



Complaints Procedure

Date Reviewed:	September 2025
Next Review Date:	February 2026
Policy Owner:	Mrs Gemma Mitchell
Ratified @ Committee Name / FGB & Date:	E&W 03.03.2025 FGB 30.06.2025

Mission Statement

We are committed to providing a supportive, enjoyable and family style environment in which every child is nurtured and encouraged to achieve their potential through a broad-based curriculum and opportunities for developing sporting, dramatic, artistic and musical talents.

Statement of Aims & Objectives

- To enable each child to fulfil their own academic and personal potential.
- To instil in every child the importance of developing personal initiative and to foster in them a belief that they can fulfil their potential in any area of school life.
- To provide a broad based academic and extra-curricular education that is delivered in such a way as to satisfy the learning needs of each and every pupil.
- To help each pupil to develop both a set of Christian values and an understanding and appreciation of other religious beliefs.
- To learn the difference between right and wrong and to appreciate that rights and responsibilities are equally balanced.
- To develop and promote a sense of caring and community between the pupils within the school and the wider community as a whole.
- To instil in each pupil a high degree of self-respect and respect for their fellow pupils, teachers and other adults.
- To prepare each child for the transition to the next stage of their education and to be able to take advantage of any opportunities as they present themselves.



Oakhurst Grange School

Safeguarding

Oakhurst Grange School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. At this school we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for our pupils so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe that every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at Oakhurst Grange School. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all of our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying. This should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy.

All staff will be asked to complete training annually following KCSIE updates. Further safeguard training will take place throughout the year. All staff must wear their lanyards at all times.

The Safeguarding governor is: Pauline Clark Pauline.clark@oakhurstgrangeschool.co.uk

DSL: Roxann Dowling (Head of EYFS)

DDSL: Gemma Mitchell (Headteacher)

DDSL: Faye Dance (Deputy Headteacher)

Telephone: 01883 343344

Safeguarding Team: DSL@oakhurstgrangeschool.co.uk



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Introduction

Oakhurst Grange School has long taken pride in the quality of the teaching and pastoral care that the school provides to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the School in accordance with this Procedure. The policy complies with Part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and DfE best practice guidance (2023).

The School Complaints Procedure is available for inspection by both current and prospective parents and can be found on the School website, in the School, and hard copies can be provided on request from the School Office. This procedure is appropriate for use for all complaints relating to children throughout the setting from EYFS to Year 6.

The Head or Deputy will notify the Chair of the Board of Governors within 24 hours of any formal complaint. The Chair of Governors will inform appropriate members of the Board of any formal complaints. It must be a consideration that some Board members must not be informed of any detail in order to be kept in reserve should an informal panel need to be formed.

The Head will inform the Full Governing Body as a part of the Head's Report to Governors of any formal complaints, or indeed any potential formal complaints from an early stage.

A written record will be kept of all complaints whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing. The written record of any action taken by the School as a result of those complaints, regardless of whether they are upheld, will be kept.



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What Constitutes a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem. It may be made about the School as a whole, about a specific department or about an individual member of staff, and any matter about which a parent is unhappy and seeks action by the school is written within the scope of this procedure. A complaint is likely to arise if a parent believes that the School has done something wrong, failed to do something that it should have done or has acted unfairly. This policy does not cover exclusions. Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated unless there are safeguarding implications.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. The school is here for your child and you can be assured that your child will not be penalised for a complaint that you (or your child) raise in good faith. Please note this policy does not apply to:

- **Exclusions:** information regarding exclusions can be found in the Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusions Policy.
- **Safeguarding** concerns regarding children or allegations of abuse made against teachers, and other staff, including supply teachers and volunteers which are managed under the School's Safeguarding Policy and is distinct from formal staff disciplinary, grievance or capability proceedings: Ref Safeguarding and Child protection Policy
- **Appeals** against a permanent exclusion, required removal and suspension are managed in accordance with Stage 3 of this procedure. Appeals against admissions are managed under the Admissions Policy. Ref: Admissions Policy
- Where complaints concern a third party the complaint should be made directly to them
- For 'Subject Access Requests' please see the Data Protection Policy
- For whistleblowing complaints please refer to the Whistle Blowing Policy

Timeframe for dealing with Complaints

All complaints will be handled seriously, sensitively, openly and without prejudice. They will be acknowledged within **five working days** if received during term time and as soon as is practicable during the holiday periods. It is in everyone's interests to resolve a complaint as quickly as possible: The School's target is to complete the Informal Stage (Stage 1) and the Formal Stage (Stage 2) of the Procedure within **twenty-eight days** if the complaint is lodged in term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. Stage 3, the Panel Hearing, will be completed within twenty-eight days of that Stage being invoked if the appeal is lodged during term time and as soon as practicable during school holidays. Please note, that for purposes of this procedure, 'working day' refers to weekdays (Monday to Friday) and does not include Bank Holidays.

