person
- By telephone
- In writing
- Via email
- Through a representative with consent

Concerns should normally be raised with the class teacher or headteacher in the first instance.

Governors should not be contacted directly, as this may compromise their impartiality at Stage 2.

7. Time Limits

Complaints should be raised within **three months** of the incident or final event in a series. Complaints outside this timeframe may be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Complaints received during school holidays will be treated as received on the next school day.

8. Reasonable Adjustments

The Federation will make reasonable adjustments to support complainants, including:

- Providing information in alternative formats

- Offering accessible meeting locations
- Supporting individuals who require help to set out their complaint

9. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated unless the headteacher or Chair of Governors determines that the matter is serious enough to warrant investigation.

10. Complaints About Staff or Governors

- **Staff (other than the headteacher):** Address to the headteacher
- **Headteacher:** Address to the Chair of Governors via the Clerk
- **Chair or individual governors:** Address to the Clerk
- **Majority or entire governing body:** An independent investigator will be appointed

11. The Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – Formal Complaint to the Headteacher

1. Complaint acknowledged within **2 school days**
2. Investigation conducted by the headteacher or a delegated senior leader
3. Written response issued within **15 school days**
4. If the complaint concerns the headteacher, a suitably skilled governor will investigate

The response will include:

- A summary of the complaint
- Findings
- Conclusions and decision
- Any actions to be taken
- Information on how to escalate to Stage 2

Stage 2 – Governing Body Complaints Committee

If dissatisfied with Stage 1, the complainant may escalate to Stage 2 by writing to the Clerk within **10 school days** of receiving the Stage 1 response.

The Clerk will:

- Acknowledge the request within **2 school days**
- Convene a panel of **three impartial governors**
- Arrange a meeting within **20 school days**

The complainant may be accompanied by a supporter (not normally a legal representative).

The panel will:

- Consider written and verbal evidence
- Make findings and recommendations
- Provide a written outcome within **5 school days**

The panel's decision is final within the Federation.

12. Next Steps

If the complainant believes the Federation has acted unlawfully or failed to follow its published procedure, they may contact the **Department for Education**.

13. Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaints

The Federation may implement proportionate measures where a complainant's behaviour becomes unreasonable, including:

- Restricting communication channels
- Setting response schedules
- Declining repetitive or abusive correspondence

This aligns with the DfE guidance and the previous Goring policy.

14. Record Keeping

The Federation will keep a written record of all complaints, including:

- Whether they were resolved at Stage 1 or Stage 2
- Actions taken
- Any recommendations made

Records will be retained securely and in accordance with data protection legislation.

15. Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body will review this policy every **two years**, or sooner if required by legislation or best practice.

Appendix A – Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the school office.

Name:
Address:
Telephone:
Email:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Relationship to pupil (if relevant):
Details of the complaint: <i>(Please include dates, names of staff involved, and any supporting evidence.)</i>
What action have you already taken to resolve the issue?:
What outcome are you seeking?:
Signed:
Date

Appendix B – Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

- Raise concerns promptly
- Provide clear information
- Treat staff with respect

Headteacher

- Investigate Stage 1 complaints
- Provide timely responses
- Ensure fairness and confidentiality

Governing Body Complaints Committee

- Hear Stage 2 complaints
- Act impartially
- Provide clear findings and recommendations

Clerk to the Governors

- Coordinate the process
- Maintain records
- Communicate decisions

Appendix C – Complaint Handling Flowchart

Concern raised → Informal resolution attempted

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Stage 1: Formal complaint to headteacher

- Acknowledgement (5 days)
- Investigation
- Response (15 days)

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Stage 2: Complaint to Governing Body Panel

- Request within 15 days
- Panel convened
- Meeting within 30 days
- Outcome within 5 days

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If dissatisfied: Contact DfE