



Beeston Primary School

Complaints Policy

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1. Introduction

Beeston Primary School ("the School") understands the importance of education and fostering good relationships between home and school. However, we know that sometimes concerns or complaints arise and the School wants to address these matters as quickly and efficiently as possible.

This policy sets out the School's approach to handling concerns and complaints through a three-stage process intended to resolve issues as amicably as possible to maintain positive relationships with families and the wider community.

2. Who can make a complaint?

Anyone can make use of this policy to make a complaint to the School about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. This includes parents, carers, pupils, members of the public.

Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), this complaints procedure will be used.

3. Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This policy covers all complaints about any community facilities or services provided by the School. It does not extend to complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures and/or other policies, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Information
• Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs	Contact Leeds City Council
• Pupil Attendance Enforcement	These matters including the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices are governed by Department for Education guidance and Local Authority procedures and sit outside of the complaints policy.
• Child Protection matters	Handled under the School's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and statutory guidance. For serious concerns: contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) via Leeds City Council.
• Suspension or Permanent Exclusion of children from school	The School's Complaints Policy cannot be used to challenge or appeal a suspension or permanent exclusion. These decisions are subject to separate statutory procedures set out in education law. Further information can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions . Complaints about the application of the School's Behaviour Policy may be considered under this Complaints Policy.
• Whistleblowing	• Internal whistleblowing procedure (for employees, temporary staff, contractors).

	• Secretary of State for Education – prescribed person for whistleblowing in education: www.education.gov.uk/contactus • Volunteer staff: complain through this policy, or (if appropriate) to the Local Authority / Department for Education.
• Staff grievances	Dealt with under the School's Internal Grievance Procedures.
• Staff conduct	Dealt with under the School's Internal Disciplinary Procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action but will be notified the matter is being addressed.
• Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Dealt with under the School's Internal Disciplinary Procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action but will be notified the matter is being addressed.
• National Curriculum - content	Contact the Department for Education www.education.gov.uk/contactus
• Parent conduct	Managed by HY Legal Firm on behalf of the school

When lots of people complain about the same issue:

If the School receives a large number of similar complaints (a "campaign"), it will not respond to each one individually through the normal complaints procedure. Instead, the School may issue a single response, which could be published or shared with parents.

If other agencies are involved:

Sometimes other organisations, such as the Police, safeguarding teams, or a Tribunal, may be investigating the same issue. If this happens, the School's complaints process may be delayed or paused until their investigations are complete.

If legal action is taken:

If someone takes the School to court about their complaint, the School may stop dealing with the complaint under its normal procedure. The complaints process would only restart after the legal case is finished.

4. 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'*.

5. How to raise a concern or complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing to 'mainoffice@beestonprimary.org' or by telephone (0113 2716978). They may be raised by the individual affected or by a third party with consent.

Anonymous complaints:

These will not normally be investigated unless a Deputy Headteacher acting on behalf of the Headteacher, or the Chair of Governors, decides there is sufficient cause.

Temporary Governing Board Arrangements for Complaints

The Governing Board has agreed a temporary variation to the operation of this Complaints Policy. This arrangement has been put in place to provide a clear and consistent allocation of responsibility for the management of concerns and complaints and to ensure that they continue to be handled promptly, fairly and consistently.

During this temporary period, responsibility for Headteacher-level complaint functions is delegated to the Deputy Headteachers. The Deputy Headteachers are authorised by the Governing Board to act on behalf of the school and to exercise these functions in place of the Headteacher.

Any request from a complainant to meet with, speak to or correspond directly with the Headteacher regarding a concern or complaint will be referred to a Deputy Headteacher. The Headteacher will not ordinarily have direct involvement in the handling, investigation or determination of complaints during this temporary arrangement.

This arrangement relates specifically to the complaints process. It does not prevent the Headteacher from becoming involved with a parent, carer or other individual where involvement is required by law or for other statutory reasons.

