



Complaints Policy & Procedure

Policy Status	Final Policy
Responsibility for this policy lies with (Headteacher, Full Governing Body, Curriculum or Finance & Resources Committee)	Full Governing Body
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Policy Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure that a concern, difficulty or complaint is managed sympathetically, efficiently and at the appropriate level and resolved as soon as possible. Doing so is good practice, fair to those concerned and helps to promote parents' and children's confidence in the School's ability to safeguard and promote welfare. The School will try to resolve every concern, difficulty or complaint in a positive way with the aim of putting right a matter, which may have gone wrong, and, where necessary, reviewing the School's systems and procedures in the light of the matters raised. The School needs to know as soon as possible if there is any cause for dissatisfaction. The School recognises that a concern or difficulty, which is not resolved quickly and fairly, can soon become a cause of resentment, which can be damaging to the relationship between the School and the parent and child, and can have a detrimental effect upon the School's ethos and culture.

Parents and children should never feel – or be made to feel – that raising a concern, difficulty or complaint will adversely affect the child's future at the School, or place the child at a disadvantage in any way.

Who can make a Complaint?

For the purpose of this Complaints Policy, a "parent" includes the natural or adoptive parent of a child, irrespective of whether they are or ever have been married, whether they are separated or divorced, whether the child lives with them, whether the father has parental responsibility for the child or whether they have contact with the child

A "parent" will also include a non-parent who has parental responsibility for a child, an adult non-parent with whom the child lives, and an adult who is involved in the day-to-day care of the child (for example, collecting or dropping off the child from school).

Any reference to a "child" will also include a prospective or former child of the School.

A person making a complaint will be referred to as a "Complainant" throughout this Complaints Policy

The DfE guidance explains the difference between a concern and a complaint:

- A **concern** is defined as "an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought"
- A **complaint** is defined as "an expression or statement of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action"

In most cases, a concern can be resolved through informal means. A complaint will follow formal procedures.

Anyone can make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that the school provides unless separate statutory procedures apply; this includes parents or carers of children at the school, parents or carers of children no longer at the school, and members of the public.

Such separate statutory procedures would apply to issues including;

- Child protection
- Admissions
- Suspension and permanent exclusion
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs and the content of any resulting statutory plan (though concerns about the provision of SEN support at the school can be raised through this policy)
- School reorganisation proposals
- Whistleblowing
- Staff grievances and conduct dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary process
- Services by other providers who may use school premises or facilities (who should have their own complaints policy)

- Matters dealt with by regulatory bodies such as the Joint Council for Qualifications and the Education and Skills Funding Agency, as well as National Curriculum content.
- Curriculum
- Collective worship

Please see our separate policies for procedures relating to these types of complaint.

Where a complaint is made against a member of staff, depending upon the nature and seriousness of the complaint, the matter may be dealt with under separate HR procedures that are strictly confidential, rather than under this Complaints Policy.

The Rules of Natural Justice

Simply put, the rules of natural justice relate to fairness. The School will ensure that all concerns, difficulties or complaint are dealt with in accordance with the following principles:

- All parties will be provided with all information and documentation pertinent to the matters raised
- All parties will be given the opportunity to prepare and present their case and respond to the other parties involved
- All persons investigating and making decisions in relation to the matters raised will be impartial and will do so without bias (or apparent bias) to any party involved
- Decisions will be made on a balanced and considered assessment of the information before the investigator only
- All decisions will be based upon logical conclusions, and not on mere speculation or suspicion
- All decisions will be supported by detailed reasons that will be disclosed to all parties involved.

Equality Act 2010

The School will deal with concerns, difficulties and complaints in accordance with its duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, by having regard to the need to: Remove or minimise disadvantages connected to a relevant protected characteristic
- Take steps to meet the different needs of those sharing a relevant protected characteristic; and to Encourage those who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in school life and activities in which participation is disproportionately low
- Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, by having regard to the need to:
 - Tackle prejudice; and
 - Promote understanding;

“Relevant protected characteristics” includes sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity and (in the case of persons who are not children) marriage and civil partnership, and age.

