

Complaints Procedure

Introduction

Our school strives to create a positive, safe, and caring environment where children have a strong sense of belonging, and staff work diligently to build positive relationships with all pupils, parents, and members of our school community. "Achievement by All" lies at the heart of what we do, and we live our five core values of kindness, respect, imagination, resilience, and reflection.

We believe that pupils, parents, staff, governors, and the local community should feel empowered to express their views and concerns, knowing they will be handled fairly and confidentially. This complaints procedure is primarily aimed at parents or carers of children registered at the school, but it is not limited to them. Throughout this policy, the term 'parent' refers to parents, carers, and other legal guardians.

We encourage parents to engage with us proactively regarding any concerns, and we have established a clear process to ensure that all complaints are addressed promptly and effectively

A summary of how to raise a concern or complaint by parents and carers is below:

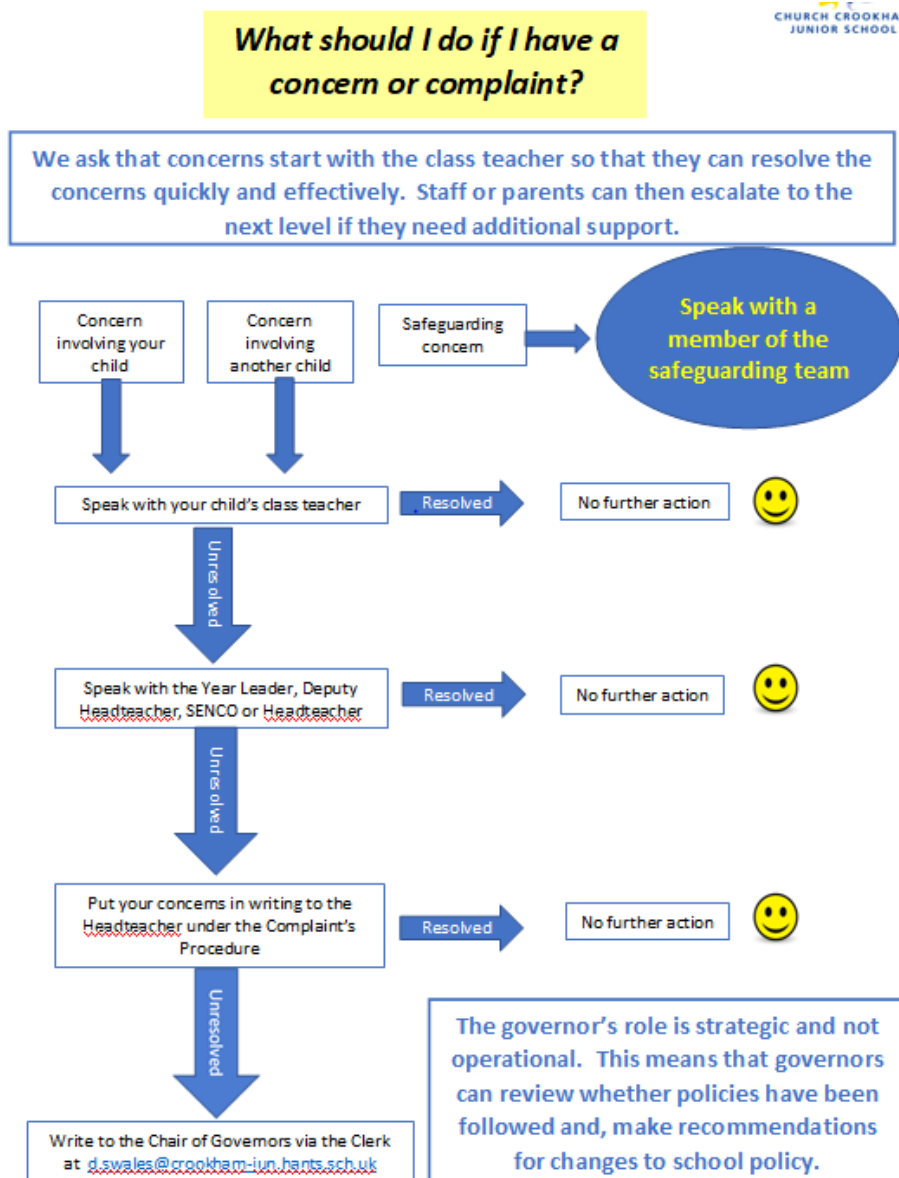


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Advice and Help4

Concerns & Complaints4

How to raise a Concern or a Complaint5

Anonymous Complaints5

Complaint Campaigns.....6

Timescales6

Resolving Complaints6

Withdrawal of a Complaint7

Complaints, Initial Concerns7

Complaints, Stage One7

Complaints, Stage Two8

Complaint Form 11

Roles and Responsibilities 12

Policy for Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints 14

Persistent Correspondents 15

Review 15

Church Crookham Junior School

This policy covers all complaints about any provision or facilities or services that a school provides with the exceptions listed below, for which there are separate (statutory) procedures.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN) • School re-organisation proposals 	<p>Concerns should be raised directly with local authorities (LA). Complaints about admission appeals for maintained schools are dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman.</p>
<p>Matters likely to require a child protection Investigation</p>	<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) 01329-225379</p>
<p>Exclusion of children from school</p>	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/school-behaviour-exclusions/exclusions</p>
<p>Whistleblowing</p>	<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 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.</p>
<p>Staff conduct</p>	<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>
<p>Staff grievances</p>	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.</p>
<p>Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities.</p>	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. They should be contacted direct.</p>
<p>National Curriculum - content</p>	<p>Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus</p>
<p>Not following the correct processes for Subject Access Requests/Freedom of Information Requests</p>	<p>Please contact the ICO at https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/</p>

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for the example the police, the 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 our school in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Advice and Help	
------------------------	--

If you are wanting support, please do raise any concerns with school staff. This includes the class teacher, SENCO, Year Leader or Headteacher.

If the concern is about special educational needs, you can seek further support from <https://www.hampshiresendiass.co.uk/> who will provide impartial special educational needs and disability information, advice and support.

For any parents who have English as an Additional Language and their English fluency and understanding is hard, Hampshire EMTAS can provide some additional support. Parents can contact EMTAS directly if they need an interpreter for any other language by phoning EMTAS on 03707 794222 or email emtas@hants.gov.uk with your contact details and the language you speak.

Concerns & Complaints	
----------------------------------	--

We recognise that there is a 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 opportunity. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. At our school, we take concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, you will be referred to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, then 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.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, we will attempt to resolve the issue, through the stages outlined within this complaint's procedure, which include an informal stage, formal stage one and formal stage two.