Complaints specifically about the Headteacher remain the responsibility of the Chair of Governors and are not delegated to the Deputy Headteachers.

The Governing Board will keep this temporary arrangement under review. These temporary arrangements will be formally reviewed by the Governing Board in September 2027 to determine whether they should continue, be amended or cease.

At no stage should a complainant approach an individual governor to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act independently and doing so may prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 2 or 3 of the procedure.

Time limit to raise complaints:

Complaints should be raised within three months of the incident. Complaints received outside this time will not normally be considered.

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

Equality law considerations:

Reasonable adjustments will be made in line with equality law.

Withdrawal of a Complaint:

If you wish to withdraw a complaint, please confirm in writing to:
mainoffice@beestonprimary.org

6. The Stages of a Complaint

This policy consists of three distinct stages:

- **Stage 1** – Informal resolution (concerns raised with staff).
- **Stage 2** – Formal written complaint, investigated by a senior leader, a Deputy Headteacher acting on behalf of the Headteacher, or a governor as appropriate.
- **Stage 3** – Governors' Appeal Panel, which is the final stage of the School's internal process.

Appendix B consists of a flow chart, which clearly shows the process/steps to follow for complaints at each stage of this Complaints Policy.

7. Recording of Meetings and Telephone Conversations

Recording of Calls and Meetings

In line with Leeds City Council guidance, data protection legislation, and safeguarding best practice, the school does not permit the recording of telephone calls, online meetings, or face-to-face meetings by parents, carers, visitors or external parties, unless explicit prior written consent has been obtained from all participants.

This approach is taken for the following reasons:

- **Data Protection (UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018)**

Discussions with school staff frequently include personal data relating to children, families and staff. Recording conversations without consent risks unlawful processing, storage and distribution of personal or sensitive information.

- **Safeguarding and confidentiality**

Meetings and calls may involve safeguarding information or discussions about vulnerable pupils or families. The school has a duty to ensure that such information is managed, recorded and shared appropriately and securely.

- **Staff wellbeing and professional dialogue**

The recording of conversations can inhibit open, honest and constructive discussion and may place staff under unnecessary pressure, impacting wellbeing and effective communication.

• **Accuracy and misuse of information**

Recordings may be edited, shared without authorisation, or taken out of context, leading to misunderstanding or misrepresentation of discussions.

To promote transparency, safeguard all parties and ensure an accurate record of discussions, the school reserves the right for two members of staff to be present during meetings with parents, carers or external parties. This may include face-to-face meetings, online meetings and telephone conversations.

Where reasonably practicable, telephone calls relating to complaints, safeguarding concerns, behaviour matters, attendance issues, disciplinary matters or other sensitive issues will be conducted with a second member of staff listening to the conversation. Similarly, meetings concerning significant school matters will normally be attended by two members of staff.

The presence of a second member of staff helps to:

- Ensure an accurate and impartial record of discussions and agreed actions.
- Provide support and safeguarding for all parties involved.
- Reduce the risk of misunderstandings, disputes or misrepresentation of conversations.
- Promote professional conduct and respectful communication.
- Provide an independent witness where discussions involve sensitive, complex or contentious matters.

The school will make reasonable efforts to inform parents, carers and other participants when a second member of staff is present or listening to a telephone conversation. The attendance of a second member of staff does not constitute recording of the conversation and is consistent with the school's safeguarding, complaints, staff wellbeing and health and safety procedures.

Where a formal record of a discussion is required, the school will ensure that face-to-face meetings are appropriately minuted. Agreed notes or minutes will be shared with all parties following the meeting to provide a clear, accurate and transparent record of discussions and outcomes.

If a parent or carer indicates that they intend to record a conversation or meeting without consent, the school reserves the right to decline or terminate the call or meeting and to rearrange the discussion under appropriate conditions. Any concerns arising from such situations will be managed in line with the school's published procedures.

