



Complaints Policy

Date Written / Reviewed	September 2024
Date of Next Review	September 2027
Headteacher	<i>R Swaby</i>
Chair of Governors	<i>M Hopkins</i>

****This policy applies to Delph Pre-School and Delph School.***

Rationale:

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, the Governing Board of all maintained schools and nursery schools in England are required to have in place a procedure to deal with complaints relating to the school and to any community facilities or services the school provides. The law also requires the complaint procedure to be publicised.

Aim:

To provide information about the school complaint procedure and how the school will respond to any concerns or complaints received about school matters.

Each day, staff at Delph Primary School, make decisions and endeavour to provide the best possible environment and education for all of the children who attend our school. Most of the time things will work well. However, there may be occasions when things do go wrong. When this happens, we want you to feel confident that we will listen to any concerns, comments, suggestions or complaints that you may have.

We will try our very best to work in partnership with you to resolve any issues that may arise, in a timely and positive way. The aim of this policy is to provide clarity and guidance about who to approach with any concerns. The underlying principle is that concerns ought to be handled, if possible, without the need for formal procedures. The requirement to have a complaints procedure need not in any way undermine efforts to resolve concerns or questions informally.

Open Door Policy

At Delph Primary School, we operate an '*Open Door*' Policy whereby parents and carers are encouraged to speak to a member of staff at the earliest opportunity should they have any concerns. In the first instance any concerns should be discussed with the class teacher and most matters can be resolved informally in this way.

If the concern or complaint is about the class teacher, then it should be made directly to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

If the matter is a safeguarding issue (including child protection), concerns must be raised with the Headteacher in her role as Designated Safeguarding Officer. If Miss. Swaby is not available, Mrs Mair is the Deputy Designated Officer. If neither are available and the matter is urgent, please ask the school office staff to identify the most senior member of staff in school.

NB: Individual school governors should not become involved in individual complaint matters and complaints should not be heard by the whole Governing Board at any stage, as this compromises the required impartiality of governors at stage 3 of the process.

Although we try hard to get things right first time, we recognise that sometimes things will go wrong, when this happens, we will deal with any parental concerns or complaints in a positive way and as quickly as possible. For the majority of matters, we will be able to resolve informally without the need to engage the formal procedure. However, if there is a need for a formal complaint investigation then this will need to be conducted quickly, and in a way that is open and transparent.

The person making the complaint should be kept fully informed about what is happening with their complaint, and reassurance should be given that school are listening to and taking any concerns seriously.

Our Promise to You

- Your concern, question or feedback will be dealt with honestly, politely and in confidence.
- Your concern, question or feedback will be investigated thoroughly and fairly.
- If your concern is urgent, we will look into it the same day if at all possible.
- We will work in partnership with you to find a positive way forward.
- We will keep you up to date with progress at each stage.
- You will get an apology if we have made a mistake.
- You will be told what we are going to do to put things right.
- You will get a full and clear written reply to a formal complaint (that follows the process for formal procedures) normally within 28 working days, excluding holiday periods.

Complaint Records and Monitoring of Complaints

All documentation relating to complaints will be held by the Headteacher in a way that is secure and confidential. Complainant's personal details will not be passed on when complaints are monitored and reported.

