



Peel Park Primary School  
**COMPLAINTS POLICY (PARENTAL COMPLAINTS)**

Approval Date:	June 2025
Review Date:	June 2028

## **Parent Complaints Policy**

### **Peel Park Primary School**

Peel Park Primary School (the “School”) is committed to providing a high quality of education and pastoral care for its pupils. The School aims to treat parents of existing pupils fairly and manage complaints in accordance with this policy. The School aims to:

- > deal with complaints promptly and impartially
- > carry out appropriate investigations
- > provide redress when necessary

All complaints will be treated confidentially. Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated unless the School considers that the complaint warrants an investigation.

This policy aligns with the Education Act 2002 and the DfE’s Best practice guidance for school complaints procedures 2020.

The School will make this policy available on its website. The School may make reasonable adjustments, if required, to enable parents to access and complete this complaints procedure. This may include providing information in alternative formats or holding meetings in accessible locations.

There is a separate complaints policy for members of the public, that is anyone who is not a parent of a pupil at the School, at the time of the complaint.

#### **Information retention**

The School will provide a copy of this policy and details of the number of formal complaints managed during the preceding academic year to anyone who requests it.

A written record will be kept of all complaints, the action taken and at what stage of the procedure they are resolved. The School will keep records of the following information:

- > date of the complaint
- > names of parent/pupil
- > description of the complaint
- > records of the investigations and witness statements
- > names of staff handling the complaint at each stage
- > action taken as a result of the complaint
- > copies of all correspondence

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State for Education or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access.

## What will be managed pursuant to this policy

This procedure covers complaints about any provision of facilities or services by the School other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures:

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admissions to schools</li> <li>• Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs</li> <li>• School re-organisation proposals</li> </ul>	<p>Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with the local authority</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).</p>
<p>Exclusion of children from school*</p>	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions">www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions</a>.</p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i></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: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>.</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure.</p>
<p>Staff grievances</p>	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.</p>

Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.  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.
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.
National Curriculum - content	Please contact the Department for Education at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>

## Concerns and Complaints

Parents must raise the complaint within 3 months of the date of the incident or the last in a series of incidents. Only in exceptional circumstances will the School consider complaints made after this deadline.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether or not it is justified, and is likely to arise if a parent believes that something has been done wrong or something that should have been done has not been done, or the School has not acted fairly.

A complaint may be made about the School as a whole or about an individual member of staff or governor. A complaint may be submitted on the parents' behalf if written consent is given.

A concern is an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought. If a concern is raised, then the School will seek resolution.

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of this complaints procedure. The School takes concerns and complaints seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

Concerns should be raised initially with either the class teacher or Headteacher. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint. If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, or if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the Headteacher will refer you to another staff member.

## **Timeline overview**

Complaints made outside of term time may be considered to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

The School will endeavour to resolve most complaints quickly and informally. The School will aim:

- > to complete Stage 1 within 15 school days of receipt if the complaint is lodged during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods
- > to complete Stage 2 within a further 25 school days of receipt if the appeal is lodged during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods

If other organisations are investigating aspects of the complaint (for example, the police or local authority) this may impact on the School's ability to adhere to the timescales in this policy. In such cases the School will confirm new timescales.

If legal proceedings are initiated the School may not process the complaint until the legal process is completed.

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, they will be asked to confirm this in writing.

## **The Complaints Procedure**

### Stage 1 – Formal complaint

Parents should put formal complaints in writing to the Headteacher (unless the complaint is about the Headteacher). The Headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 2 school days.

In most cases the Headteacher (or delegated nominee for example in the case of a conflict) will discuss the matter with the parents. Every attempt will be made to reach a resolution at this stage but it may be necessary for the Headteacher (or nominee) to carry out further investigations. Written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint will be kept.

Once the Headteacher is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established and has reached a decision, the parents will be informed of the decision in writing. The Headteacher will give reasons for the decision and, where necessary, action to be taken to resolve the complaint within 15 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint. If the Headteacher is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the parent with an update and revised response date.

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 the actions at Stage 1.

If the complaint is:

- > jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- > the entire Governing Body or
- > the majority of the Governing Body

the complaint will be escalated to an independent investigator to be investigated. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will give reasons for their decision and, where necessary, action to be taken to resolve the complaint.

If the parents are not satisfied with the decision at Stage 1, they may proceed to Stage 2.

### Stage 2 – Complaints Committee

If the parents decide to proceed to Stage 2 they will be referred to the Clerk to the Governing Body. Parents must make a written request within 5 school days of receipt the decision complained of, stating the grounds of the complaint and desired outcome.

The matter will be referred to the Complaints Committee, consisting of 3 governors with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. If there are fewer than 3 governors from the School available, the Clerk will source any additional, independent governors through another local school or through the local authority's Governor Services team.

If the complaint is about the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, the majority of the Governing Body, or the entire Governing Body, a completely independent Complaints Committee will hear the complaint at Stage 2.

The Clerk to the Complaints Committee, on behalf of the Committee, will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a meeting to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 15 school days of the receipt of the request. If the parent rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the parent's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

The Complaints Committee will seek to resolve the complaint without the need for further investigation. If necessary, the Complaints Committee will decide how further investigation should be conducted. The Complaints Committee may require that further particulars of the complaint be provided ahead of the meeting. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties normally not later than 5 school days prior to the meeting.

The Complaints Committee will not review any new complaints or allow information unrelated to the original complaint to be included at Stage 2. The Complaints Committee

will not normally accept as evidence recordings of any conversations that were obtained covertly or without all parties' agreement.

The Complaints Committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the parent's needs. If the parent is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Parents must confirm to the Clerk who will be attending at least 5 school days before the meeting.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings are not normally permitted unless a parent's disability requires it and the consent of all parties has been obtained. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before the recordings of meetings take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. Media representatives are not permitted to attend.

The Complaints Committee may either:

- > dismiss the complaint in whole or in part if the Committee considers the complaint is not made out; or
- > uphold the complaint in whole or in part if the Committee considers the complaint is made out.

The Complaints Committee cannot make a financial reward or impose sanctions on staff, pupils or parents. The Complaints Committee may make recommendations on these or other issues (such as an apology or an explanation of the steps that will be taken to ensure that it will not happen again) to the full Governing Body.

Normally within 10 school days of the meeting the Complaints Committee will write to the parents to confirm the decision and the reasons for it. This will be sent to the email address held on School records unless otherwise notified or alternatively given to the parents. The decision will also, where relevant, be provided to the person complained about and will be available for inspection at the School.

### **Serial or persistent complaints**

The complaint will be viewed as serial or persistent if the parents remain dissatisfied following Stage 2 and attempts to reopen the same or similar issues.

In the event of serial or persistent complaints, the Chair of the Governing Body will inform the parents in writing that all stages of the complaint's policy have been completed and that the matter is closed. Any further contact from the parents regarding the complaint will be ignored by the School.

### **Unreasonable Complaints**

Any of the following actions may be taken if the Headteacher or Chair of the Governing Body considers that a complaint is unreasonable:

- > implementing a limited communications strategy
- > advising that a third-party act on the parents' behalf
- > notifying the parent that this policy will not be implemented and there will be no further response to their complaint

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable if the parent:

- > refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of this policy
- > makes excessive demands on school time by either frequent, lengthy, complicated and/or stressful contact with staff regarding their complaint
- > refuses to co-operate with the investigation process while seeking for their complaint to be resolved
- > insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with this policy or with good practice
- > introduces trivial or irrelevant information and expects it to be taken into account and commented on
- > raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions insisting they are fully answered, sometimes immediately and to their own timescales
- > repeatedly makes the same complaint and refuses to accept previous findings despite responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed
- > changes the basis of their complaint during investigations
- > seeks to replace or makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the complaint
- > seeks an unrealistic outcome

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the parent displays the following behaviour:

- > uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language
- > makes defamatory statements and/or makes statements known to be false
- > publishes, or threatens to publish, information including on social media, websites, or in newspapers
- > acts maliciously
- > acts aggressively, using threats, intimidation or violence

Where the parent has displayed aggressive or abusive behaviour the School may ask the parent to leave the School premises, inform the police and bar the parent from being on the School premises.

**Department for Education**

If following completion of Stage 2 the complainant wishes to take the complaint further, they may contact the Department for Education: [Contact the Department for Education - Contact type - GOV.UK](#)

The Department for Education will only consider complaints where there is evidence that the School:

- > does not have a complaints procedure
- > did not provide a copy of its complaints procedure when requested
- > does not have a procedure that complies with statutory regulations
- > has not followed its published complaints procedure
- > has not allowed its complaints procedure to be completed

If the Department for Education upholds a complaint it may:

- > ask the School to change its complaints procedure so it complies with legal requirements
- > ask the School to reconsider your complaint from an appropriate stage in the procedure
- > remind the School of its requirements to comply with its complaints policy
- > remind the School of its requirements to comply with the legislation and statutory guidance
- > monitor future exclusions at the School in relation to complaints about exclusions

The Department for Education will not overturn the decision taken by the School.

### **Review**

The Governing Body will monitor the nature and frequency of formal complaints. This policy will be evaluated in the light of complaints made and their resolution to contribute to continuous improvement.

<b>Approved by:</b>	J.Makin/Governing Board	<b>Date:</b> 23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2025
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2025	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	June 2028	