

Lacey Green Primary Academy

Complaints Policy and Procedure



Policy Reviewed: January 2026

Date	Principal	Head of School	Chair of Trustees
Jan 2026	Mr S Shaw	Mr T Copland	Dr D Budd

Scope of this Procedure

1. This formal complaint procedure is for use only when informal channels have been previously explored.

Who can make a complaint?

2. This complaints procedure is not only limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Lacey Green Primary Academy about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

3. A **concern** may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.

A **complaint** may be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

4. It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Lacey Green Primary Academy takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.
5. If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, we will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, we will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.
6. We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case Lacey Green Primary Academy will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

7. A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf on a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.
8. Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher or the appropriate staff member (see Appendix A) informally in the first instance. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint at **Formal Stage 1** to the Principal.

9. For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure (Appendix C). The completion of the complaints form is the most effective method of submitting a complaint and help in completing the form can be accessed via the Academy office. However, you can raise a complaint without the form, just please ensure all the relevant information is included in your submission.
10. In accordance with equality law, the Academy will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. This may include providing information in alternative formats, assisting individuals in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.
11. The scope of this complaints procedure is covered in more detail in Appendix B.

Timescales

12. Complaints must be raised within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. The Academy will consider complaints made outside of this time frame only if the Chair of Trustees and Principal, having taken advice, are of the view that exceptional circumstances apply.
13. All timescales in this procedure refer to Academy working days for this Academy, excluding Academy holidays, In Service Training (Inset) days and bank holidays.
14. Any complaints made outside of term time will be considered to have been received on the first Academy day after the holiday period.

Anonymous complaints

15. Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated. However, the Principal or Chair of Trustees, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Serial or Unreasonable Complaints

16. Where the Academy judges a complaint to be unreasonable or where a complainant is making serial complaints or raising issues again that have previously been addressed under the final formal stage of the Academy's complaints procedure, the procedure outlined at Appendix E may be invoked.

Resolving complaints

17. At each stage in the procedure, the Academy will hope to be able to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, it will be acknowledged that the complaint is not upheld, upheld in whole or in part. In addition, one or more of the following may be offered:
 - an explanation
 - an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
 - an assurance that the Academy will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
 - an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
 - an undertaking to review Academy policies in light of the complaint
 - an apology

Withdrawal of a Complaint

18. If a complainant wishes to withdraw their complaint, they will be asked to confirm this in writing. Once a complaint has been withdrawn the same instance of an issue cannot be raised again.

Formal Stages

19. There are three formal stages.

20. Formal complaints must be in writing, preferably on the complaints form provided at Appendix C.

21. Complainants must not approach individual trustees 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 Stage 3 of the procedure.

22. Complaints (except those against the Principal) should be made in the first instance, to the Principal via the following email address: head@laceygreen.cheshire.sch.uk . Please mark them as Private and Confidential. Complaints that involve or are about the Principal should be sent via email to the Chair of Trustees, d.budd@aquaspersions.co.uk . Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

23. Any complaints which subsequently lead to staff conduct actions will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes of this will be confidential and will not be shared with the complainant.

24. Complaints about the Chair of Trustees, any individual trustee or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Head of Finance and Operations via the following email address: admin@laceygreen.cheshire.sch.uk . Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Stage 1

25. If a parent/carer is still dissatisfied after raising initial concerns, they can formally submit a complaint in writing, preferably using the form in Appendix C, to the Principal. The parent/carer will be expected to include responses to the following three questions **as part of** the Formal Stage 1 complaint in order to help reach a resolution.

- How have you initially raised your concerns? Including details of who it was raised with and when.
- Why do you feel that the matter remains unresolved?
- What action(s) would you like the school to take?

26. The Principal will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing **within 5 school days**, within term time. Within this response, the Principal may seek to clarify the nature of the complaint (by email, telephone or face-to-face). If there is no response to communication sent to the complainant from the Academy **within 10 school days**, the complaint will be closed.

27. The Principal will deal with the complaint and, if appropriate, will offer a meeting to the parent/carer at a mutually convenient time. The Principal will not agree to any audio or visual recording during the meeting.

28. The Principal may delegate the investigation to another member of the Academy's School Leadership Team, but not the decision.

29. The Principal may need to speak to other staff and students to investigate the concerns before writing a response.

Where appropriate, this could involve, a face-to-face meeting or phone call between the complainant and the Principal / Senior Leadership Team (SLT) as part of the investigation. This should happen **within 20 school days**, within term time, from the acknowledgement receipt in paragraph 26. If this timescale cannot be met, the Principal should inform the parent/carer that this will take longer. Reasons for this may be that the complaint is complex and needs more time or someone involved is absent through sickness or holidays. The Principal should, however, give written notice of a realistic timescale for the complaint to be responded to.

30. The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide an explanation of the decision made and the reason/s made for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions that Lacey Green Primary Academy will take to resolve the complaint. The Principal will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1. If there is no reply from the complainant to the Principal's Stage 1 response **within 10 school days**, during term time, the complaint will be closed.

Stage 2

31. If the complaint is not resolved at Stage 1, after the involvement of the Principal, the complaint can be referred to the Chair of Trustees via the email address: d.budd@aquaspersions.co.uk . This complaint must specify the unresolved issue and the complainant's preferred outcome.
32. If the Chair of Trustees is the subject of the complaint, complainants should refer to paragraphs 24 of this procedure.
33. The Chair of Trustees will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing **within 5 school days**, within term time. Within this response, the Chair of Trustees may seek to clarify the nature of the complaint (by email, telephone or face-to-face).
34. The Chair of Trustees has **20 school days**, within term time, from the acknowledgement receipt in paragraph 33, to investigate the complaint. Where appropriate, this could involve, a face-to-face meeting or phone call between the complainant and the Chair of Trustees as part of the investigation. If it cannot be resolved within this time, the Chair of Trustees will inform the complainant and explain why it will take longer. Reasons for this may be that the complaint is complex and needs more time or someone involved is absent through sickness or holidays. The Chair of Trustees should, however, give written notice of a realistic timescale for the complaint to be responded to.
35. The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide an explanation of the decision made and the reason/s made for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions that the Chair of Trustees will take to resolve the complaint. The Chair of Trustees will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2. If there is no reply from the complainant to the Chair of Trustees' Stage 2 response **within 10 school days**, during term time, the complaint will be closed.

Stage 3 - This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

36. If the complaint is still not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, the complainant must write to the Chair of the Trustees within the 10 days as specified in paragraph 35. The escalation must specify the unresolved issue/s and the complainant's preferred outcome. The Chair of Trustees has the authority to arrange for a Complaints Panel to consider the complaint at this final stage. Whilst a Complaints Panel may be called it will only be convened as a last resort when all other avenues have been explored.
37. The Complaints Panel will only be convened if the Chair of Trustees is unable to provide a mutually acceptable

resolution.

