Tudor Court Primary School

Complaints Policy

Reviewed HT	November 2025
Assigned to Committee	FGB
Frequency of Review	Every 2 Years
Ratified by the Governing Body	January 2026

Tudor Court Primary School is dedicated to providing the best possible education and support for all its pupils. This means having a clear, fair, and efficient procedure for dealing with any complaints to or against the school, so that any issues that arise can be dealt with as swiftly and effectively as possible.

All school staff will be made aware of complaints procedures and are expected to review this policy regularly in order that they are familiar with our process of dealing with complaints and can be of the most assistance when an issue is brought to their attention.

This policy explains the procedure, and the steps that it outlines should be referred to and followed by all pupils and their parents whenever an issue arises that causes them concern.

This policy does not apply to complaints about:

- Admissions to schools
- Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- School reorganisation proposals
- Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation
- Exclusion of children from school
- Whistleblowing
- Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures
- Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities

When an issue or concern first arises

If you have a concern that you would like to take up with the school you should initially inform a member of staff either in person, over the telephone or in writing. You will then be contacted by the member of staff most appropriate for dealing with your concern.

You may wish to approach your child's class teacher first as they will be best placed to help you either directly or by directing you to another member of staff that you should be speaking to.

We encourage parents to approach staff with any concerns they may have, and aim to resolve all issues with open dialogue and mutual understanding.

If your complaint is about the Head Teacher or a governor:

You should raise your concern in writing with our Chair of Governors; Mr Phillip Brewster via brewster@tudorcourtprimary.com and also to the Clerk to Governors Mrs Emma Terris via emma.terris@btinternet.com

If your complaint is about the Chair of Governors:

You should raise your concern in writing with the Head Teacher, via officemanager@tudorcourtprimary.com who will forward your notice on in confidence.

The chair of Governors may refer complaints that are taken straight to them back to the Head Teacher, if they do not warrant the Governing Body's involvement at that point.

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'.

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

Procedures

Complaints should to be considered, and resolved, as quickly and efficiently as possible. Complaints should therefore be raised within 3 months of the event taking place, except in exceptional and mitigating circumstances. However, where further investigations are necessary, new time limits can be set and the complainant sent details of the new deadlines and an explanation for any delay.

The school's policy is to follow the DfE guidelines when handling concerns and complaints. It would be unusual to deviate from these procedures, but the school always retains discretion in these matters. Full details of the procedures can be found at **Appendix A** of this policy.

In summary, the nationally accepted procedure is divided into three stages:

Stage 1 aims to resolve the concern through informal contact at the appropriate level in school.

Stage 2 is the first formal stage where complaints are considered by the Head Teacher. For a stage 2 complaint, please contact the Head Teacher, in writing via the Office or by email to officemanger@tudorcourtprimary.com or by completing the attached form (Appendix B) and returning it to the Office. The Head Teacher considers any such complaint very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly. Most complaints are normally resolved at this stage.

If the complaint relates to the Head Teacher or any governor the Chair of Governors should be contacted via brewster@tudorcourtprimary.com and also to the Clerk to Governors in the first instance via emma.terric@btinternet.com

If the complaint relates to the Chair of Governors, the Head Teacher should be contacted via officemanager@tudorcocurtprimary.com

Stage 3 is the next step if the matter is unresolved following a formal investigation or if the complainant wishes to take the matter further. This complaint must be made in writing. Should you have a disability or special needs which will affect your ability to communicate in writing, please contact the Clerk to Governors. The complaint must state the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far. The parent/carer should address this complaint to the Chair of Governors via the Clerk to Governors. The Chair of Governors will consider all written complaints within three weeks of receipt and will do all he/she can to resolve the complaint to the parent's/

carer's satisfaction. This stage *may* involve a complaints review panel of Governors. However, it is at the discretion of the Chair of Governors for such a panel to be offered.