In addition, the School will comply with its duty to make the following reasonable adjustments for persons with a disability:

- Where a provision, criterion or practice places a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to person who is not disabled, reasonable steps must be taken to avoid that disadvantage.
- Where a disabled person would, but for the provision of an auxiliary aid, be placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with a person who is not disabled, reasonable steps must be taken to provide the auxiliary aid. *An auxiliary aid can be a piece of equipment or a service.*

If a complainant or other person involved in the complaint's procedure requires an interpreter, a signer or any other assistance at meetings or at a Complaint Panel Hearing, they should let the School know immediately.

GDPR / Data Protection Act 2018 and Freedom of Information Act 2000

Complaints sometimes include requests for information or documentation. Such requests will be either a "subject access request" under the Data Protection Act 2018 (where the information requested relates to an identifiable individual) or a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (where the information is general and not related to an identifiable individual).

Subject access requests under the Data Protection Act 2018 must be responded to within one calendar month, and requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 must be responded to within twenty working days, however the School will aim to provide this information as soon as practicable (where the request is valid and the Complainant is lawfully entitled to the information or documentation) in accordance with the rules of natural justice.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Complainant

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

- Follow these procedures
- Co-operate with the school throughout the process, and respond to deadlines and communication promptly
- Ask for assistance as needed
- Treat all those involved with respect
- Do not approach individual governors about the complaint
- Do not publish details about the complaint on social media

The Investigator

An individual will be appointed to look into the complaint and establish the facts. They will:

- Interview all relevant parties, keeping notes
- Consider records and any written evidence and keep these securely
- Prepare a comprehensive report to the headteacher or complaints committee, which includes the facts and potential solutions

The Complaints Co-Ordinator

The complaints co-ordinator can be:

- The headteacher
- The designated complaints governor
- 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, clerk and local authority (LA)

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

Clerk to the Governing Board

The clerk will:

- Be the contact point for the complainant and the complaints committee, including circulating the relevant papers and evidence before complaints committee meetings
- Arrange the complaints hearing
- Record and circulate the minutes and outcome of the hearing

Committee Chair

The committee chair will:

- Chair the meeting, ensuring that everyone is treated with respect throughout
- Make sure all parties see the relevant information, understand the purpose of the committee, and are allowed to present their case

Resolving Complaints Informally

The School expects that most concerns and difficulties (defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'), where a parent or child seeks intervention, reconsideration or some other action to be taken, can be resolved informally. Examples might include dissatisfaction about an aspect of teaching or pastoral care, allocation of privileges or responsibilities, a timetable clash, an issue with the School's systems or equipment, or a billing error.

The concern or difficulty should be raised as follows:

- Education issues – if the matter relates to the classroom, the curriculum or special educational needs, the Complainant should speak to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher, as appropriate.
- Pastoral care – for concerns relating to matters outside the classroom, the Complainant should speak to the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or SENCO as appropriate.
- Disciplinary matters – a problem over any disciplinary action taken or a sanction imposed should be raised with the member of staff who imposed it in the first instance. If not resolved, the Complainant should speak to the Headteacher, or Deputy Headteacher.
- Financial and administrative matters – a query relating to fees, extras or other administrative matters should be raised by the Complainant with the School Business Manager.
- An issue with a specific member of staff – often, the best way to resolve an issue with a specific member of staff is to raise it with that member of staff directly, so that they are given the opportunity to address and resolve the concern or difficulty before it becomes a formal complaint. If the Complainant feels uncomfortable doing this, however, the issue should be raised with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

Where concerns are raised the staff member may need to take notes if they feel the matter may need to be taken further or it may arise again in the future. Any such notes will be kept in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018. However, such notes would be able to be used as evidence if further investigation was required, or if the concern became a formal complaint

The extent to which informal resolution of a concern was attempted may be taken into consideration when assessing the reasonableness of a complaint during the formal stages of the complaints procedure.