How to raise a Concern or a Complaint	
--	--

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 of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher or Headteacher. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

A summary of who and how to complain is on the first page of this procedure.

Important Note: Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints should the complaint progress to a later stage.

A summary of who and how to complain is available on the first page of this procedure.

- Complaints against school staff (except the headteacher) should be made in the first instance to the headteacher via the school office. Please mark these as 'private and confidential.'
- Complaints involving or about the headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors via the school office. Please mark these as 'private and confidential.'
- Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor, or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body via the school office. Please mark these as 'private and confidential.'

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

Anonymous Complaints	
-----------------------------	--

Our school will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the headteacher or chair of governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation based on its nature and potential impact. For example, if there is reference to a safeguarding issue in the complaint, it is likely that this would be investigated further.

While we encourage open communication and transparency, we understand that there may be circumstances where individuals feel unable to disclose their identity. In such cases, we advise that

any concerns be raised openly, as this allows for a more thorough investigation and resolution. Our school staff live out our values of kindness, respect and reflection and we are always keen to know if there are any identified areas for improvement.

Please note that if an anonymous complaint is investigated, the complainant may not receive feedback due to the nature of the complaint.

Complaint Campaigns	
----------------------------	--

If we receive what we consider to be a large volume of complaints, all based on the same subject and possibly from complainants not connected to the school, we will treat these complaints as part of a campaign. In such cases, we are likely to respond in one of the following ways, depending on the nature and scale of the complaint:

- **Send the same response to all complainants:** This ensures that everyone receives consistent information regarding the issue.
- **Publish a single response on the school's website:** This provides transparency and allows all stakeholders to access the same information.

To determine whether complaints constitute a campaign, we will consider factors such as the number of complaints received, the subject matter, and the involvement of individuals not connected to the school.

We will inform complainants of our decision to treat their complaints as part of a campaign and encourage open dialogue should they wish to discuss their concerns further

Timescales	
-------------------	--

Complainants 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. We will consider complaints made outside this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply (such as, significant personal issues or unforeseen events that prevented them from raising a complaint in the expected time frame).

We encourage parents to raise concerns as soon as possible after an incident occurs to facilitate a timely resolution.

Complaints made outside of term time will be considered received on the first school working day after the holiday period. Complainants will be informed of whether their complaint is accepted or rejected based on the timeframe and any exceptional circumstances that may apply.

Resolving Complaints	
-----------------------------	--

At each stage in the procedure, we aim to resolve the complaint effectively. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part.

In addition, we may offer one or more of the following responses:

Church Crookham Junior School

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we 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 school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology to the complainant

Withdrawal of a Complaint	
----------------------------------	--

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing, specifying that it can be submitted via email or letter.

Complaints, Initial Concerns	
-------------------------------------	--

Should the complainant feel that the class teacher has not addressed the concerns appropriately, or feels that further action should be taken then the complainant should discuss their concerns with the Year Leader, Assistant Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. (Details of their names are on our school website under the section called '[About Us](#)'.) It may also be appropriate to discuss concerns with our school SENCO. They will always seek to listen and resolve any concerns raised. Should this not be the case then our headteacher, and/or Chair of Governors, may be available to talk to meet with parents, staff or governors to talk through any concerns. Appointments can be arranged by contacting the School Office.

We always aim to resolve concerns and complaints promptly and respond within a maximum of 5 school days and ensure that all parties are informed and involved in the resolution process. The complainants will receive feedback on the outcome of their complaint and discussions to help maintain transparency and trust.

Complaints, Stage One	
------------------------------	--

Formal complaints must be made to the Headteacher (unless they are about the Headteacher), via the school office. This may be done in person, in writing (preferably on the complaint form), or by telephone. The Headteacher will:

record the date the complaint is received

acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within **10 school days**.

Within this response, the Headteacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The headteacher can consider whether a face-to-face meeting is the most appropriate way to address these points.

Note: The Headteacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but retains the decision-making authority.

Church Crookham Junior School

During the investigation, the Headteacher (or investigator) will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the Headteacher will provide a formal written response within **20 school days** of the date of receipt of the complaint. If the Headteacher is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide an explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions our school will take to resolve the complaint.

The Headteacher will inform the complainant when stage one of the process has been completed and how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of stage one.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher or a member of the governing body (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to complete all actions at stage one. In cases where the complaint involves both the Chair and Vice-Chair, or the entire governing body, an independent investigator appointed by the governing body will handle stage one. At the conclusion of the investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

Complaints, Stage Two	
------------------------------	--

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at stage one and wishes to escalate the matter, they can request a meeting with members of the governing body's complaints committee. This committee will consist of the first three impartial governors available and represents the final stage of the complaint's procedure.

Requesting Stage Two:

A request to escalate to stage two must be made to the clerk within **5 school days** of receipt of the stage one response. The clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within **5 school days**. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply (e.g. serious illness, emergencies).

Understanding the Role of Governors:

The complainant should be aware that governors operate at a strategic level and can make recommendations for changes to school policies but cannot alter day-to-day operations. It is important for the complainant to consider carefully the appropriate outcome they seek.

Meeting Arrangements:

The clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within **20 school days** of receipt of the stage two request. If this is not possible, the clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

Church Crookham Junior School

In some cases, the complaints committee may decide to hear the complaint based solely on written submissions.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least **3 working school days** before the date of the meeting. The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations/events that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The committee will also 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 stage one of the procedure.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented.

The committee can:

- uphold the complaint, in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint, in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld, in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The chair of the committee will provide the complainant and Church Crookham Junior School with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, **within 10 school days**. The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the DfE if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by our school.

The Complaints Committee and Clerk will receive training and advice from Hampshire Governor Services, ensuring that school procedures and policies are followed effectively.

All documentation related to the complaint, including paperwork submitted by the complainant and the school, events during the Complaints Committee meeting, and the written outcome, will remain confidential and not be shared with other members of the school community or beyond, including on social media.

After Stage Two	
------------------------	--

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their

Church Crookham Junior School

duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education (DfE) after they have completed stage two.

The DfE will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Church Crookham Junior School. They will consider whether Church Crookham Junior School has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

Grounds for DfE Involvement

Complaints may be referred to the DfE if the complainant believes the school has acted unlawfully (e.g., violating statutory duties) or unreasonably (e.g., acting in a way that no reasonable governing body would act in similar circumstances).

Contacting the DfE: The complainant can refer their complaint to the DfE through the following methods:

Online: Visit www.education.gov.uk/contactus

Telephone: Call 0370 000 2288

Postal Address: Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Documentation: We encourage complainants to keep a record of their interactions with the school throughout the complaints process, as this may provide useful context for the DfE.