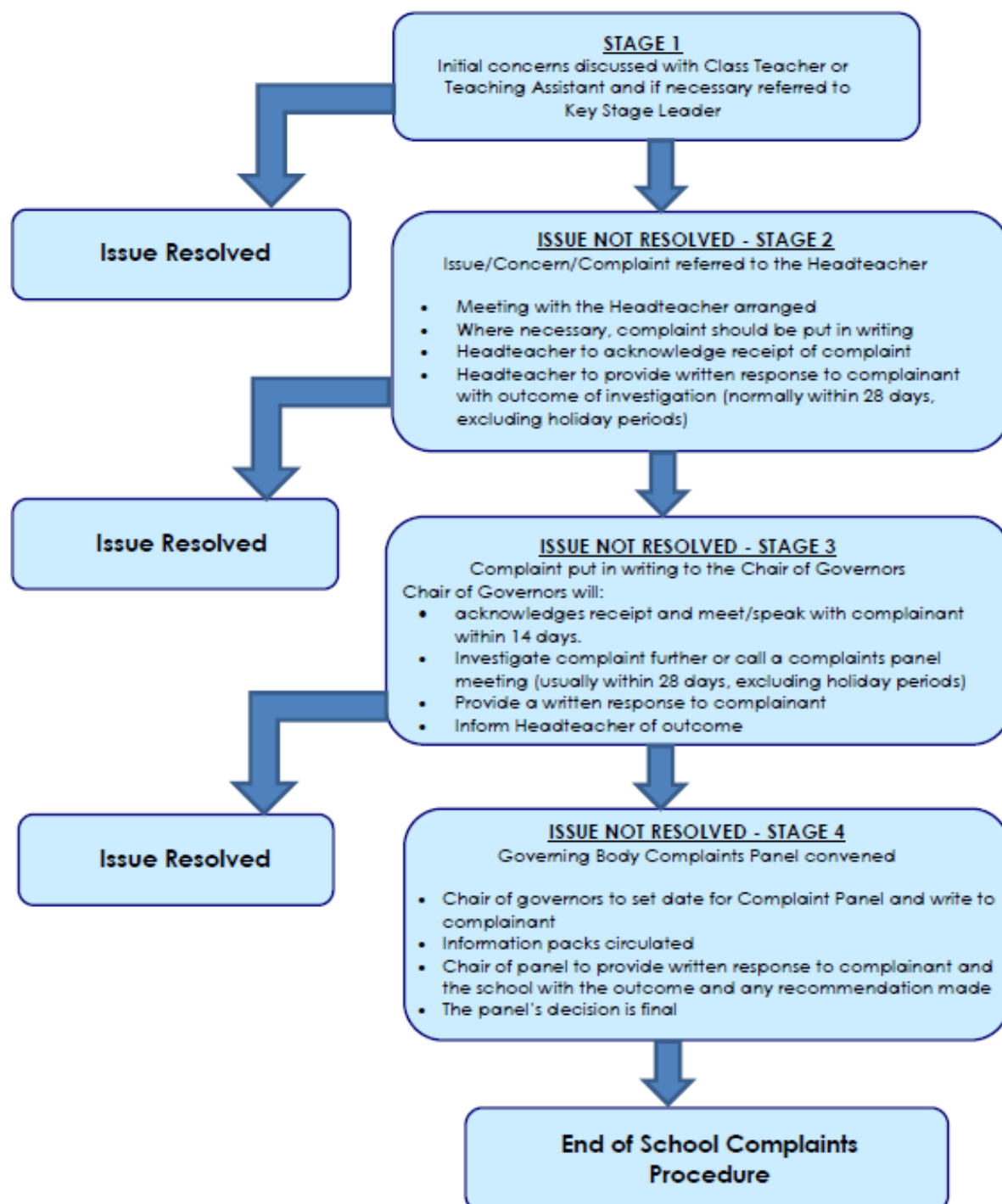
How do I progress a complaint?

The School Complaints procedure and summary flowchart outline the procedure to follow if issues, concerns or complaints are not resolved in the first instance. It outlines clearly the stages to follow if it is necessary to progress a complaint.

Governing Board Complaints Panel

This will consist of three governors. Governors on the panel must not have been involved in the complaint at an earlier stage or be seen to have a conflict of interest. An independent person can also be invited to sit on the panel.

School Complaint Procedure Flow Chart



Stage 1: Complaint heard by staff member

In the first instance any complaint should be discussed with a member of staff. This may be a Class Teacher or member of the Support Team where relevant. They will make every effort to try to provide clarity and resolve matters.

If the complaint can't be resolved in this way, then it will progress to stage 2.

Stage 2: Complaint heard by the Headteacher

The Headteacher will acknowledge your complaint and may need to investigate matters further before they can respond. They may need to speak with those involved and look at any information or records that are available.

You will usually receive a response from the Headteacher to your complaint within 10 working days. If the Headteacher feels that more time is needed to investigate matters, you will be informed of the delay and any new timescale.

Following investigation the Headteacher will write to you to let you know the outcome of any investigation into your complaint and may want to meet with you to discuss the outcome and any actions the school are going to take as a result.

Most complaints are resolved at this stage.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the response from the Headteacher and matters are not resolved, then they can move to stage 3 and write to the Chair of Governors with details of their complaint.

Stage 3: Formal complaint to the Chair of Governors

If having spoken with the Head Teacher (or if the complaint is about the Headteacher), the complainant is still not satisfied that the complaint is resolved, then they will need to contact the Chair of Governors with the complaint. This should be completed in writing. The letter should contain the contact details of the complainant and an outline of the issues wishing to be raised. Contact details for the Chair of Governors can be supplied upon request from the school. The Chair of Governors will then contact the complainant and see if a satisfactory conclusion can be reached.

If no satisfactory conclusion can be reached, the Chair of Governors will then decide whether to investigate the complaint further or convene a Governors Complaints Panel meeting (stage 4). The Chair of Governors will provide a written response to the complainant normally within 28 days (excluding holidays periods).

Stage 4: Complaint heard by Governing Board Complaints Panel

A Panel consisting of three school Governors who have not had prior involvement will usually be convened within 10 working days of receiving the request. They will review the complaint and the school response made so far. An independent person may also be invited to sit on the panel.

The members of the panel will each receive an information pack in advance of the panel meeting. The information pack will contain all information that will be presented to the governors at the meetings. This includes the complaint, the reason for complaint, evidence to support the complaint and details of steps taken by the school to resolve the complaint. Both school and the complainant will be invited to submit information for inclusion in the panel pack in advance prior to the panel meeting and no additional written information will be accepted at the panel meeting itself.

The Chair will arrange for the panel meeting to be clerked and the aim of the panel meeting will always be to try to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant/s.

The panel can:

- Dismiss the complaint in part or in whole.
- Uphold the complaint in part or in whole.
- Make recommendations about what action(s) should be taken to resolve matters.
- Recommend changes to school practice, policy or procedures to ensure similar issues do not reoccur.

It should be acknowledged however, that the complainant may not be satisfied with the outcome, especially if the panel does not provide the outcome they would wish to see to resolve their complaint. In these circumstances it may only be possible to establish facts, identify possible ways to move forward and make recommendations to satisfy the complainant/s that their complaint has been taken seriously by the school.

The panel will reach a conclusion and decide on any course of action it deems necessary to follow. Following the panel meeting, a written response will be sent to both the complainant and the school detailing the outcome and any recommendations made by the panel members. This letter will also outline if there are any further rights of appeal and, if so, to whom these should be addressed. The panel's decision is final and there is no further recourse to the panel, following their decision. This will be done within 10 school working days of the panel meeting.

This will mark the end of the School's Complaints Procedure - at this point the Governors of the School will consider the matter closed.

The Governing Board Complaint Panel is the final stage of the school complaint process, and if complainants feel that the school has not properly investigated and responded to their complaint they can write to the Secretary of State for Education.

Information about school complaints procedures and how to contact the Secretary of State is available on the Department for Education website.

Once a complaint has progressed through the whole school complaint process and complainants have received the Panel response to their complaint, the school will consider the matter to be closed. The school will not investigate complaint matters where these have:

- Already been previously investigated via the school complaint process.

Or:

- Where complaints are considered to be vexatious in nature.
- Where the same complaint is made repeatedly with a refusal to accept the outcome.
- Where there is an unreasonable outcome being sought.

Unreasonable / Unacceptable Behaviour

The school will not normally restrict access to the school complaint procedure. However, it is recognised that in a small number of cases where the behaviour of a complainant is felt to be rude, offensive or abusive or where behaviour is unreasonably persistent and impacting negatively on the ability of the school to carry on day to day business, then in these cases a management plan may need to be put in place, or in extreme circumstances access to the procedure may be blocked. The school may seek legal advice where this is felt to be necessary to protect pupils and staff from behaviour that is deemed to be threatening in any way or violent.

Data Protection Statement

The procedures and practice created by this policy have been reviewed in the light of our Data Protection Policy. All data will be handled in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.

Data Audit for the Complaints Policy					
What?	Probable Content	Why?	Who?	Where?	When?
Notes from meetings, logs, e-mails relating to the issue	Names of staff/pupils / family members Details of complaint / incident / follow-up actions	Ensure complaints can be dealt with effectively and according to policy	Staff Governor complaint panel LA advisors	Electronic documents (encrypted) E-mails Paper documents in locked drawer / room	Held on File throughout a child's time at school and up to age of 25 Data may be transferred to receiving school where relevant
This Policy has Few / No Data Compliance Requirements		This Policy has A Moderate Level of Data Compliance Requirements		This Policy has a High Level of Data Compliance Requirements	
				✓	

Appendix 1

Suggested Formal Complaint Form- to be completed by the complainant

Please complete and return to **the school office marked FOR THE ATTENTION OF MR M HOPKINS** (Chair of Governors) who will acknowledge receipt and explain the next steps.

Your name	
Pupil's name	
Your relationship to the pupil	
Full Address	
E-mail	
Phone number	
Please give details of your complaint:	
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint (Who did you speak to and what was the response):	
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?	
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.	
Signature:	Date: