



## Complaints Procedure 2026-28

Ratification by Warrender Full Governing Body	
Policy Updated:	January 2026
Date of next Review	January 2028
Signature (Governors):	W Maynard
Signature (Headteacher):	HBrown



## 1. Aims

The Governing Body and staff at Warrender School are committed to providing an open environment where problems and issues can be dealt with quickly and in a positive manner. We welcome feedback, opinions and complaints from parents/carers, pupils and the wider community. It is in everyone's interest that concerns, issues and complaints are resolved at the earliest opportunity. We try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed.

When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel, where necessary
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response
- Respect complainants' desire for confidentiality
- Treat complainants with respect and courtesy
- Make sure that any decisions we make are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate, in line with the principles of administrative law
- Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process
- Consider how the complaint can feed into school improvement evaluation processes

The complaints procedure is available on the school website, upon request from the school office and provided to complainants when they make formal complaints.

If complaints are made anonymously, the school will investigate these following same procedures as outlined in this policy.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

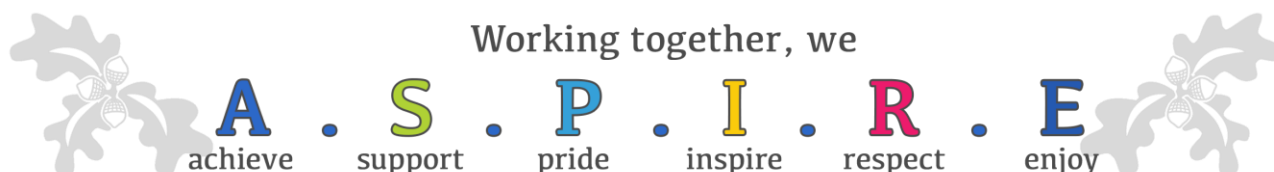
This document meets the requirements of section 29 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which states that schools must have and make available a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The complainant

The complainant will get a more effective and timely response to their complaint if they:

- Follow these procedures
- Co-operate with the school throughout the process, and respond to deadlines and communication promptly
- Ask for assistance as needed
- Treat all those involved with respect





- Do not publish details about the complaint on social media

## 3.2 The investigator

An individual will be appointed to look into the complaint and establish the facts. They will:

- Interview all relevant parties, keeping notes
- Consider records and any written evidence and keep these securely
- Prepare a comprehensive report to the headteacher or complaints committee, which includes the facts and potential solutions

## 3.3 The complaints co-ordinator

The complaints co-ordinator can be:

- The headteacher
- The designated complaints governor
- Any other staff member providing administrative support

The complaints co-ordinator will:

- Keep the complainant up to date at each stage in the procedure
- Make sure the process runs smoothly by liaising with staff members, the headteacher, Chair of Governors, clerk and the local authority
- Be aware of issues relating to:
  - Sharing third party information
  - Additional support needed by complainants, for example interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person
- Keep records

## 3.4 Clerk to the Governing Board

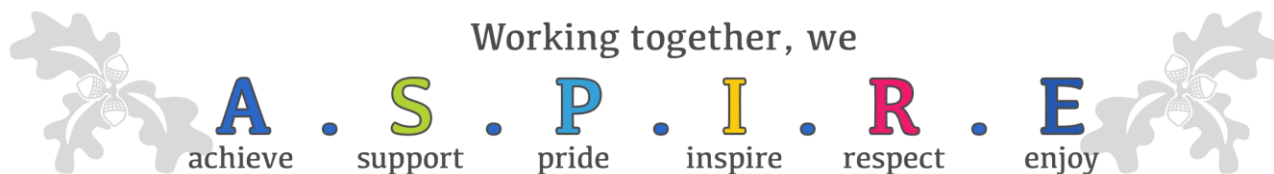
The clerk will:

- Be the contact point for the complainant and the complaints committee, including circulating the relevant papers and evidence before complaints committee meetings
- Arrange the complaints hearing
- Record and circulate the minutes and outcome of the hearing

## 3.5 Committee chair

The committee chair will:

- Chair the meeting, ensuring that everyone is treated with respect throughout





- Make sure all parties see the relevant information, understand the purpose of the committee, and are allowed to present their case

## 4. Stages of Complaint

This policy does not cover complaints such as:

- Staff grievances or disciplinary matters
- Admission decisions
- Statutory assessment of Special Educational Needs
- Safeguarding matters
- Exclusion decisions
- Whistleblowing concerns

Our complaints procedure is divided into four clear stages, throughout which we endeavour to respond clearly and effectively to meet the concerns raised within a reasonable timeframe. If there is concern with Acorns wraparound care, external provider clubs, please contact them directly and follow their complaints procedure. For complaints regarding Warrender, we ask that each procedural step is followed in sequence to retain professionalism and so that any further action(s) can be followed efficiently.

