



Policy Document: Concerns and Complaints

School's Lead Member of Staff: Head Teacher

Governors Monitoring: Full Governors

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Chair of Governing body signatures:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Millings', with a stylized flourish at the end.

CFS Concerns and Complaints policy

Formal Complaint Recorded

The School dealt with zero formal complaints during the academic year 2024-25.

Purpose

This policy sets out how the school manages concerns and complaints raised by parents and others, and how these interact with safeguarding and child protection procedures. It is designed to ensure concerns are handled promptly, proportionately and fairly, while maintaining a clear distinction between safeguarding matters and complaints.

Staff conduct expectations, including safeguarding boundaries, are set out in internal documents such as the Staff Code of Conduct. These documents are designed for staff and are not parent-facing. Relevant expectations are communicated to parents through the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, this Complaints and Concerns Policy, and direct communication where appropriate.

This policy should be read alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Staff Code of Conduct, and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

Scope

This policy applies to all parents of pupils at the school and to concerns or complaints relating to any aspect of school life.

Key principles

The school encourages early, open communication to resolve concerns at the earliest possible stage.

Safeguarding concerns are always managed under safeguarding procedures, not the complaints process.

'Low-level concerns' about staff conduct are managed proportionately in line with statutory guidance.

Formal complaints are handled through a clear staged process compliant with the Independent School Standards.

Safeguarding concerns and low-level concerns

A safeguarding concern is any concern that a child may be at risk of harm. Safeguarding concerns are managed in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and statutory guidance, including KCSIE.

Low-level concerns about staff conduct, including concerns raised by parents or pupils, are managed in accordance with the low-level concerns framework set out in KCSIE. Such concerns:

- May relate to behaviour that is inconsistent with expected standards but does not meet the threshold for harm or allegation
- Are recorded and reviewed proportionately
- Do not automatically constitute a formal complaint/

Where a safeguarding or low-level concern is raised, the school will apply safeguarding thresholds and take appropriate action. The complaints procedure does not replace or override safeguarding decision-making.

Where a safeguarding matter is raised by a parent, it will be managed in line with the principles and procedures set out in the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.. Dissatisfaction with how a concern has been handled may be addressed through the complaints process.

Informal concerns

Many concerns can be resolved informally through discussion with the relevant member of staff or senior leader. Informal concerns may be raised verbally, by email or in writing.

Informal concerns:

- Are recorded in the school's informal concerns log
- Are reviewed to identify themes or patterns
- May be managed outside the formal complaints process.

If a parent expresses dissatisfaction with how an informal concern has been handled, they may request that the matter be considered under the formal complaints procedure.

Formal complaints procedure

This staged procedure complies with Part 7 of the Independent School Standards (England) Regulations 2019.

Stage one – informal complaint

A complaint should be raised with the Form Teacher or relevant Head of School. This is so that the complaint can be resolved quickly and informally. A response will be provided within 10 working days.

If the complaint relates to safeguarding, parents should contact the Head Teacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead directly.

Stage two – formal complaint in writing

If the complaint is not resolved at stage one, parents may submit a formal complaint in writing to the Head Teacher within 10 working days. The Head Teacher will review the complaint and respond in writing, within 5 working days.

If the complaint concerns the Head Teacher, it should be submitted to the Chair of Governors.

Stage three – complaints appeal panel

If the complaint remains unresolved, parents may request a hearing before a Complaints Appeal Panel. The Panel will consist of at least three members, including one member independent of the management and running of the school, and will follow the requirements set out in the Independent School Standards.

Recording and confidentiality

The school maintains:

- A low-level concerns log
- A record of informal complaints and concerns
- Records of formal complaints and outcomes

Records are kept confidentially and made available to ISI on request. Information is shared only where necessary and in line with data protection and safeguarding requirements.

Governance oversight

The governing body receives regular reports on safeguarding concerns, low-level concerns and complaints, in anonymised form, to provide assurance that procedures are effective and compliant.

Review

This policy is reviewed every year, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or guidance.