Concerns should not be raised with individual governors as it may prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 2 of the formal procedure.

Formal Stages of the Complaints Procedure

Stage 1: Raising a Concern

A concern is not a formal complaint. The school will resolve concerns through day-to-day communication as far as possible. The school will make every effort to resolve the matter quickly. It may be the case that the provision or clarification or information will resolve the issue.

1. The concern should be raised as soon as possible with the relevant class teacher, either in person or by letter, telephone or email. If it is unclear who to contact or how to contact them, please contact the school office.
2. Although not a formal complaint, a record will be made of the concern when raised.
3. The school will acknowledge the concern within 2 school days from receipt.
4. If necessary, an investigation will be made or information will be gathered and a response provided within **10 school days** from receipt.
5. At any stage, if suitable, a meeting will be offered with a member of the senior management team as appropriate.

If the concern is not resolved informally, the complainant may choose to escalate it to a formal complaint.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint to the Headteacher

1. A complaint can be made in person, in writing (via letter or email- head@edwardpauling.hounslow.sch.uk) or by telephone. It is recommended that the complainant uses the form attached to this policy. If you require help completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask a third-party organisation such as Citizens Advice for assistance. Where a verbal complaint is made, it will be recorded on the form attached and confirmed with the complainant.

The basis of the complaint should be defined and all details given such as relevant dates, times, and the names of witnesses of any events, alongside copies of any relevant documents. The complainant should also state what they feel would resolve the complaint.

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

2. The Headteacher (or designated member of the senior leadership team) may call a meeting with the complainant to clarify concerns and seek a resolution. The complainant may be accompanied to this meeting and should inform the school of the identity of their companion 2 school days in advance.

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.

3. Following the meeting, the Headteacher (or other person appointed by the Headteacher for this purpose) will then conduct their own investigation. 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;
 - Keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation and the outcomes.

They will consider all relevant evidence. This may include but is not limited to:

- Obtaining statements from the complainant and those involved with the complaint
 - Meeting with the complainant and those involved with the complaint
 - Reviewing correspondence and other documentation relating to the complaint
4. The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant within **10 school days** from the date of the meeting, or receipt of the complaint if a meeting is not held. If the Headteacher is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

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 also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of this stage.

5. If the complainant wishes to proceed to the next stage of the procedure, they should notify the School Business Manager via the school office within **5 school days** of the date of the Headteachers written conclusion, ideally in writing/by email.

The next stage is a panel of school governors and is the **final stage of the school's complaints procedure**.

6. The School Business Manager will record the date the notification is received and will acknowledge it in writing (either by letter or email) within **5 school days**.

Stage 3: Complaints Panel Hearing

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 2 of the formal complaints process, they may ask the Chair of the Governing Body to set up a complaints panel to consider the complaint. At this stage, the complaint may be different from the original complaint lodged as it may include dissatisfaction with the action taken by school management to resolve the original complaint.

A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the chair of governors via the school office/or email: governors@edwardpauling.hounslow.sch.uk no later than 4 weeks after the receipt of the Stage 2 outcome. The request must include a summary of the complaint, why the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2 and the outcome they are seeking. The chair of governors will acknowledge the request to escalate in writing no later than 10 working days after its receipt.

It must be noted that the basis of a formal complaint should not change at any stage from the beginning of Stage 2. Any change or addition to the original complaint, as investigated by the Headteacher, will not be considered by the panel. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

1. A panel of governors will be convened who can consider the complaint afresh. The complaints panel will consist of at least three governors with no prior involvement with the complaint. If three impartial governors are not available from the governing body, alternatives will be sought from another school.

Where the Governing Board is aware of the substance of the complaint before the review panel stage, the school will (where reasonably practicable) arrange for an independent panel to hear the complaint.