The full process (all 3 stages) should normally be concluded within 50 working days of receipt of the initial complaint, in line with ISI expectations.



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Recording Complaints

The School will keep a written record of all formal complaints, whether they are resolved at Stage 2, or proceed to a Panel Hearing, and the action taken by the School as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld). At the school's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member(s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them. Complaints which do not have Safeguarding implications will be retained for at least seven years.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. Such complaints and concerns to be investigated and resolved within **7 working days** under these circumstances.
- If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's Form Teacher. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the parents' satisfaction. This is to be concluded and resolved within **7 working days**.
- The school will keep a confidential written record of all complaints whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing. All records will be completed and logged within **48 working hours** of receipt. **Confidentiality will be respected in all cases, except where access is required by the Secretary of State (in practice DCSF) or by Inspectors operating under Section 162a of the 2002 Act.**



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- If the Form teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to consult the Deputy Head Teacher in the absence of the Head Teacher. After the initial 7 working days the Form teacher should take no more than **48 hours** to have this consultation.
- The Form Teacher or if necessary the Head Teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. **Should the matter not be resolved within 7 working days, or in the event that the teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with stage 2 of this Procedure.**

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take. This decision will be made within **2 working days** of receipt of a written complaint.
- In most cases the Head Teacher will meet or speak to the parents concerned, within **2 working days** of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
- It may be necessary for the Head Teacher to carry out further investigations.
- The Head Teacher will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint in a Complaints Log Book along with electronic records. Such records will be kept confidentially, except in cases where information is requested by the Secretary of State.
- Once the Head Teacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing (**within 5 working days** of the Head Teacher receiving the complaint). The Head Teacher will also give reasons for his decision. A formal written outcome must be provided within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint, with reasons clearly explained.

Should the matter not be resolved within 7 working days, then parents will be advised to proceed to stage 3 of this Procedure. Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to a Board Member, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. Parents must be given at least 5 working days' notice of the hearing.
- The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school.



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- Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chairman of Governors. The Board Member, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and within **10 working days**.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than **3 days** prior to the hearing.
- The parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall complete within **10 working days** of the Hearing. The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. [The decision of the Panel will be final.] The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Head Teacher, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of, within the same **10 working day** period.
 - If the parent decides not to attend the Panel Hearing this does not remove the School's obligation to hold the Panel Hearing according to our Complaints Policy. Our arrangements for the Panel Hearing should be reasonable to enable the parents to attend.
 - If possible, the Panel will resolve the parents' complaint at the hearing without the need for further investigation. However, should the Panel decide at the hearing that further investigation is required, the Panel shall decide how such investigations should be carried out and by when they should be concluded.
 - After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will make findings and may make recommendations.
 - The Panel Hearing will write to the complainant informing them of its decision together with their findings and recommendations. The decision of the Panel will be final.
 - A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendations (if any) will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given in writing to the Headteacher, Chair of Governors, and, where the complainant relates to an individual, to that individual. **In the EYFS, this must be done within twenty-eight days of the original complaint.** A hard copy of the Panel's findings will be held confidentially on the school premises.
 - If a parent repeatedly raises the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages this will be regarded as vexatious and outside the remit of this policy.
- Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. **Confidentiality will be respected in all cases, except where access is**



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required by the Secretary of State (in practice DCSF) or by Inspectors operating under Section 162a of the 2002 Act.

- ISI requires schools to provide evidence of how complaints were resolved during inspections; ensure records are retained for at least 7 years.
- Parents are advised that they can contact these bodies if they so wish - the details are below.

Contact Details

The Independent Schools Inspectorate - ISI, CAP House, 9 – 12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA.
Tel: 020 76000100 or contact ISI via their website, www.isi.net
OFSTED – Piccadilly Gate Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD Tel: 0300 123 1231

Source for guidance in creating the policy/procedure;
The Independent School Standards - Guidance for independent schools
(publishing.service.gov.uk)

Footnotes to Complaints Procedures:

Oakhurst Grange School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the School's Equal Opportunity Policy document.

In the event that a complaint involves or relates to a member of staff, then that member of staff will be kept fully informed in writing of the procedure being adopted in relation to the management of the complaint and supplied with copies of all documentation.

In the event of a Panel Hearing, the member of staff will have the right to make representations to the Panel.

Responding to Complaint Campaigns

Occasionally schools can become the focus of a campaign and receive large volumes of complaints:

- All based on the same subject
- From complainants unconnected with the School

In these rare, instances, the school will seek legal advice and may use a template response to all complainants. Alternatively, the School may choose to publish a single response on the School's website. In these circumstances, we would expect to respond to a complaint campaign within thirty working days.

This Policy is subject to regular review.