



FULFEN
Primary School

Leading the way
to a brighter future

L Love of Learning... E Encouraging... A Adaptable... D Determination...

Complaints Policy

Last Updated: September 2026

Review Date: September 2027



1. Definitions and aims

1.1 Definitions

The DfE defines:

A **concern** as “an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought.”

A **complaint** as “an expression or statement of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action.”

1.2 Aims

Fulfen Primary School aims to:

- Handle complaints impartially and respectfully
- Conduct thorough investigations
- Resolve issues promptly and effectively
- Respect confidentiality and ensure a lawful, fair process
- Communicate clearly and supportively with all parties
- Feed findings back into school improvement where relevant
- We promote a caring, transparent environment and believe our complaints process upholds our core values of *respect, responsibility and resilience*.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 and reflects guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), including the model complaints procedures. It also aligns with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for complaints relating to EYFS provision.

3. Scope

This policy does **not** apply to:

- Admissions
- Special educational needs assessments
- Safeguarding issues
- Suspensions and exclusions
- Whistle-blowing
- Staff grievances or discipline
- Curriculum or collective worship
- School reorganisation proposals

For these issues, please refer to the relevant school or local authority policy.



4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The complainant

Complainants should:

- Follow this policy
- Cooperate respectfully with school staff
- Avoid contacting governors directly or sharing complaints on social media

4.2 The investigator

- Responsible for:
- Gathering evidence and statements
- Writing a comprehensive report for the headteacher or complaints committee

4.3 The complaints co-ordinator

Usually the headteacher or a designated member of staff. They:

- Keep all parties informed
- Liaise with involved individuals
- Arrange reasonable adjustments
- Maintain records

4.4 Clerk to the governing board

The clerk will:

- Arrange and document hearings
- Circulate materials
- Communicate outcomes

4.5 Committee chair

The chair:

- Leads the panel hearing
- Ensures fairness and respectful conduct
- Summarises findings

5. Principles for investigation

We aim to:

- Clarify the issue
- Identify all parties and actions involved
- Determine what resolution is sought

5.1 Timescales

Complaints should be raised within **3 months** of the incident. Delays beyond this may not be considered unless exceptional circumstances apply. School consider complaints made



outside of term time to have been received on the first school day back after the holiday period. Please refer to each complaint stage below for specific timescales.

6. Informal concerns

Concerns should be raised as early as possible to the relevant staff member or the headteacher.

Contact details:

 01543 226070

 office@fulfen.staffs.sch.uk

We will acknowledge informal concerns within **3 school days**, and aim to resolve them within **10 school days**. If unresolved, the matter will proceed to the formal stage.

7. Anonymous Complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

8. Stages of complaint (not against Headteacher or Governors)

8.1 Stage 1 – Formal Investigation

Complaints may be submitted in writing, verbally, or by a third party. Include:

- Relevant dates and details
- Desired outcomes

The Headteacher will acknowledge the complaint within **5 school days** and investigate. A written response will be sent within **15 school days**.

Escalation: If unsatisfied, write to the **Clerk to the Governors (via the school office)** within **10 school days** of the decision.

8.2 Stage 2 – Review Panel

The panel will include **3 impartial governors**. A meeting will be arranged within **20 school days** of the request. Please see Appendix 1 for the Review Panel procedure.

All written material will be shared at least **5 school days** before the hearing.

The decision will be communicated in writing within **5 school days** after the meeting.

9. Complaints against the Headteacher or Governors

9.1 Stage 1 – Formal

Complaints about the Headteacher: write to **Chair of Governors** (via school office).



Complaints about the Chair/any governor: write to the **Clerk to the Governors** (via school office).

The complaint will be investigated by a suitably impartial governor or an external investigator if needed. Your complaint will be acknowledged within 5 school days. A written response will be sent within 15 school days.

9.2 Stage 2 – Review Panel

The panel will include either impartial governors or external members, depending on who is the subject of the complaint. The process follows section 8.2. A meeting will be arranged within **20 school days** of the request.

All written material will be shared at least **5 school days** before the hearing.

The decision will be communicated in writing within **5 school days** after the meeting.

10. Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we ask them to confirm this in writing.

11. Referring complaints externally

If unsatisfied, complainants may refer the matter to the **Department for Education** via:

 www.gov.uk/complain-about-school

The DfE will assess whether procedures were followed but will not re-investigate the issue.

12. Unreasonable and persistent complaints

We define a complaint as unreasonable if it is:

- Excessive, repetitive or abusive
- Aimed at disruption
- Based on previously addressed issues

We may:

- Limit contact
- Assign a single point of contact
- Decline to respond to repeated identical complaints
- Refer serious incidents to the police

13. Record keeping and confidentiality

All complaints are securely logged and retained in line with data protection law. Records will be kept confidential except where disclosure is legally required.



14. Learning lessons

The **governing board** and **senior leadership team** will use complaint outcomes to identify and implement improvements to school practice, as appropriate.

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy is reviewed at least every **2 years** by the Headteacher and approved by the **Governing Board**. Complaints data is reviewed by the **Chair of Governors** and Headteacher to monitor patterns and effectiveness.

16. Links with other policies

This policy links to:

- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Admissions policy
- Exclusion policy
- SEND policy
- Staff grievance and discipline procedures
- Whistle-blowing policy
- Data protection policy



Appendix 1 – Governing Body Complaints Committee

The Panel will want to ensure that the nature of the complaint is understood and, where possible, will seek to establish from you what actions you feel might resolve the problem. In helping to reach a conclusion, the Panel will seek to identify possible sources of information and advice to help collate the necessary evidence.

As indicated above, you will be given the opportunity to attend the complaints meeting and will have the right to bring a friend/family member or other supporter. In normal circumstances the head teacher and/or chair of governors may also attend the meeting, but will not take any part in the decision-making process. A typical complaints meeting may adopt the following structure:

- The meeting will be as informal as possible.
- Witnesses may be required to attend but only for the part of the meeting in which they give their evidence.
- After introductions, you will be invited to explain your complaint, and you will be followed by your witnesses (if any).
- The head teacher / chair of governors may ask questions of both you and your witnesses after each has spoken.
- The head teacher / chair of governors will then be invited to explain the school's actions and will be followed by the school's witnesses.
- The Panel may ask questions at any point.
- You will then be invited to sum up your complaint.
- The head teacher / chair of governors will be invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
- The panel chair will explain that both parties will hear from the Panel in writing within a set time scale.
- Both parties leave together while the panel remains to decide on the issues and reach a conclusion.

The above procedures for the complaints meeting may vary with the approval of all parties, for example you may wish to meet the Panel without the head teacher being present. Where this is the case you should be aware that it will still be necessary for the Panel to meet with the headteacher as part of the process.