### Stage One (Informal)

- The school will take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter quickly. It may be the case that the provision or clarification of information will resolve the issue.
- The complainant should raise the complaint as soon as possible with the relevant member of staff or the headteacher as appropriate, either in person or by letter, telephone or email. If the complainant is unclear who to contact or how to contact them, they should contact the school office [office@warrenderschool.org.uk](mailto:office@warrenderschool.org.uk) The school will acknowledge informal complaints. Where an investigation or information is required, a response will be given within 5 school days.
- If the complaint is about the Headteacher, the parent/carer should contact the Chair of Governors. If the complaint is from a member of the wider community, the procedure is to contact the school office by telephone, letter or email ([office@warrenderschool.org.uk](mailto:office@warrenderschool.org.uk))

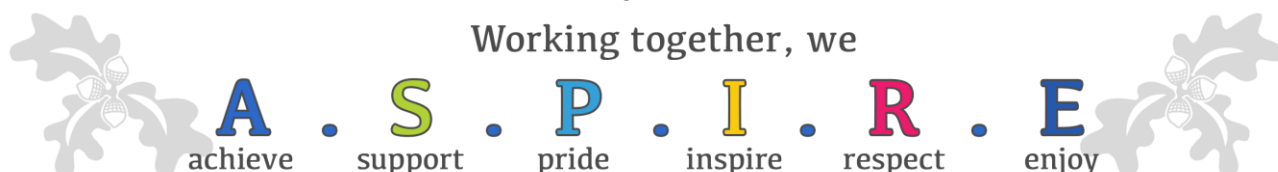
### Discussion with staff member(s)

Stage one aims to resolve the concern, issue or complaint through an informal process with the appropriate member of staff:

- The first point of contact should be the class teacher, or other member of staff when appropriate.
- The member of staff will see you or contact you in writing, as soon as possible after your concern is made known.
- The staff member will ensure that you are clear what action has been agreed.
- The staff member will discuss the concern, issue or complaint with you again at a mutually agreed time.
- If you are dissatisfied following this informal stage, you may take your complaint to the first formal stage, Stage Two.
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### Stage Two (Formal)

- Following an informal discussion with the class teacher or other staff member, if the issue has not been resolved, the complaint should be put in writing and will be considered by the Headteacher. The





complainant should provide details such as relevant dates, times, and the names of witnesses of events, alongside copies of any relevant documents, and what they feel would resolve the complaint.

- 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 3 school days. The headteacher (or designated member of the senior leadership team) will call a meeting to clarify concerns, and seek a resolution. The complainant may be accompanied to this meeting, and should inform the school of the identity of their companion in advance. In certain circumstances, the school may need to refuse a request for a particular individual to attend any such meeting – for example, if there is a conflict of interest.
- The headteacher (or other person appointed by the headteacher for this purpose) will then conduct their own investigation. The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant within 15 school days.

## Consideration by the Headteacher

This is the first formal stage when written complaints are considered by the Headteacher:

- The complaint should be addressed to the Headteacher. If your complaint concerns the Headteacher personally, it should be sent to the school office marked 'For the attention of the Chair of Governors'.
- We will acknowledge your complaint in writing within three working days.
- We will send you a copy of these procedures with the acknowledgement.
- The Headteacher may invite you to a meeting to discuss the complaint further.
- The Headteacher may be accompanied by a suitable person if appropriate.
- The Headteacher may talk to pupils, staff and others involved as necessary.
- The Headteacher will keep written records of all meetings and telephone conversations.
- Once the Headteacher has established all the relevant facts, a written response will be sent to you.
  - Normally, we would expect to respond in full within 15 working days. If this is not possible, we will write to explain the reason for the delay and let you know when to expect the full response.
  - If you are dissatisfied following Stage Two, you may take your complaint to the second formal stage, Stage Three.