2. The School Business Manager/Clerk will set the date, time and venue of the meeting. They will try to ensure that the date of the meeting is convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible.

There is no requirement for complaints appeal panels to meet at a time requested by the complainant. However, governors will aim to find the middle ground between the needs of the complainant and the panel. If a complainant cannot make the proposed time, an alternative will be offered. If the complainant rejects the offer of 3 proposed dates without good reason, the panel will be held in their absence with written submissions from both parties. If possible, at least **15 school days' notice** will be given of the meeting.

The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations only, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs. If preferred, the evidence provided by any witnesses may also be submitted in writing. If parties are invited to a hearing, the complainant may be accompanied by a suitable companion if they wish. The school may also have an external advisor at the panel hearing if it would aid the panel process.

3. At the same time as notifying those concerned of the date of the meeting (**15 school days** before the meeting), the School Business Manager/ Clerk will:
 - Ask for the details of any witnesses, companions or advisors who may be called upon at the meeting, or who's evidence is to be submitted to the panel.
 - Request copies of all written material relevant to the investigation (for submission to the committee) e.g.: the original complaint, all records of investigations and actions taken to date, all relevant communication to date and any witness statements.

Note: Members of staff will not usually be required to attend the complaint panel hearing to give a verbal statement, unless their conduct is relevant, or their account is contentious, and the panel seeks clarification. It is sufficient that a signed written account is included in the documentation.

4. **5 school days** before the date of the meeting the School Business Manager/ Clerk will:
 - Disseminate the written material, including the existing record of the complaint's progress and any further submitted material, and the details of those attending the meeting, to all parties.

Note: The names of individuals other than the complainant, the complainant's family, members of the school's staff and governors, MUST be redacted and replaced with a letter relevant to that particular individual unless they have provided their written consent for their name to be disclosed.

This gives both parties the opportunity to raise limited reasonable queries with the panel ahead of time that they could consider, as part of their investigation into the complaint. Such queries should be passed to the School Business Manager/ Clerk 2 school days before the panel meeting. The clarity should then come in the form of the panel's response to the complaint.

5. The committee will not:
 - Review any new complaints at this stage;
 - Consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint; or
 - Accept as evidence, recordings of conversations or events that were obtained covertly.
6. **Meetings will be held in private.** Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. If this is the case, prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. If a complainant or other person involved in the complaints procedure requires an interpreter, a signer or any other assistance at meetings or at a complaint panel hearing, they should let the school know with as much notice as possible.

7. During the Complaints Panel Hearing, only panel members may ask questions of the complainant and/or the school, or witnesses for either party. If the complainant or the school have any queries that they wish to raise, these must be submitted to the Clerk of Governors/SBM **2 school days** before the meeting. These will be passed on to the panel who may raise them.

The panel will receive any written evidence from the complainant and the action taken to resolve it. Any written evidence will be circulated to all parties before the hearing. This may include the outcome of any investigation conducted by the Lifelong Learning, Leisure and Cultural Services department, submitted as evidence by the Headteacher or by the complainant. The panel will hear statements from the complainant and the Headteacher and evidence from witnesses from both sides relating specifically to the complaint and the action taken. The panel will be able to question the complainant, the headteacher and the witnesses, and the headteacher and complainant can question each other and the witnesses.

The format will be:

1. Introductions by the Chair of the Panel (The members of the panel will appoint one of their number, not a member of staff of the school, as Chair.)
2. Complainant makes statement of complaint and background
3. Questions to complainant by panel and Headteacher
4. All parties hear and question witnesses called by complainant
5. Headteacher makes statement
6. Questions to Headteacher by panel and complainant
7. All parties hear and question witnesses called by Headteacher
8. Headteacher makes final statement
9. Complainant makes final statement
10. The complainant and the Headteacher leave the hearing
11. Panel considers case in private and reaches decision on whether the complaint is upheld, upheld in part, or rejected. The panel may ask for a particular action to be taken by the school, or for a change in school procedure.

Once the panel has reached a decision, it is final. The Chair of the panel will communicate the decision to the complainant in writing, or arrange for the clerk to do so, within 5 school days of the hearing. If the complainant then tries to reopen the complaint, the Chair will write to say that the procedure has been exhausted and the matter is therefore closed.

The only further recourse for the complainant is generally to the Secretary of State for Education, or to the Local Government Ombudsman, because the Governing Body has not considered the complaint properly.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

Withdrawal of a Complaint

When a complainant wishes to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing

Learning Lessons

The Governing Board will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the Headteacher, where appropriate, to determine whether there are any improvements that the school can make to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

Referring Complaints to the Department for Education

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the school's complaints procedure, they can refer their complaint to the Department for Education (DfE) which considers complaints relating to maintained schools on behalf of the secretary of state.

They will not re-investigate the matter of the complaint. It will look at whether the school's complaints policy and any other relevant statutory policies that the school holds were adhered to. They also look at whether the school's statutory policies adhere to education legislation. The DfE may direct the school to re-investigate the complaint where it is clear the school has acted unlawfully or unreasonably.

For more information or to refer a complaint, see the following webpage: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>

Complaints against the Headteacher, a Governor or the Governing Board

Stage 1: Formal

Complaints that involve or are about the headteacher should be addressed to the chair of governors, via the school office, and marked as private and confidential.

Complaints about the chair of governors, any individual governor or the whole governing board should be addressed to the clerk to the governing board via the school office, marked as private and confidential.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher or 1 member of the governing board (including the chair or vice-chair), a suitably skilled and impartial governor will carry out the steps at stage 1 (set out as above).

If the complaint is:

- Jointly about the chair and vice-chair
- The entire governing board
- The majority of the governing board

An independent investigator will carry out the steps in stage 1 (set out as above). They will be appointed by the governing board and will write a formal response at the end of their investigation.

How to Escalate a Complaint

If the complainant wishes to proceed to the next stage of the procedure, they should inform the clerk to the governing board in writing within **10 school days**. Requests received outside of this timeframe will be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Complaints can be escalated by contacting the clerk to the governing board:

- By letter or email (governors@edwardpauling.hounslow.sch.uk)
- Over the phone
- In person
- Through a third party acting on behalf of the complainant

The clerk will need the details of the complaint as set out above, as well as details from the complainant on how they feel the previous stage of the procedure has not addressed their complaint sufficiently, and what they feel would resolve the complaint.

The clerk will acknowledge receipt of the request **within 5 school days**.

Stage 2: Review Panel

If the complaint is about the headteacher or 1 member of the governing board (including the chair or vice-chair), a committee of members of the governing board will hear the complaint. They will carry out the steps at stage 2 (as set out above).

If the complaint is:

- Jointly about the chair and vice-chair
- The entire governing board
- The majority of the governing board

A committee of independent governors will hear the complaint. They will be sourced from local schools, the local authority and will carry out the steps at stage 2 (as set out above).

Persistent Complaints

Where a complainant tries to re-open the issue with the school after the complaints procedure has been fully exhausted and the school has done everything it reasonably can in response to the complaint, the Chair of Governors (or other appropriate person in the case of a complaint about the Chair) will inform the complainant that the matter is closed.

If the complainant subsequently contacts the school again about the same issue, the school can choose not to respond.

The normal circumstance in which school will not respond is if:

- The school has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's needs, and
- the complainant has been given a clear statement of the school's position and their options (if any), and
- the complainant is contacting the school repeatedly but making substantially the same points each time.

However, this list is not intended to be exhaustive. The school will be most likely to choose not to respond if:

- We have reason to believe the individual is contacting the school with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience; and/or
- complaints are without merit, obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious;
- the individual's letters/emails/telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive; and/or

- the individual makes insulting personal comments about, or threats towards, school staff.