8. Stage 1 – Concerns or Informal Complaints

Concerns or informal complaints should normally be addressed first to the relevant class teacher. Class teachers have 'on the ground' day-to-day involvement with your child's education and are very often best placed to resolve your concerns. Where this is not appropriate, another suitable staff member will be asked to respond.

The School will aim to resolve concerns or informal complaints in person, via telephone, or via a written response, within **10** school days of receipt, or provide an update with reasons for any delay.

Stage 2 formal complaints will be considered by School once Stage 1 has been exhausted.

9. Stage 2 – Formal Complaints

How to complain:

Complainants are encouraged to use the Complaint Form at Appendix A. However, complaints will also be accepted in writing (letter or email) or verbally if recorded by a member of staff.

Who to complain to:

- About staff (except the Headteacher): to a Deputy Headteacher, who will act on behalf of the Headteacher for the purposes of this policy.
- About the Headteacher: to the Chair of Governors.
- About the Chair or Governors collectively: to a Deputy Headteacher acting on behalf of the Headteacher, who will arrange an independent investigator.

Process:

- Complaint acknowledged in writing within **5** school days.
- Investigator reviews complaint, meets parties if needed, and keeps records.
- Written outcome sent within 20 school days of receipt of the complaint (or with an explanation and revised timescale if unavoidable).

The outcome letter will set out findings, actions to be taken, and how to escalate if dissatisfied.

10. Stage 3 – Governors' Appeal Panel

What is the purpose of Stage 3?

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, an appeal can be made to a panel of governors under Stage 3. This is the final stage of the internal complaint's procedure.

The aim of a panel is **not to reinvestigate the complaint**. The panel will review **how** the complaint has been investigated and determine whether this has been conducted fairly.

The Panel will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint.

Request deadline: within **5** school days of receiving the Stage 2 outcome.

Appeals to Stage 3 may be made on the complaints template provided at Appendix A at the end of this policy.

Who will consider the appeal?

A panel of governors will consider appeals at Stage 3 ('Panel'). The Panel will consist of three governors with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. If there are fewer than three governors from the School available, the School will source any additional, independent governors.

Complaints about the Chair and Vice Chair jointly, the majority of, or the entire governing body will be heard by a committee of independent Panel members.

Can the complainant be accompanied at the Panel meeting?

The complainant may attend the panel hearing. They may bring someone along to provide support at the Panel meeting. This can be a relative or friend. Representatives from legal or the media are not permitted to attend.

How will the complaint be handled?

School will record the date the stage 3 complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.

School will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of a meeting with the Panel. They will aim to convene a meeting within 20 school days of receipt of the Stage 3 request. If this is not possible, the School will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed. If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the School will decide when to hold the meeting. The Panel will proceed in the complainant's absence.

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 any proceedings are recorded.

Prior to the meeting, the Panel will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Panel.

The Panel will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The Panel may adjourn the meeting to conduct further investigation or obtain additional evidence.

The Panel can:

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

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

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

An outcome letter will be sent to the complainant and the School within 10 school days of the meeting. The response will detail:

- an explanation of the decision and the reason(s) for it;
- how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their

complaint has been handled by the School.

11. Next Steps

If the complainant believes the School has not followed its procedure properly, acted unlawfully, or acted unreasonably, they may contact the Department for Education after completing Stage 3:

- Online: www.education.gov.uk/contactus
- Telephone: 0370 000 2288
- Post: Department for Education, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

The DfE will not normally reinvestigate the substance of a complaint.

12. Vexatious or Repeated Complaints, and Unreasonable or Persistent Contact

The purpose of this section is to ensure that the School maintains positive, respectful, and constructive communication with parents, carers, and members of the community. It sets out how the School will respond when communication or behaviour becomes unreasonable, persistent, or vexatious, in order to safeguard staff wellbeing, protect resources, and ensure the School's primary focus remains on delivering high-quality education to all pupils.

Commitment to Positive Relationships: The School is committed to fostering positive relationships with parents, carers, and members of the wider community. We are dedicated to open and transparent communication, and to addressing complaints and concerns in a fair, consistent, and timely manner under the procedures outlined in this policy.

In most cases, we will not seek to limit contact between individuals and the School. However, we do expect all communications to be respectful. We will not tolerate behaviour that is abusive, offensive, or threatening, and will take appropriate action to protect staff and maintain a safe and supportive environment for all.

Reasonable Communication: To support effective resolution of concerns, individuals are asked to keep their communications with the School proportionate and necessary. Repeated or excessive correspondence (whether by letter, telephone, email, or text) is not helpful and may delay outcomes being reached.

Managing Unreasonable Behaviour: Where concerns arise, a Deputy Headteacher acting on behalf of the Headteacher, or the Chair of Governors, will, wherever possible, seek to resolve matters informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking. If such behaviour continues, a Deputy Headteacher acting on behalf of the Headteacher will write to the individual, explaining that their conduct is considered unreasonable and requesting that it is modified. Where communication becomes excessive and causes significant disruption, the School may introduce a communication plan. This may specify the methods of communication permitted and limit the frequency of contact. Communication plans will be reviewed after six months.

Aggression, Abuse or Violence: In response to any serious incident of aggression, abuse, or violence, the School may revoke an individual's implied licence to enter the School

premises, resulting in a ban. Where conduct is sufficiently serious, the School will also contact the Police.

Vexatious or Persistent Complaints: The School reserves the right to identify and manage complaints or concerns that are deemed vexatious or persistent in nature. This may include cases where:

- a communication order is in place, or
- a ban from the School site has been imposed due to unreasonable behaviour.

In such circumstances, matters may be managed outside the scope of this policy, following advice from HY Legal Firm.

Examples of Unreasonable Behaviour: Unreasonable behaviour, or vexatious and repeated complaints, hinders the School's ability to provide education to pupils as it redirects valuable resources. Examples of such behaviour include (but are not limited to):

- refusing to articulate a complaint, specify the grounds, or identify the outcomes sought, despite offers of assistance
- refusing to co-operate with staff and published procedures
- refusing to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insisting that matters are dealt with in ways incompatible with the School's procedures or good practice
- introducing trivial or irrelevant information and expecting it to be taken into account
- raising large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions and insisting on immediate answers, often to their own timescales
- making unjustified complaints about staff dealing with the issues, and seeking to have them replaced
- changing the basis of a complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly raising the same matter, questions, or complaint
- refusing to accept the findings of an investigation where the complaints procedure has been fully and properly followed
- seeking unrealistic or disproportionate outcomes
- making excessive demands on staff time through frequent, lengthy, or complicated contact in person, in writing, by email, or by telephone
- breaching the School's Parental Code of Conduct
- using threats, intimidation, or harassment
- using abusive, offensive, or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly providing falsified information
- publishing unacceptable or defamatory information on social media or other public forums
- pursuing matters that are unmeritorious or lacking in serious purpose or value
- demanding redress in ways that are intended to disrupt or cause annoyance.

13. Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body, or more frequently if required, to ensure that it remains up to date, effective, and aligned with best practice and legal requirements.

The Deputy Headteachers, acting on behalf of the Headteacher for complaints matters, will monitor the implementation of this policy and provide updates to the Governing Body as necessary. Any amendments will be communicated to staff, parents, and carers.

Policy status: Statutory

Date of approval: September 2026

Date of next review: September 2027 (Unless statutory guidance changes in the meantime)

**This Policy has been written by Beeston Primary School and HY Education
Solicitors Sandbrook House, Sandbrook Way, Rochdale, OL11 1RY**

**This policy adheres to all statutory requirements set out by the Department for
Education**

Appendix A – Complaint Form

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address: Postcode: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number:
What stage of the policy are you writing under?
If you are writing to appeal to Stage 3, have you completed Stage 2?
Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.

