


Complaints Procedure for Parents Policy

Leehurst Swan School



Approved by:	 Headteacher	Date: 25/06/25
Last reviewed on:	25/06/2025	
Next review due by:	25/06/2026	

This policy applies to the whole school including Reception and is available on the school website for parents of pupils to access. If parents (which includes guardians) of current pupils wish to make a complaint to the school, it will be handled in accordance with this Policy. The Policy does not apply to complaints from parents of former or prospective pupils.

1. Aim of Policy

Leehurst Swan welcomes suggestions and comments from parents, guardians and pupils and takes seriously complaints and concerns they may raise. Our reputation is important, and it is in the interests of the school to deal with any concerns promptly.

A complaint is an expression of genuine dissatisfaction, which needs a response.

We wish to ensure that:

- parents wishing to make a complaint know how to do so;
- we respond to complaints within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way;
- parents realise that we listen and take complaints seriously;
- we take action where appropriate.

The School recognises its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, and reasonable alternative communication preferences will be accommodated in any stage of the complaints procedure.

2. Complaints Procedure

"How should I complain?"

2.1 Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. Parents should raise complaints initially with their child's form teacher or, if the complaint is about the form teacher, the Head of Prep or Deputy Head. You should raise the complaint in person, by telephone, email or letter and be as clear as possible about what is troubling you. The member of staff contacted will keep a written record of your complaint and the date on which it was received.

"I don't want to complain as such, but there is something bothering me."

The school is here for you and your child and we want to hear your views and your ideas. Contact a member of staff as described above.

"I am not sure whether to complain or not."

If, as parents, you have concerns you are entitled to complain. If in doubt you should contact the school as we are here to help.

“What will happen next?”

If you raise something face to face or by telephone it may be possible to resolve the matter immediately and to your satisfaction. If you have made a complaint via letter or e-mail, we will normally contact you within 5 school days of its receipt to respond to your concerns.

“What if I am not satisfied with the outcome?”

We hope that you will feel satisfied with the outcome, or at least that your concerns have been fully and fairly considered. Should the matter not be resolved to your satisfaction within 7 school days then parents may make a formal complaint in accordance with the Stage 2 process described below.

2.2 Stage 2 - Formal Complaints Procedure

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your informal complaint, you may make a formal complaint by writing to the Headteacher who will investigate and determine the complaint himself/herself in accordance with the procedure described below. He or she may also, if appropriate, delegate the investigation and/or determination of the complaint to another member of the Senior Leadership Team. In that case, references to the Headteacher should be read as including a person to whom they have delegated their responsibility under Stage 2.

The Headteacher may speak to the parents within 5 school days of receiving the complaint to discuss the matter. It will usually be necessary for the Headteacher to carry out further investigations including by reviewing relevant documents and interviewing staff, pupils and others. Written records will be kept by the Headteacher of all meetings and interviews about the complaint. Once all the relevant information has been gathered, the Headteacher will review it, determine the facts on the balance of probabilities and decide whether the complaint (or any element of it) should be upheld in full or in part. The Headteacher will write to the parents to inform them of the outcome of the complaint, with reasons to the extent appropriate, within 5 school days of his/her decision and, where possible, within 28 days of receipt of the Stage 2 complaint.

If the complaint is against the Headteacher, the parents should write to the Chair of Governors directly and he/she (or any governor to whom he/she delegates his/her role) will follow the procedure described above.

If parents disengage from the Stage 2 process, or if their child leaves the school before the Stage 2 process has been completed, the school will normally endeavour to complete the process with or without the parents' involvement.

“What happens if I am still not happy?”

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the Stage 2 process, you may progress your complaint to Stage 2 (the final stage in the school's complaints procedure) by writing to the Clerk to the Governors within 10 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 outcome letter and asking for a Stage 3 review of your complaint.

2.3 Stage 3 - Panel Hearing

At Stage 3, the complaint will be considered by a three-person panel consisting of two governors and a third person who is independent of the school's management. The panel should not include members who have been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.

The Clerk to the Governors will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 5 school days.

The Clerk will endeavour to convene a meeting of the panel to take place within 25 school days of receipt of the Stage 3 request. The parents will be invited to attend if they wish and will be offered three proposed dates. If the parents unreasonably reject the offered dates the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting and it will proceed in the parents' absence on the basis of their written complaint and any additional material they submit at least five school days before the meeting.

If the parents attend the meeting:

- they may be accompanied by another person to provide support, such as a friend or relative but not a legal representative;
- the Clerk will ensure that the venue and proceedings are accessible.

If the panel members deem it necessary, they may ask for additional information from the parents or the school but the panel will not consider new complaints or evidence unrelated to the initial complaint. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

Written material to be considered by the panel will, to the extent appropriate and in accordance with applicable laws, be circulated to all parties at least 5 school days before the date of the meeting. The panel will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not permitted unless a parent's disability requires it, in which case the prior consent of all parties attending must be obtained, such consent not to be unreasonably withheld.

If possible, the panel will determine the Stage 3 complaint without the need for further investigation after the hearing. If further investigation is necessary, the panel will decide how it should be carried out.

After due consideration of the complaint and all relevant evidence presented, the panel will determine whether or not the Stage 2 decision was a reasonable one and decide whether to:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part:
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part; and
- make recommendations if appropriate.

The Panel will, within 10 school days of the hearing, write to the parents to communicate its decision and the reasons for it and any recommendations. Where appropriate, the outcome and recommendations will also be sent to the person complained about. The outcome and recommendations will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the Headteacher and the school governors.

3. External Authorities

Parents are also entitled to refer a complaint unresolved after panel hearing to the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). Parents with children in Reception may refer an unresolved complaint to the ISI or Ofsted if they believe the school is not meeting EYFS requirements.. The contact details for both organisations are:

Independent Schools Inspectorate

CAP House
9 - 12 Long Lane
London
EC1A 9HA

Telephone 020 7600 0100

Email: complaints@isi.net

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1
2WD

Telephone 0300 123 4666

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

The school will provide the ISI/Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period and the action taken as a result of each complaint. The record of any such complaints will be kept in accordance with our Privacy Policy.

4. Complaints Record Keeping

The school will keep a written record of:

- All formal complaints and whether they are resolved following a formal procedure (Stage 2) or proceed to panel hearing (Stage 3); and
- Any action taken by the school as a result of the complaints, regardless of whether they are upheld or not.

5. Confidentiality and Disclosure

The school recognises and acknowledges your entitlement to complain and we hope to work with you in the best interests of the children and young people in our care. Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential, except when an inspector requests access to them in accordance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, otherwise as required or permitted by law.

Generally, information gathered in the course of dealing with a complaint will be shared only to the extent necessary to ensure natural justice within the complaints process and to meet the school's safeguarding obligations.

Note: In some instances, a parental complaint may lead to a separate staff disciplinary process. This process is generally confidential between school and staff member and its outcome will not be shared with parents.

6. Log of Formal Complaints

Formal Complaints Registered in Academic Year	Resolution/Stage
2022-2023 -1	Resolved stage 2

2021-2022 - 1	Resolved stage 2
2020-2021 - 0	