Unreasonable behaviour which is abusive, offensive or threatening may constitute an unreasonably persistent complaint.

Once the school has decided that it is appropriate to stop responding, the complainant will be informed in writing, either by letter or email. The school will ensure when making this decision that complainants making any new complaint are heard, and that the school acts reasonably.

Unreasonably Persistent Complaints

The school is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

Edward Pauling Primary School defines unreasonable complainants as 'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints'.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:

- 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 co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account 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
- 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.

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, email or text), 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 behaviour continues the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact the school causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from the school. Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. Schools will therefore act to ensure they remain a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of their community.

If a parent's behaviour is a cause for concern, a school can ask him/her to leave school premises. In serious cases, the Headteacher or the local authority can notify them in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any representations that the parent may wish to make. School will always give the parent the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing. The decision to bar will then be reviewed, taking into account any representations made by the parent and possible legal advice, and either confirmed or lifted. If the decision is confirmed the parent should be notified in writing, explaining how long the bar will be in place.

Anyone wishing to complain about being barred can do so, by letter or email, to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors. However, complaints about barring cannot be escalated to the Department for Education. Once the school's own complaints procedure has been completed, the only remaining avenue of appeal is through the Courts; independent legal advice must therefore be sought.

Record Keeping and Confidentiality

Edward Pauling Primary School will record the progress of all complaints, including information about actions taken at all stages, the stage at which the complaint was resolved, and the final outcome. The records will also include copies of letters and emails, and notes relating to meetings and phone calls.

This material will be treated as confidential and stored securely, and will be viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint or on the review panel. This is except where the secretary of state (or someone acting on their behalf) or the complainant requests access to records of a complaint through a freedom of information (FOI) request or through a subject access request under the terms of the Data Protection Act, or where the material must be made available during a school inspection.

Records of complaints will be kept securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with data protection law. The details of the complaint, including the names of individuals involved, will not be shared with the whole governing board in case a review panel needs to be organised at a later point.

Where the governing board is aware of the substance of the complaint before the review panel stage, the school will (where reasonably practicable) arrange for an independent panel to hear the complaint.

Complainants also have the right to request an independent panel if they believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings. The decision to approve this request is made by the governing board, who will not unreasonably withhold consent.

Monitoring Arrangements

The Governing Board will monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure in ensuring that complaints are handled properly. The Governing Board will track the number and nature of complaints, and review any underlying issues.

All complaints are logged and overseen by the School Business Manager.

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Board every 3 years. At each review, the policy will be approved by the Full Governing Board and the Headteacher.

Appendix 1- Formal Complaint Form

Formal Complaint Form



Please complete and return to the school office, who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address: Postcode: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number:
Do you require any adjustments to enable you to access this process due to illness, disability or other reason? Answer: Yes/No. If yes, please approach the School Business Manager via the school office to discuss any reasonable adjustments we may be able to make.
Please give details of your complaint including the dates and times of any relevant events and the names of any witnesses. Please include whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it. (Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date received:

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

Appendix 2- Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Edward Pauling School, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<p>Admissions to schools Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs School re-organisation proposals</p>	<p>Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with the London Borough of Hounslow, Hounslow House, 7 Bath Road, Hounslow, Middlesex, TW3 3EB 0208 583 2000</p>
<p>Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation</p>	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>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 (MASH).</p> <p>The LADO for London Borough of Hounslow can be contacted via: 0208 5835730 lado@hounslow.gov.uk</p>
<p>Exclusion of children from school*</p>	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions</p> <p><i>*Complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i></p> <p><i>A copy of the behaviour policy can be found at www.edwardpauling.hounslow.sch.uk/policies/</i></p>
<p>Whistleblowing</p>	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus.</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>
<p>Staff Grievances</p>	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.</p>
<p>Staff Conduct</p>	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a</p>

	complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
National Curriculum - Content	Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus