



Dream Believe Achieve

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Policy Reviewed: October 2020
Next Review date: October 2021

1. Introduction and Scope We care about what you think

The Policy of Whittlefield Primary & Nursery School is to work in partnership with parents/carers and the wider community. Therefore, any person, including members of the public, can make a complaint. We try hard to do our best for all our pupils/students. Your views help us plan for the future. We like to know when things are going well. We also want parents/carers to tell us about their worries, concerns or complaints as soon as possible. It is much easier for the school to sort out a recent problem than something that happened some time ago.

Our commitment to you

- We will deal with your concern or complaint in a professional manner.
- It will be looked into thoroughly, fairly and as quickly as possible.
- We will keep you up-to-date with what we are doing.
- We will apologise if the school has made a mistake.
- We will tell you what we are going to do to put things right.

What to do first

If you have a concern about anything we do you can tell us by telephone, in person or in writing. If any of these are difficult for you, a friend or advocate can speak to the school on your behalf. Most concerns or complaints will be sorted out quickly either by putting things right or by explaining the School's actions to you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations. We take our duties under equality law seriously and we encourage any person having difficulty accessing this procedure to contact us immediately in order that reasonable adjustments can be made.

Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints.

They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at the Review Stage of the procedure.

Try to go to the member of staff involved or your child's class teacher who will either deal with your issue or pass you on to someone who is more able to help.

Please remember that the beginning or end of the school day can be a very busy time. If you talk to a teacher at these times, for practical reasons, it may not be

possible to sort things out there and then. Be prepared for them to make an appointment to see you/to ring you at a more convenient time.

In considering concerns or complaints, the School will ensure that they are dealt with effectively and with fairness to all parties. Where possible, complaints will be resolved informally. Where a complaint has not been resolved informally, then the formal procedures set out in section "6(ii)" will be followed. Where your concern or complaint is considered sufficiently complex or serious, the school may choose to investigate formally from the outset.

2. What is a concern or a complaint?

(a) A concern or a complaint is defined as:

- An expression of dissatisfaction about the conduct/operation of the School.
- The conduct of, actions or lack of actions by a member of staff/the Governing Board/an individual governor.
- Unacceptable delay in dealing with a matter or the unreasonable treatment of a pupil or other person.

(b) This procedure does not cover complaints or concerns that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed in the following table, as separate procedures apply.

Note

- Serious complaints or allegations relating to the abuse of children, assault, criminal or financial matters are also subject to separate procedures. The table following is not exhaustive, and separate procedures may exist for other categories.
- For complaints regarding governors, the school will follow this Policy to resolve the issue.

These procedures do not cover	Who to contact
Admissions to schools Appeals for schools	Concerns about admissions/appeals, should be raised with Lancashire County Council (Pupil Access Team) Email: ESCPupilAccessCentral@lancashire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 123 6707
Inclusion Service: Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)	Concerns about Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, should be raised with Lancashire County Council Tel: 0300 123 6706 Email: enquiries@lancashire.gov.uk
School reorganisation proposals	Concerns school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Lancashire County Council (School Place Planning Team) Email: schoolplanning@lancashire.gov.uk
Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. 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). Email: MASHeducation@lancashire.gov.uk
School Exclusions *	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions . Concerns about exclusions should be raised with Lancashire County Council (Pupil Access Team) Email: ESCPupilAccessCentral@lancashire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 123 6707 *complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure. Please refer to the school's behaviour policy which is located on the school website.

These procedures do not cover	Who to contact
Whistleblowing	<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 Lancashire County Council or the Department for Education depending on the substance of your complaint www.education.gov.uk/contactus Complaintsandfeedback@lancashire.gov.uk</p>
Staff grievance procedures	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.</p>
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 their service. Please contact them direct.
National Curriculum content Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework Collective worship Sex Education	Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus
Unauthorised absence fines	Please contact Lancashire County Council Tel: 0300 123 701
Freedom of Information Data Protection (GDPR)	Data Protection Officer at the school and if this remains unresolved the Information Commission Office Tel: 0303 123 1113 Email: dataprotectionfee@ico.org.uk
Functions of the County Council	Complaints and Appeals Team Legal and Democratic Services County Hall Preston PR1 8XJ Tel: 0300 1236701 Email: Complaintsandfeedback@lancashire.gov.uk

3. Anonymous Complaints

The School will always give serious consideration to concerns and complaints that are brought to its attention. However, anonymous complaints will not normally be considered.

4. Unreasonable Complaints

There is a right to raise a complaint against a school and an expectation that the individual will exhaust the School's procedures. If the individual contacts the school again with the same issue, this could be seen as unreasonable and the school may choose not to respond.

The school should seek advice from Governor Services and their Legal Adviser, prior to taking the decision not to progress the complaint further. The school should not stop responding to a complaint because an individual is viewed as difficult to deal with or asks complex questions. The school may refuse to respond to the subject matter but not the correspondent.

The DfE provide additional guidance in 'Best Practice Guidance for School Complaints Procedures' (January 2019 and updated in March 2019).

See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-complaints-procedures/best-practice-advice-for-school-complaints-procedures-2019>

5. Making a complaint

The school expects that the majority of complaints to be made within three months of the incident being complained of. The school will consider complaints beyond this time frame in exceptional circumstances only.

Dependent on the type of complaint, the following table is a guide to whom or (the complaint) should be referred to:

Type of Complaint:	Contact the:
Something that has happened, or failed to happen, in School.	Class teacher
The actions of the class teacher.	Headteacher via the school.
The actions of the Headteacher.	Chair of Governors via the school.
The actions of a governor.	Chair of Governors via the school.
The actions of the Chair of Governors.	Vice Chair via the School.
The actions of the Governing Board.	Clerk to the Governing Board via the School

6. Roles and Responsibilities of the Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible;
- co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint;
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint;
- ask for assistance as needed;
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect and
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

The School /Governing Board would in most cases hope to resolve concerns and complaints at an informal stage, but the procedures allow for formal consideration of a complaint and a review stage if matters cannot be resolved.

The School is committed to dealing with complaints as speedily as possible and would plan to complete each stage within 20 school days. From time to time, it may not be possible to complete the process in that timescale. Where it is not possible, the complainant will be informed of any delays. Where a complaint is made immediately prior to a school holiday period it should be noted that the 20 days will commence from the first day of the school re-opening.

Where complaints are made against an individual member of the school staff or a governor, the individual will be informed of the complaint at the earliest opportunity and certainly before any investigation commences.