38. The Chair of Trustees will record the date the request to escalate the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt in writing (either by letter or email).
39. The Chair of Trustees may delegate the administrative arrangements for the convening of a Complaints Panel, to the Head of Finance and Operations at Lacey Green Primary Academy.
40. If deemed appropriate, a meeting of the Complaints Panel will be arranged within 20 Academy days of receipt of the Stage 3 request. If this time frame is not possible, the Academy will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.
41. The Complaints Panel must comprise of three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, two of whom will be Lacey Green Primary Academy Trustees and one of whom must be independent of the Governance, management and running of Lacey Green Primary Academy.
42. The Complaints Panel should meet at a time convenient to all parties. The complainant, the panel, the Principal, wider SLT members where it is deemed appropriate, and any other member of staff the complaint is about, will be invited to the meeting.
43. The complainant may bring someone with them to the panel meeting to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Other than in exceptional circumstances (as agreed in advance with the Complaints Panel) this should not be a legal representative. This companion will not have the right to speak on the complainant's behalf.
44. The complainant will be informed in advance of the meeting of the membership of the panel and asked whether they wish to raise any objections to individual members. If objections are raised the panel will give them reasonable consideration. If the ability of a panel member to give the case a fair hearing is called into question, the reasons given will be considered and that panel member may be replaced.
45. If there are fewer than two trustees from the Academy available, the Head of Finance and Operations, or the minute clerk for the hearing, will seek to source additional, independent trustees through another local school or through the Cheshire East Governance Team, in order to make up the Complaints Panel.
46. If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Head of Finance and Operations, or the minute clerk for the hearing, will decide when to hold the meeting, in consultation with the Complaints Panel. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence based on written submissions from both parties. Please see Appendix D for the arrangements and procedures for the panel hearing.
47. A suitable venue must be provided for the meeting which includes separate waiting areas for the two parties and refreshments for all involved. (This will usually be the Lacey Green Conference Centre)
48. At least ten Academy working days before the meeting, the Head of Finance and Operations, or the minute clerk for the hearing, will:
 - confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible.
 - request copies from both parties of any further written material to be submitted to the Complaints Panel at least five Academy days before the meeting.
 - request that both parties provide names of any witnesses to be called and the nature of the evidence which they will be providing, at least five days in advance of the meeting. The Complaints Panel has the discretion not to admit a witness if they do not consider their evidence to be relevant to the complaint.
49. If an Academy employee is called as a witness in a complaints meeting, they may wish to be supported by a representative of their trade union. Any such representative will be present in a supportive capacity only and will not be allowed to speak on the member of staff's behalf.

50. Minutes of the meeting will be taken by the Head of Finance and Operations, or a minute clerk appointed specifically for the hearing by the Complaints Panel.
51. There will be no audio or visual recording of the proceedings by any party unless a complainant's own disability or individual needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before recordings of meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken. A copy of the minutes of the meeting, once approved by the Complaints Panel, will be kept on file and can be requested by both parties.
52. The Complaints Panel will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.
53. The Complaints Panel will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Formal Stage 1 of the procedure.
54. The meeting will be held in private, and proceedings will be treated as confidential.
55. The meeting will follow the process outlined in Appendix D.
56. The Complaints Panel will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The Complaints Panel can:
 - uphold the complaint in whole or in part
 - dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.
57. If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the Complaints Panel will:
 - decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
 - where appropriate, recommend changes to the Academy's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.
58. The chair of the Complaints Panel will provide the complainant and the Principal/Chair of Trustees (depending on who conducted Formal Stage 3) with a full explanation of the Panel's decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 15 Academy working days. The response will also detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and, where appropriate, will include details of actions the Academy will take to resolve the complaint.
59. The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by the Academy.

Next Steps

60. If the complainant believes the Academy did not handle their complaint in accordance with this complaints procedure or it acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of its duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Formal Stage 3.
61. The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by the Academy. They will consider whether the Academy has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.
62. The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for Education,
Piccadilly Gate,
Store Street,
Manchester,
M1 2WD.



Parent Communication Flow Chart with school.

Learning Concerns

Covering all aspects related to classroom learning. Please talk to your child's class teacher sooner rather than later about anything that is worrying you.

Pastoral Concerns

Pastoral care covers our support of your child's individual needs, their emotional wellbeing and helping them with any personal problems they may be experiencing at school.

Concern relating to learning or physical needs

Where a concern is related to a special need and you feel an adjustment may be required to support successful learning e.g. issues related to ASD (autistic spectrum disorders), dyslexia or dyspraxia or physical disabilities

Please raise your concern with your **child's class teacher** in the first instance via Class Dojo.

If you feel the class teacher is unable to help, please contact your child's Key Stage Lead via Class Dojo Messages.

