

Parent Guidance: How to Raise a Concern or Make a Complaint

We want every child to feel happy, safe and supported in our school. Most issues can be sorted out quickly and informally, and we are committed to working with you in a fair, respectful and solution-focused way. This page explains **how you can raise a concern**, what you can expect from us, and the approach we use to ensure conversations remain positive and productive.

Start with a conversation

Most concerns are best resolved by talking with the person who knows your child or situation best.

Please speak first to:

1. **Class Teacher / Phase Lead** – for classroom or learning-related matters
2. **Pastoral/SEN/Year Leader** – for wellbeing or support needs
3. **Deputy Headteacher / Assistant Headteacher** – if the issue is ongoing or more complex
4. **Headteacher** – if the issue remains unresolved

If your concern is **about the Headteacher**, please write to the **Chair of Governors** via the school office.

If your concern is about the **Chair or Governing Body**, contact the **Clerk to the Governing Body**.

Please do not contact individual governors directly. This protects fairness if a review panel is needed later.

(Based on governance requirements in the school's formal policy.)

How to raise an issue

You can get in touch:

- in person
- by telephone
- by email or in writing
- through a trusted third-party (with your permission)

If you need help making your concern clear, or require **reasonable adjustments** (e.g. support with writing, alternative formats, interpreters, accessible meeting arrangements), please let us know — we will be happy to help.

What you can expect from us

We aim to:

- **Acknowledge your concern within 3 school days**
- Offer a **conversation (call or meeting)** — because tone, empathy and clarity are strongest when we speak directly (recommended best practice)

- Provide an **update or outcome within 15 school days**
- Treat all concerns **fairly, respectfully and confidentially**
- Record themes and learning from complaints to help improve our school (as advised in good practice guidance)

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, you can make a **formal complaint** following the steps in our full Complaints Policy.

Our CLEAR approach

To make sure every parent feels heard and every issue is understood properly, staff follow the **CLEAR** approach when handling concerns and complaints.
(Based on the nationally recommended model for parent-school communication.)

C — Categorise

We check whether the issue is **feedback**, a **concern**, or a **complaint**, so we respond in the right way.

L — Listen

We give time and space for you to share the full story without interruption. We listen to understand, not to defend.

E — Empathise

We acknowledge feelings — concern, frustration or worry — and recognise that your perspective is real and important.

A — Ask

We work with you to agree what needs to happen next, check expectations, and make sure we understand what a good outcome looks like.

R — Respond

We follow through on agreed actions, update you within the expected timescales, and confirm when the matter is closed.

If you remain unhappy

If your concern cannot be resolved informally, you can move to the **formal stages** of the complaints process.

These include:

- **Stage 2:** Formal complaint to the Headteacher
- **Stage 3:** Review by a **Governing Body Complaints Panel**

After completing all local stages, you may refer a process concern to the **DfE**.
(DFE's role is to check the process, not change decisions.)