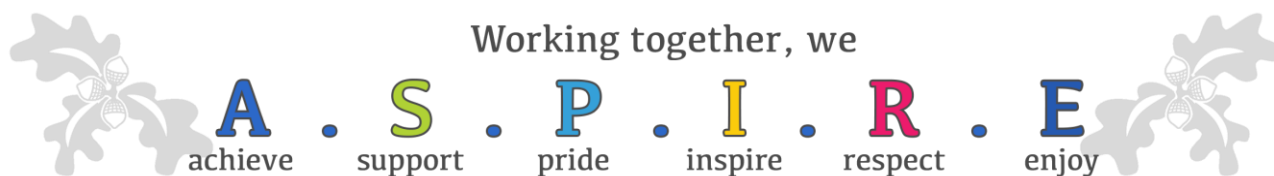
## Stage Three (Formal)

- If the parent/carer is not satisfied with the response of the Headteacher, the parent/carer should put the complaint in writing via the school office addressed Private and Confidential to the Chair of Governors within three days of the written response from the headteacher. The Chair or nominated governor will consider the complaint and respond in writing within 15 school days.

## Consideration by the Chair of Governors or Nominated Governor

In this second formal stage, written complaints are considered directly by the Chair of Governors or a specifically nominated governor:

- The complaint should be sent to the school office marked 'For the attention of the Chair of Governors'.
- We will acknowledge your complaint within three working days.
- The Chair of Governors or nominated governor will establish what has happened to date, the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved.





- The Chair of Governors or nominated governor may invite you to a meeting to discuss the complaint further.
- The Chair of Governors or nominated governor may be accompanied by a suitable person if appropriate.
- The Chair of Governors or nominated governor may talk to the Headteacher and others involved with the complaint to date.
- The Chair of Governors or nominated governor will keep written records of all meetings and telephone conversations.
- Once the Chair of Governors or nominated governor has established all the relevant facts, a written response will be sent to you.
- Normally, we would expect to respond in full within 15 working days. If this is not possible, we will write to explain the reason for the delay and let you know when to expect the full response.
- If you are dissatisfied following Stage Three, you may take your complaint to Stage Four.
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## Stage Four (Formal)

- If the parent/carer is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage Three, the complaint is heard by the Governing Body Complaints Review Panel. The panel will comprise of three members that have had no previous connection with the complaint. The parent/carer (who may be accompanied or represented) and the Headteacher will be present. The panel will hear and consider the complaint. Within 15 working days of the panel meeting, the Chair of the panel will write to the parent/carer notifying them of the panel's decision with a copy to the Headteacher.

## Consideration by a Governors Complaint Review Panel

This is when the complaint is considered by the Governors Complaints Review Panel:

- If your complaint has already been through Stages 1, 2 and 3 and you are not happy with the outcome, the Chair of Governors will instruct the Clerk to set up a Complaints Review Panel to consider it.
- The purpose of this arrangement is to present your complaint to a panel of governors who have no prior knowledge of the details of the complaint and therefore, can consider it without prejudice. One member will be independent of the management and running of the school. This person will be sourced by the Chair of Governors using their professional governance network.
- The aim of the Complaints Review Panel is to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the parent/carer. We do recognise however, that it may sometimes only be possible to establish facts and make recommendations which will reassure you we have taken your complaint seriously.

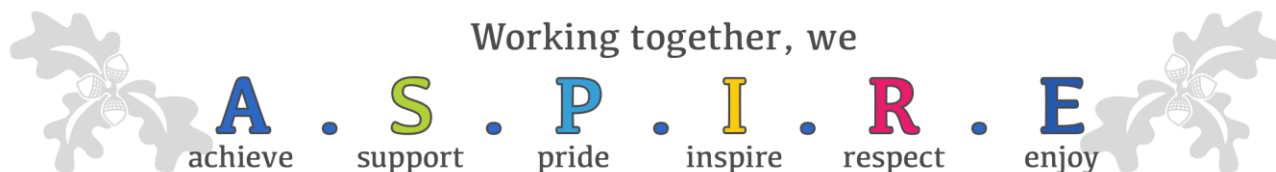
## The Outcome

The committee can:

- Uphold the complaint, in whole or in part
- Dismiss the complaint, in whole or in part

If the complaint is upheld, the committee will:

- Decide the appropriate action to resolve the complaint





- Where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future

## The Complaints Review Panel operates according to the following formal procedures:

- The Clerk to the governing body will aim to arrange for the panel meeting to take place within twenty working days.
- The Clerk will ask you whether you wish to provide any further written documentation in support of your complaint.
- The Headteacher will be asked to prepare a written report for the panel. Other staff involved in your complaint will also be asked to prepare reports/statements.
- The Clerk will inform all parties involved in writing, at least five working days in advance the date and time of the meeting.
- The Clerk will send you all relevant documentation and details of what will happen at the panel meeting.
- You are entitled to be accompanied to the meeting by a person of your choice.
- The chair of the panel will ensure that minutes are taken of the meeting.
- Following the panel meeting, the clerk will send you notification of the panel's decision in writing within ten working days. The letter will explain what further rights of appeal are available to you.

## 6. Complaints against the headteacher, a Governor or the Governing Board

### 6.1 Stage 1: informal

Complaints made against the headteacher or any member of the governing board should be directed to the Chair of Governors, via the school office. If the complaint is about the headteacher or 1 member of the governing board (including the chair or vice-chair), a suitably skilled and impartial governor will carry out the steps at stage 1 informal.

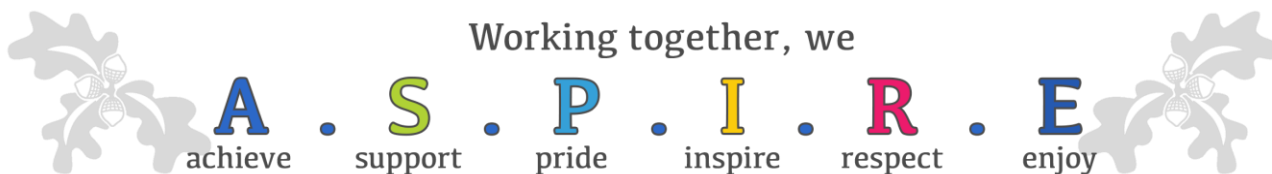
### 6.2 Stage 2: formal

If the complaint is jointly about the chair and vice-chair, the entire governing board or the majority of the governing board, an independent investigator will carry out the steps in formal procedure. They will be appointed by the governing board and will write a formal response at the end of their investigation.

### 6.3 Stage 3: review panel

If the complaint is jointly about the chair and vice-chair, the entire governing board or the majority of the governing board, a committee of independent governors will hear the complaint. They will be sourced from local schools and the local authority and will carry out the procedures for the stage 3 review panel.

## 7. Referring complaints on completion of the school's procedure





If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the school's complaints procedure, they can refer their complaint to the DfE.

The DfE will not re-investigate the matter of the complaint. It will look at whether the school's complaints policy and any other relevant statutory policies that the school holds were adhered to. The DfE also looks at whether the school's statutory policies adhere to education legislation.

The DfE will intervene where a school has:

- Failed to act in line with its duties under education law
- Acted (or is proposing to act) unreasonably when exercising its functions

If the complaints procedure is found to not meet regulations, the school will be asked to correct its procedure accordingly.

For more information or to refer a complaint, see the following webpage:

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>

## 8. Time Limits

The complainant 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 made outside of this timeframe will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply. Complaints, which are received outside of term time, will be considered to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Complaints need to be considered and resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible using time limits given in this procedure. However, where further investigations are necessary, new time limits can be set.

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority, safeguarding teams or tribunals, this may impact on the school's ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or may result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations. In both these instances, the complainant will be notified and provided with an explanation for the delay.

### Further Action – The final stage of appeal

This is when complaints can be made to the Secretary of State for Education. Any complaints or concerns should be addressed to:

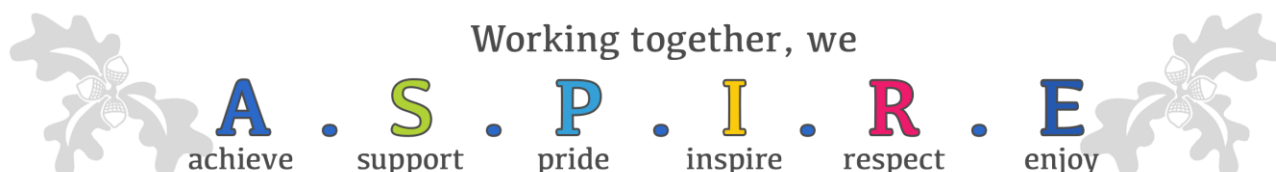
The School Complaints Unit (SCU)  
Department for Education  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Piccadilly Gate  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

**Please Note:** The Department of Education (DfE) is not usually able to consider any complaints that have not followed the school's procedure.