EYFS: Miss Rowark

Key Stage 1 (Y1&2): Mrs Fesmer

Key Stage 2 (Y3, 4, 5 & 6): Mrs Jones

In the unlikely event that your child's class teacher is unable to help for pastoral or SEN concerns, please contact **Ms Bacon** (Home-School Liaison, SENDCO and Mental Health Lead)

Email: parents@laceygreen.cheshire.sch.uk

Please make an appointment to see our Head of School **Mr Copland** / Principal **Mr Shaw** if you remain concerned after following all the steps above using the email address: head@laceygreen.cheshire.sch.uk

For Safeguarding and Staff Concerns: Please contact one of our Designated Safeguarding Leads (**Ms Bacon, Mr Shaw, Mr Copland or Mrs Jones**) using the school telephone number, or email head@laceygreen.cheshire.sch.uk

Appendix B: Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints other than those that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below. As noted below, Academy employees may not use this procedure to raise concerns relating to their employment.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admissions to the Academy Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs Academy re-organisation proposals 	<p>Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or Academy re-organisation proposals should be raised with Cheshire East Borough Council:</p> <p>Admissions (Click Here)</p> <p>SEND (Click Here)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation 	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclusion of children from Academy* 	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: (Click Here)</p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through this procedure.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Academy should complain through the Academy's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the Department for Education (see link above)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff grievances 	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the Academy's internal grievance procedures.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff conduct 	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the Academy'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>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use Academy premises or facilities 	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Curriculum - content	Please contact the Department for Education at: (Click Here)
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If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against the Academy the complaints procedure may be suspended until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Appendix C: Complaints Form

Please complete and return to the Academy office marked private and confidential for the attention of the Principal or chair of trustees 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:
Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the Academy about it.

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 acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

Appendix D: Arrangements and Procedure for Trustees' Panel Hearing

1. The trustees' panel will agree a chair from amongst their number.
2. Although this procedure may appear formal, the hearing should be conducted in as informal a way as possible, and the chair of the panel should make every effort to make all parties feel comfortable.
3. The chair of the panel will introduce all the parties present and explain the procedure to be followed, and that every effort will be made to keep the process as informal as possible.
4. The complainant will outline their complaint and explain why they are dissatisfied with the Academy's response at Formal Stage 1 and 2. The complainant may call any witnesses in support of their complaint who will attend the meeting but only for the time that they are providing information, and may be questioned by all parties.
5. The Principal/SLT* and/or Chair of Trustees and the trustees on the panel will have the opportunity to ask questions of the complainant.
6. The Principal/SLT and/or Chair of Trustees will explain their involvement in the complaint and the reasons for their decisions at the informal and formal stages. The Principal and/or chair of trustees may call any witnesses in support of his/her statement who will attend the meeting only for the time that they are providing information and may be questioned by all parties.
7. The complainant and the trustees on the panel will have the opportunity to ask questions of the Principal/SLT and/or Chair of Trustees.
8. Both parties will be given the opportunity to sum up their statements, ending with the complainant. No new material may be introduced at this stage.
9. The trustees may decide to adjourn the hearing pending further investigation at any stage if this seems necessary.
10. Both parties will leave the meeting and the trustees will consider the information that has been put to them. The Head of Operations and/or Clerk will remain for this part of the meeting in order to clarify anything if necessary, but the trustees' deliberations will not be minuted.
11. The trustees' panel must reach a unanimous or majority decision as to whether or not to uphold the complaint wholly or in part, and what action (if any) the Academy needs to take to resolve the complaint. This may include referring the matter to another formal process, whether in relation to a complaint against a trustee or a member of the Academy staff. Normally the trustees will reach a decision at this point but they may feel the need to take further advice. Where this is the case they should endeavour to reach a decision as soon as possible.
12. The trustees will communicate their response to both parties in writing as soon as possible but, in any case, within 15 working days of reaching their decision.

*SLT – Senior Leadership Team (Principal, Head of School, Deputy Headteacher and SENDCO)

Appendix E: Policy for Managing Serial or Unreasonable Complaints

1. This Academy 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 our Academy. 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.
2. This Academy defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the Academy. For example, if the complainant:
 - 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 complaint's investigation process
 - refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaint's procedure
 - insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaint's 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 Academy'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 Academy 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.
3. Complainants should try to limit their communication with the Academy 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.

4. If the behaviour continues, the Principal will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact the Academy causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.
5. In response to any incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police, where appropriate, and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from the Academy premises.

Policy Reviewed: January 2026