

Learning and living as children of God

(Ephesians 5:1)(You are God's children whom he loves. Try to be like God)



Complaints Policy

Reviewed Jan 2023

Review January 2025 (DfE new guidelines - serial complaints)

Complaints Policy

Aims and objectives

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We give careful consideration to all complaints and deal with them as swiftly as possible. We aim to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and, in all cases, we put the interests of the child above all other issues. We provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not 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 Deerhurst and Apperley C of E Primary School 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

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'.

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. Deerhurst and Apperley Primary School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Deerhurst and Apperley Primary School will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

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.

Time scales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents.

Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about services by Deerhurst and Appoerley Primary School, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs • School re-organisation proposals 	<p>Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Glos LA</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>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). 01452 426994</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion of children from school* 	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions.</p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints 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 school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You</p>

	may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff grievances 	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 service. Please contact them direct.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Curriculum - content 	Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

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.

Raising a concern or complaint

Informal Stage

It is normally appropriate to communicate directly with the class teacher. This may be by letter, by telephone or in person by appointment. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information and it is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved by this informal stage.

In the case of serious concerns, it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Head Teacher (or to the Chair of the Governing Body, if the complaint is about the Head Teacher).

If you are uncertain about whom to contact, please seek advice from the school office or the Clerk to the Governing Body.

Formal Stage

If your concern is not resolved at the informal stage your complaint should be made in writing and passed to the Head Teacher, (or to the Clerk to the Governing Body, for the attention of the Chair, if your complaint is about the Head Teacher) who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately. A Complaint Form is provided for guidance purposes and your convenience and may be used.

If it is not possible for you to put the complaint in writing then it may be made in person or by telephone. If the complaint is not made in writing then notes will be made of any discussions and such discussions may at the school's discretion be recorded.

You should include details that might help the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and provide copies of relevant documents.

It is also important that you include a clear statement about what you hope might reasonably contribute to a resolution of the problem.

Any written complaint should be delivered in a sealed envelope to the Head Teacher or to the Clerk to the Governing Body, as appropriate and any oral complaint should be similarly directed

You will be advised in writing within 5 school days of the school receiving your formal complaint, of how the school intends to proceed and you will be given an indication of the anticipated timescale.

The Head Teacher (or Chair) may invite you to a meeting to discuss your complaint and to seek a resolution. If you accept such an invitation, a friend may accompany you to help you explain the nature of your complaint.

If a resolution is not achieved then arrangements will be made for the matter to be referred to the Chair of Governors.

The Chair of Governors may invite you to a further meeting to discuss your complaint and to seek a resolution. Again, if you accept such an invitation, a friend may accompany you to help you explain the nature of your complaint. Within 5 schooldays of such meeting the Chair of Governors, will notify you in writing of the outcome.

If you are not satisfied with the way in which the process has been followed, you can request that the governing body reviews the process followed by the school in handling your complaint. Your request should be made in writing to the clerk to the governing body, within 10 school days of receiving notice of the outcome, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure. The procedure described below will be followed. A Review Request form is provided for your convenience.

Review Process

A panel of three members of the governing body will conduct any review of the process followed by the school. This will usually take place within 10 school days of receipt of your request.

The governors on the review panel will normally consider written submissions, but will sympathetically consider any reasonable requests to make oral representations.

The panel will first receive written evidence from the complainant of perceived failures to follow the procedure.

The panel will then invite representatives of the school (Usually the Head Teacher or the Chair of the Governing Body panel that has considered the matter), as appropriate, to make a response to the complaint.

The panel may also have access to the records kept of the process followed.

You, and the school representatives, will be informed in writing of the outcome, usually within 5 school days of the panel meeting.

The school will then consider the case closed.

If you believe that the Governing Body has acted illegally or arbitrarily in handling the complaint, then you may make representations to the Schools Complaint Unit. Further information can be obtained from the SCU by calling the National Helpline on 0370 000 2288 or going online at: www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus or by writing to:
Department for Education School Complaints Unit 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD

Managing serial and unreasonable complaints

Deerhurst and Apperley Primary School 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 school. 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.

Deerhurst and Apperley Primary School defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, 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 complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints 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 school'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 school 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.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school 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.

Whenever possible, the headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an ‘unreasonable’ marking.

If the behaviour continues, the headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Deerhurst and Apperley 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.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from Deerhurst and Apperley.

The Complaints Policy was reviewed January 2023. The policy will be shared with staff at the next available staff meeting and presented to the next FGB meeting for governor approval in March 2023

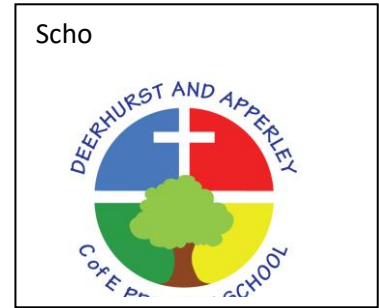
Signed: **Head Teacher Jayne Neveu**

Signed: **Chair of Governors Chris Davis**

Date:

(Name) School Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it to Head Teacher (or Clerk to the Governing Body), who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.



Your name:	
Your Address:	
Daytime telephone number:	
Evening telephone number:	

Relationship with school eg parent of a child on the school's roll	
Child's name (if relevant to your complaint):	

Please give concise details of your complaint, (including dates, names of witnesses etc), to allow the matter to be fully investigated:

You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of additional pages attached	
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What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? (ie whom have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?)

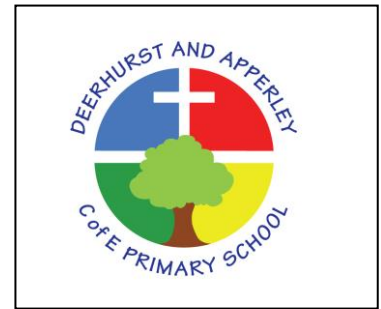
What do you hope might reasonably contribute to a resolution of the problem at this stage?

Signature:
Date:

School use:			
Received by:		Date	
Acknowledgement sent by:		Date	
Complaint referred to:			
Name		Date	
Name		Date	
Name		Date	

(Name) School Complaint Review Request Form

Please complete this form and return it to Head Teacher (or Clerk to the Governing body), who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.



Your name:	
Your Address:	
Daytime telephone number:	
Evening telephone number:	

Dear sir/madam

I submitted a formal complaint to the school on

Date:

My complaint was submitted to

Name:

and I received a response from

Name:

on

Date:

I have attached copies of my formal complaint and of the responses from the school.

I am dissatisfied with the way in which the procedure was carried out because:

You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of additional pages attached	

What do you hope might reasonably contribute to a resolution of the problem at this stage?

Signature:

Date:

School use:

Received by:		Date	
Acknowledgement sent by:		Date	
Complaint referred to:			
Name		Date	
Name		Date	
Name		Date	