## 9. Closure of Complaints

Very occasionally, the school may feel that it needs regrettably, to close a complaint when the complainant is still dissatisfied.

We will do all we can to help resolve a complaint against the school, but sometimes it is not possible to meet all the complainant's wishes or it is a case of 'agreeing to disagree'.





If a complainant persists in making representations to the school – to the Headteacher, designated governor, Chair of Governors or anyone else - this can be extremely time-consuming and can detract from the schools' responsibility to look after the interests of all the children in our care. For this reason, we are entitled to close correspondence (including personal approaches, as well as letters and telephone calls) on a complaint where we feel that we have taken all reasonable action.

A complaint may be considered unreasonably persistent when a complainant continues to pursue a complaint after the school's complaints procedure has been fully exhausted, without presenting significant new evidence, or repeatedly changes the basis of their complaint as each concern is addressed. A complaint may be considered vexatious when it appears designed to cause disruption or distress to staff rather than to seek a genuine resolution, lacks any serious purpose or merit, or involves unreasonable demands on staff time and resources.

If a member of staff believes a complaint may be unreasonably persistent or vexatious, they will report this to the headteacher (or Chair of Governors if the complaint involves the headteacher) with evidence of the behaviour that meets the criteria outlined in this policy. The headteacher (or Chair of Governors) will review the evidence, consult with relevant staff, and make a decision on whether to declare the complaint as vexatious, ensuring the decision is fair, proportionate and based on the complainant's behaviour rather than the complaint itself. If the complaint is declared vexatious, the school will inform the complainant in writing, explaining the reasons for this decision, what restrictions will be applied, and for how long these restrictions will remain in place.

Unreasonable complainant behaviour may include:

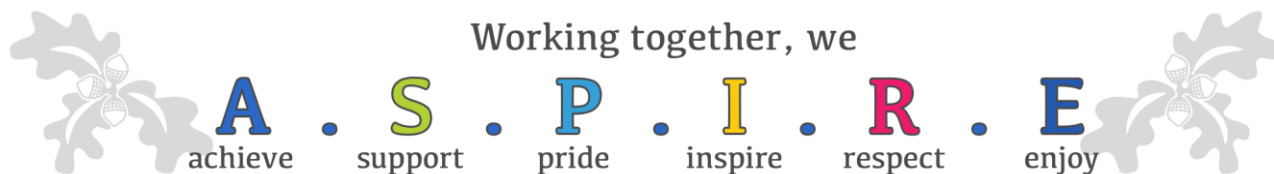
- Refusing to engage constructively with the complaints process
- Making excessive contact about the same issue
- Using threatening, aggressive or abusive language
- Making personal attacks on staff
- Refusing to accept the outcome despite the complaints procedure being exhausted

If a complainant's behaviour becomes abusive, threatening or otherwise unreasonable at any stage of the complaints process, we will:

- Issue a written warning explaining which behaviours are unacceptable
- Specify what restrictions will be applied if the behaviour continues
- In serious cases, require all future contact to be in writing only
- Consider whether it's appropriate to report the matter to the police if behaviour is threatening or constitutes harassment"

## 10. Record keeping

The school will record the progress of all complaints, including information about actions taken at all stages, the stage at which the complaint was resolved, and the final outcome. The records will also include copies of letters and emails, and notes relating to meetings and phone calls. This material will be treated as confidential and held centrally, and will be viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint or on the review panel. This is except where the secretary of state (or someone acting on their behalf) or the complainant requests access to records of a complaint





through a freedom of information (FOI) request or through a subject access request under the terms of the Data Protection Act, or where the material must be made available during a school inspection.

Records of complaints will be kept securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with data protection law, our privacy notices and records management retention schedule. The details of the complaint, including the names of individuals involved, will not be shared with the whole governing board in case a review panel needs to be organised at a later point.

## 11. Withdrawal of Complaints

Complainants can withdraw their complaint at any stage. This must be done in writing to the attention of the Headteacher or Chair of Governor.

## 12. Learning Lessons

The governing body review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the Senior leadership team, where appropriate, and respecting confidentiality, to determine whether there are any improvements that the school can make to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

## 13. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the headteacher every 2 years. At each review, the policy will be approved by the CFL committee.

