



COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Purpose

This policy outlines how concerns and complaints are managed fairly, consistently and in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance.

The school aims to resolve concerns at the earliest possible stage.

2. Principles

- Complaints will be handled impartially, confidentially and without discrimination.
- Complainants will be treated with respect.
- The process is accessible and reasonable adjustments will be made where required.
- Investigations will be thorough and proportionate.
- Retaliation against complainants will not be tolerated.

3. Definition

- **Concern** - A concern is an expression of worry or query.
- **Complaint** - A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about actions taken or not taken by the school.

4. Scope

- This procedure covers most school-related complaints.
- Separate statutory procedures apply for safeguarding, admissions, exclusions and SEND.

5. Timeframes

- Complaints should be raised within 3 months of the issue.
- The school will acknowledge formal complaints within 5 school days.
- Responses will normally be provided within 10–20 school days.

6. Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- Concerns should first be raised with the staff member responsible.
- This may be done in person, by phone or email.
- If unsure about the staff member's contact details, please contact reception@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
- Most concerns should be resolved at this stage.
- If this is not appropriate, another staff member will support.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint (Headteacher)

- If unresolved, a written complaint should be submitted to the Headteacher via pa@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
- The complaint should include details of the issue and desired outcome.
- The Headteacher will investigate the matter.
- The Headteacher may delegate the investigation to a member of the Leadership Team.
- A written response will be provided.
- Complaints about the Headteacher should be directed to the Chair of Governors via the Clerk to the Governing Body on pa@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Stage 3 – Appeal (Governing Body)

- If dissatisfied, complainants can appeal in writing to the Clerk to Governors via pa@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
- A panel of governors not previously involved in that complaint will review the case.
- A written decision will be issued.
- The decision of that panel is final and there is no further right of appeal.

7. Record Keeping

- A written record of all formal complaints will be kept.
- Records will include outcomes and actions taken.
- Confidentiality will be maintained.

8. Unreasonable or Persistent Complaints

The school follows Department for Education (DfE) guidance on managing serial and unreasonable complaints.

The school will consider whether a complaint is unreasonable or persistent, rather than labelling the complainant.

A complaint may be considered unreasonable where it is repetitive, pursued in an unreasonable manner, or seeks unrealistic outcomes.

The school may apply restrictions but will only do so after all stages of the complaints procedure have been completed and a final response issued.

In such cases, the school may limit contact or cease responding, in line with DfE guidance.