Church Crookham Junior School

Complaint Form	
-----------------------	--

Please complete and return to either the Headteacher (or to the Clerk to the Governors) 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:	
Daytime/evening telephone numbers:	
Please give detail of your complaint, including whether you have to spoken to anyone at the school 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 whom:	

Roles and Responsibilities	
-----------------------------------	--

Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- cooperate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint
- ask for assistance as needed
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

Investigator

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint consideration and analysis of records and other relevant information
- liaising with the complainant and the complaints coordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal
- be mindful of the timescales to respond
- prepare a comprehensive report for the Headteacher or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

Complaints Coordinator

This could be the Headteacher/designated complaints governor or other staff member providing administrative support. The complaints coordinator should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- liaise with staff members, the Headteacher, chair of governors, clerk and local authorities (if appropriate) to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure
- be aware of issues regarding: sharing third party information additional support – this may be needed by complainants when making a complaint including interpretation support
- keep records of all communications and actions taken throughout the process

Clerk to the governing body

The clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the committee and should:

- ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, [education law](#), [the Equality Act 2010](#), [the Freedom of Information Act 2000](#), [the Data Protection Act \(DPA\) 2018](#) and the [General Data Protection Regulations \(GDPR\)](#)

Church Crookham Junior School

- set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties (if they are invited to attend) and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example stage two paperwork, school and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale
- record the proceedings and circulate the minutes of the meeting
- notify all parties of the committee's decision.

Committee chair

The committee's chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint meeting, should ensure that:

- the committee operates fairly and transparently.
- lead the meeting and facilitate discussion among committee members.
- communicate the committee's decision to the complainant and ensure that all parties are informed of the outcome.

Committee Members

Committee members should be aware that:

- The meeting must be independent and impartial and should be seen to be so. No governor may sit on the committee if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it
- The aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. We recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations
- Many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting. Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child. Committee members should strive to create a supportive atmosphere that encourages open communication.
- Extra care needs to be taken a child/young person is present during all or part of the meeting. Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that any child/young person present does not feel intimidated. The committee should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults. Where the child/young person's parent is the complainant, the committee should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child/young person needs to attend
- However, the parent should be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child/young person to attend a part of the meeting that the committee considers is not in the child/young person's best interests
- • The welfare of the child/young person is paramount in all discussions and decisions
- Hampshire Governor Services can provide training and advice around any complaints, and committee members should seek this advice before and, if necessary, during or after the meeting.
- Committee members should document the proceedings and decisions made during the meeting to ensure accountability and transparency.
- Follow-up actions should be clearly outlined, and the complainant should be informed of any progress made in implementing recommendations.

Policy for Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints	
---	--

At Church Crookham Junior School, we are 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.

Definition of Unreasonable Behaviour

Church Crookham Junior 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. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Refusal to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought despite offers of assistance.
- Refusal to cooperate with the complaints investigation process.
- Insisting on the complaint being dealt with in ways that are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practise.
- Introducing trivial or irrelevant information that they expect to be taken into account.
- Raising large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions and insisting they are fully answered immediately.
- Making unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues and seeking to have them replaced.
- Changing the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds.
- Repeatedly making the same complaint despite previous investigations concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed.
- Refusal to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented.
- Seeking unrealistic outcomes.
- Making excessive demands on school time through frequent, lengthy, and complicated contact regarding the complaint.
- Using threats to intimidate.
- Using abusive, offensive, or discriminatory language or violence.
- Knowingly providing falsified information.
- Publishing unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Encouragement for Constructive Communication

We encourage complainants to express their concerns constructively and to seek assistance in articulating their complaints effectively. Support services are available to help navigate the complaints process.

Management of Unreasonable Behaviour

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint while it is being progressed. Repeated correspondence can delay the outcome. 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 our school, causing significant disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the

Church Crookham Junior School

number of contacts in a communication plan. This plan will be reviewed after six months based on the following criteria:

- Improvement in the nature of communications.
- Willingness to cooperate with the complaints process.
- Adherence to the school's expectations of respectful communication.

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 Church Crookham Junior School.

Training and Documentation

Staff will receive training on managing unreasonable complaints and aggressive behaviour. All incidents of unreasonable behaviour and actions taken will be documented to ensure accountability and inform future assessments.

Persistent Correspondents	
----------------------------------	--

If complainants frequently contact the school, causing a significant level of disruption, but refuse to engage with the complaints procedure, Church Crookham Junior School can:

- **Restriction of Contact:** The complainant may be restricted to a single point of contact via a designated email address. This measure aims to streamline communication and reduce disruption.
- **Limitation of Contact Frequency:** The school may limit the number of times the complainant can make contact regarding the complaint.

These restrictions will be specifically related to the complainant's capacity to complain. For all other issues, the complainant can contact the school as normal.

Notification of Restrictions

The complainant will be informed in writing of any restrictions placed on their contact, including the reasons for these restrictions and the duration they will be in effect.

Review of Restrictions

Restrictions will be reviewed after a specified period (e.g., six months) or upon request from the complainant. The complainant will be given an opportunity to discuss the restrictions and present any evidence or arguments for their removal.

Documentation

All correspondence with persistent complainants will be documented to ensure transparency and accountability in the management of their complaints.

Review	
---------------	--

This policy was agreed on 23.09.2024

This policy will be reviewed Autumn 2025.