If, once the school's procedure has been completed, you remain dissatisfied, you may refer your complaint to the Department for Education (DfE) via their online school complaints form:https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school

Monitoring and Review

Tudor Court Primary School will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that all aspects of the complaints process are accessible to all parents and carers, including those with disabilities or communication needs. The school will record the progress of the complaint and the final outcome. All complainants have a right to copies of these records under the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts. The Governing Body will monitor a log of written complaints. Tudor Court Primary School will review and evaluate all complaints no matter how far they are taken or what the outcome to ensure that similar problems are avoided in the future or to see if they could have been managed any more effectively.

Please note: complaints made during a school holiday or half-term holiday that necessitate action by the Head Teacher or the Chair of Governors will be dealt with as soon as practical and will not follow the normal timescale.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. All personal data collected during the complaints process will be processed in line with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. Records will be retained securely and separately from pupil records.

The Governing Body will review the complaints policy every 2 years.

Serial and Persistent Complaints

There may be occasions when, despite all stages of the procedures having been followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the Chair of the Governing Body may inform them in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.

The school will not take the decision to stop responding lightly. This decision will only be made if:

- Tudor Court Primary School has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's needs;
- The complainant has been given a clear statement of the school's position and their options (if any); and
- The complainant is contacting the school repeatedly but making substantially the same points each time.

Appendix A

School Complaints Procedure

These procedures have been developed in line with DfE guidance: Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2024

The majority of concerns from parents, carers and others are handled under the following general procedures.

The procedure is divided into three stages:

Stage 1 aims to resolve the concern through informal contact at the appropriate level in school.

Stage 2 is the first formal stage at which written complaints are considered by the Head Teacher.

Stage 3 is the next stage if the complaint is unresolved. It may involve a complaints review panel of Governors.

How each of these stages operates is explained below:

Stage 1 - Your initial contact with the school

1. Many concerns will be dealt with informally when you make them known to us. The first point of contact should be your child's Class Teacher. In the event that the complaint is about the Class Teacher you should refer your complaint to the Year Lead.

2. You will be contacted, as soon as possible after your concern is made known to us. All members of staff know how to refer, if necessary, to the appropriate person with responsibility for particular issues raised by you. The member of staff will make a clear note of the details and will check later to make sure that the matter has been followed up.

3. We will ensure that you are clear of what action or monitoring of the situation, if any, has been agreed.

4. We will ensure that we speak directly to all appropriate persons who may be able to assist us with our enquiries into your concern.

5. We will discuss with you (normally within ten working days) the progress of our enquiries. You will have the opportunity of asking for the matter to be considered further, once we have responded to your concern.

If you are still dissatisfied following this informal approach, your concern can become a formal complaint and will then be dealt with at the next stage.

Stage 2 - Formal consideration of your complaint

If you do not feel that your concern has been dealt with as you would like, are unhappy with the outcome of your informal meeting or feel that the issue is serious enough that it warrants it, you can make a formal complaint in writing to the Head Teacher.

1. Your complaint can be made in person, by telephone or in writing and addressed to the Head Teacher. The school's Complaint Form is attached (Appendix B). If, however, your complaint concerns the Head Teacher personally, the complaint should be addressed to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors can be contacted through the Clerk to Governors.

2. We will acknowledge your complaint in writing as soon as possible after receiving it. Normally we would expect to respond in full within 10 working days, but if this is not possible we will write or telephone to explain the reason for the delay and let you know when we hope to be able to provide a full response. All references to 'working days' in this policy mean school working days during term time. Complaints received during holidays will be processed as soon as practical once the school reopens.

3. As part of our consideration of your complaint, we may invite you to a meeting to discuss the complaint and fill in any details required. If you wish, you can ask someone to accompany you to help you explain the reasons for your complaint.

4. The Head Teacher, or Chair of Governors may also be accompanied by a suitable person if they wish.

5. Following the meeting, the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors will, where necessary, talk to witnesses and take statements from others involved. If the complaint centres on a pupil, we will talk to the pupil concerned and, where appropriate, others present at the time of the incident in question.

6. We will normally talk to pupils with a parent or carer present, unless this would delay the investigation of a serious or urgent complaint, or where a pupil has specifically said that they would prefer the parent or carer not to be involved. In such circumstances, we will ensure that another member of staff, with whom the pupil feels comfortable, is present.

7. If the complaint is against a member of staff, it will be dealt with under the school's internal confidential procedures, as required by law.

8. The school will keep notes of meetings and telephone calls and copies of any written responses. If there are any communication difficulties, a recording device may be used during the process to enable all parties to access and review discussions. Written confirmation by all parties will be required in advance of recordings taking place in line with GDPR.

9. Once we have established all the relevant facts, we will send you a written response to your complaint. This will give a full explanation of the Head Teacher's decision and the reasons for it.

If follow-up action is needed, we will indicate what we are proposing to do. We may invite you to a meeting to discuss the outcome as part of our commitment to building and maintaining good relations with you.

Stage 3 - (including Consideration by a Complaints Review Panel)

The Complaints Review Panel operates according to the following formal procedures: If your concern has already been through Stages 1 and 2 and you are not happy with the outcome, we ask that you

make a written complaint addressed to the Chair of Governors. Should you have a disability or special needs which will affect your ability to communicate in writing, please contact the Clerk to Governors via the Office. The Chair of Governors will consider all written complaints, usually within three weeks of receipt and will do all he/she can to resolve the complaint to the parent/carer's satisfaction. The Chair of Governors *may* agree to set up a complaints review panel to consider it. This is a formal process, and your ultimate recourse at school level. The Chair of Governors has discretion to agree to this form of meeting where he or she feels it would be helpful in resolving the complaint.

The purpose of this arrangement is to give your complaint a hearing in front of a panel of Governors who have no prior knowledge of the details of the complaint. You have the right to request an independent panel and a decision about that will be made at the discretion of the School Governors.

The aim of a complaints review panel is to resolve the complaint and to achieve reconciliation between the school and the parent. We recognise, however, that it may sometimes only be possible to establish facts and make recommendations which will reassure you that we have taken your complaint seriously.

The complaints review panel operates according to the following formal procedures:

1. The Clerk to the Governing Body will aim to arrange for the panel meeting to take place within 10 working days of the Chair of Governors' decision to a review panel. At least one panel member will be independent of the management and running of the school, as required by DfE guidance.

2. The Clerk will ask you whether you wish to provide any further written documentation in support of your complaint. You can include witness statements, or ask witnesses to give evidence in person, if you wish.

3. The Head Teacher will be asked to prepare a written report for the Panel. Other members of staff directly involved in matters raised in your complaint will also be asked to prepare reports or statements.

4. The Clerk will inform you, the Head Teacher, any relevant witnesses and members of the panel by letter, at least five working days in advance of the date, time and place of the meeting, which will usually be at the School.

5. With the letter, the Clerk will ask whether to submit further written evidence to the panel.

6. The letter will explain what will happen at the panel meeting and the Clerk will also inform you that you are entitled to be accompanied to the meeting. The choice of person to accompany you is your own, but it is usually best to involve someone in whom you have confidence but who is not directly connected with the school. They are there to give you support but also to witness the proceedings and to speak on your behalf if you wish.

7. With the agreement of the chair of the panel, the Head Teacher may invite members of staff directly involved in matters raised by you to attend the meeting.

8. The chair of the panel will bear in mind that the formal nature of the meeting can be intimidating for you and will do his or her best to put you at your ease.

9. As a general rule, no evidence or witnesses previously undisclosed should be introduced into the meeting by any of the participants. If either party wishes to do so, the meeting will be adjourned so that the other party has a fair opportunity to consider and respond to the new evidence.

10. The chair of the panel will ensure that the meeting is properly minute. Such minutes are often of a sensitive nature and therefore should remain confidential.

11. The written outcome of the panel meeting will be sent to you and should give you all the information you require.

12. During the meeting, you can expect there to be opportunities for:

    - you to explain your complaint;
    - you to be questioned by the Head Teacher about the complaint;
    - you to hear the school's explanation of actions from the Head Teacher;
    - you to question the Head Teacher about the complaint;
    - the panel members to be able to question you and the Head Teacher;
    - any party to have the right to call witnesses (subject to the chair's approval) and all parties to have the right to question all witnesses;
    - you and the Head Teacher to make a final statement.

13. In closing the meeting, the chair will explain that the panel will now consider its decision and that written notice of the decision will be sent to the Head Teacher and yourself within two weeks. All participants other than the panel and the Clerk will then leave.

14. The panel will then consider the complaint and can:

    a) dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
    b) uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
    c) decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
    d) recommend, where appropriate, to the Governing Body changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that similar problems do not happen again.

15. The Clerk will send you and the Head Teacher a written statement outlining the decision of the panel usually within two weeks. The letter will explain what further recourse, beyond the Governing Body, is available to you.

16. The panel's decision is final. If you are unhappy with the outcome, you may wish to put your complaint to the Secretary of State. Complaints should be sent to the Ministerial & Public Communications Division of D of E, Piccadilly Gate, Shore Street, Manchester M1 2WP.

17. We will keep a copy of all correspondence and notes on file in the school's records but separate from pupils' personal records.

Closure of Complaints

The person investigating your complaint may decide that we have done all we can to resolve the complaint, in which case we may use our discretion to close the complaint at this point. Please see below for further information about this process:

1. Very occasionally, the school will feel that it needs, regretfully, to close a complaint where the complainant is still dissatisfied.

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

3. If a complainant persists in making representations to the school - to the Head Teacher, Chair of Governors or anyone else - this can be extremely time-consuming and can detract from our 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 to resolve the complaint. The school will refer to its policy on 'Unreasonable Complainants' in this instance.

4. In exceptional circumstances, closure may occur before a complaint has reached complaints review panel. This is because a complaints panel takes considerable time and effort to set up and we must be confident that it is likely to assist the process of investigating the complaint. The Chair of Governors may decide, therefore, that every reasonable action has been undertaken to resolve the complaint and that a complaints review panel would not help to move things forward.

5. This does not, of course, prevent you from referring your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education.

Appendix B

Complaints Form

Please complete and return to The Office Manager for the attention of the **Head Teacher.**

Full Name	
Pupil's Name (if applicable)	
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant)	
Address	
Postcode	
Daytime Telephone Number	
Evening Telephone Number	
Please give details of your complaint:	
What action, if any have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? *Who have you spoken and what was their response?*	

What action do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?
If you are attaching any paperwork, please list all documents.

Signature		Date	

Official Use Only	
Acknowledgment Sent by	
Acknowledgement Date	
Complaint Referred To	
Referral Date	
Final Action agreed/taken	

Closure Date	

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
- Co-operate 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 of records and other relevant information
- Analysing information
- Liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

Unreasonable Complainants

Tudor Court Primary School is 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 the 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, intimidating, offensive or threatening.

Tudor Court Primary School defines unreasonable complainants as 'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints'.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.
- A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:

    - Maliciously
    - Aggressively
    - Using threats, intimidation or violence
    - using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
    - knowing it to be false;
    - using falsified information;
    - publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with a school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues the Head Teacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Tudor Court Primary School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from Tudor Court Primary School.

Barring from the School Premises

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. Members of the public have no automatic right of entry. Schools will therefore act to ensure they remain a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of their community.

If a parent's behaviour is a cause for concern, a school can ask them to leave school premises. In serious cases, the Head Teacher or the local authority can notify them in writing that their implied licence to be on school premises has been temporarily revoked subject to any representations that the parent may wish to make. Schools should always give the parent the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to bar in writing.

The decision to bar should then be reviewed, taking into account any representations made by the parent, and either confirmed or lifted. If the decision is confirmed the parent should be notified in writing, explaining how long the bar will be in place.

Anyone wishing to complain about being barred can do so, by letter or email, to the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors. However, complaints about barring cannot be escalated to the Department for Education. Once the school's own complaints procedure has been completed, the only remaining avenue of appeal is through the Courts; independent legal advice must therefore be sought.