



Lovelace Primary School Complaint Procedures

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Signed copies are available in the school office.

Agreed: June 2024 Review by: June 2025

Index

- [Introduction](#)
 - [Advice to Parents from our Induction Handbook](#)
 - [Safeguarding](#)
 - [Social Media](#)
 - [Who can make a complaint?](#)
 - [The difference between a concern and a complaint](#)
- [How to raise an informal concern](#)
- [How to make a formal complaint](#)
 - [Anonymous complaints](#)
 - [Duplicate complaints](#)
 - [Complaint campaigns](#)
 - [Timescales](#)
 - [Complaints received outside of term time](#)
 - [Scope of this complaints procedure](#)
- [Resolving complaints](#)
 - [Withdrawal of a complaint](#)
- [Timescale of a formal complaints process](#)
- [Stage 1 - Formal complaint](#)
- [Stage 2 Formal Appeal Panel of Governors](#)
- [Next Steps](#)
- [Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints](#)
- [Lovelace Primary Complaint Form](#)
- [Appendix 1 Roles and responsibilities](#)

Introduction

Lovelace Primary School endeavours to provide the best education possible for all of its pupils in an open and transparent environment. We welcome any feedback that we receive from parents, pupils and third parties, and we accept that not all of this will be positive. In school we use the saying, *'Praise loudly and publicly, criticise softly and privately.'* Where concerns are raised or formal complaints are submitted, the school intends for these to be dealt with fairly, openly, promptly and without prejudice.

In order to do so, the governing board of Lovelace Primary School has approved the following procedure which explains what you should do if you have any concerns about the school or wish to submit a formal complaint. All members of staff will be familiar with the procedure and will be able to assist you. In developing this policy we have applied the Department for Education (DfE) best practice guidance which can be located here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-complaints-procedures/best-practice-advice-for-school-complaints-procedures-2019>

Advice to Parents from our Induction Handbook

We send out the following reminders every year at induction and incorporate them in our induction handbook. If at any time you have a worry about your child in school, here are some 'top tips' to solve it...

- ✓ If something goes wrong for your child at school, help them talk it through. Try to work out what has actually happened, and help your child find a way to deal with it.
- ✓ If your child is in trouble, try to be dispassionate—do not automatically leap to his or her defence. Try to see both sides of the argument. Loving your child does not mean assuming they can do no wrong.
- ✓ We know that nobody knows your child, or cares about his or her welfare, as much as you. So if on reflection, you feel there is a concern, let someone in school know—if the class teacher doesn't know about it they can't deal with it.
- ✓ On such occasions, avoid rushing in to complain in an angry or upset state of mind. Keep calm and respectfully put across your point of view—in school we use the saying, 'Praise loudly and publicly, criticise softly and privately.'
- ✓ Your child's teacher is the person in school that knows your child best—please always contact them first if you have a worry or concern about your child.



Lovelace Primary School Complaint Procedures

- ✓ So that learning is not interrupted we ask you to speak to your child's class teacher after school and/or to make an appointment to speak to them
- ✓ Try to be positive about school when talking about it to your child—parental attitudes rub off on children, and the more positive their attitude to school, the better they will do.
- ✓ So: if you had a bad experience of school yourself, do not let them influence you—schools are very different places nowadays; always look for things to praise about their education, the school and their class teacher

Safeguarding

Wherever a complaint indicates that a child's wellbeing or safety is at risk, the school is under a duty to report this immediately to the Single Point of Access (where referrals go to regarding Children's Safeguarding or Child Protection). Any action taken will be in accordance with the school's safeguarding policy which can be found on the school's website.

Social Media

In order for complaints to be resolved as quickly and fairly as possible, Lovelace Primary School requests that complainants do not discuss complaints publically via social media such as Facebook, X (Twitter), WhatsApp etc. Complaints will be dealt with confidentially for those involved, and we expect complainants to observe confidentiality also.

The School has a responsibility to ensure that all members of the school community, be they children, staff or parents, are treated with respect at all times. If you have a worry or disagreement with the school you need to use the proper channels to communicate this. We have this complaints procedure to deal with a variety of situations and urge you to take this up should you wish to raise any concerns.

Comments made online are considered to be published and remain on the internet forever. Please think very carefully about making any negative comments online, as should those comments be considered to be offensive, the School will have no option but to take further action by referring matters to the Police or taking civil action on behalf of the school.

As you know, the School is committed to ensure that the School remains a safe and happy place for all members of the School community and will move swiftly to ensure that no negative behaviour, either in person, or online, undermines this purpose.

Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is mainly aimed at parents or carers of children who are registered at the school, but it is not limited to them. Any member of the public may make a complaint to Lovelace Primary School about any provision of facilities or services that the school provides.

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

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 opportunity. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Lovelace Primary School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Lovelace Primary School will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the formal stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

How to raise an informal concern

A concern can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

All concerns will be dealt with confidentially, although the staff member may need to take notes if they feel that the matter should be taken further or it may arise again in the future. Any such notes will be kept in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018. However, such notes could be used as evidence if further investigation was required, or if the concern became a formal complaint.



Lovelace Primary School Complaint Procedures

Your child's class teacher should always be your first point of contact as they know your child best.

Members of the school leadership team are also on duty at the start and end of the school day.

You may also talk to our Family Liaison Officer (FLO) – the office is at the front of school opposite the school office. It is much better to speak in person where possible.

If you have already spoken to the above, the next step is to contact the following:

For pupils in:

Nursery, Reception, Sunrise & Sunset

Year 1

Year 2

Year 3

Year 4

Year 5

Year 6

For site or premises issues

For office / admin / data / GDPR

Talk in person to to:

Head of Early Years

eyfs@lovelace.rbksch.org

Y1 Best Practice Manager

y1@lovelace.rbksch.org

Y2 Best Practice Manager

y2@lovelace.rbksch.org

Y3 Best Practice Manager

y3@lovelace.rbksch.org

Y4 Best Practice Manager

y4@lovelace.rbksch.org

Y5 Best Practice Manager

y5@lovelace.rbksch.org

Y6 Best Practice Manager

y6@lovelace.rbksch.org

School Business Manager

office@lovelace.rbksch.org

School Business Manager

office@lovelace.rbksch.org

Concerns should be raised with the staff members as outlined above.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, our school office team or our Family Liaison Officer will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, our FLO or the school office will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

If despite following the procedure above the issue / concern remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint (refer to page 6 [Stage 1 – Formal Complaint](#)).

How to make a formal complaint

Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at stage 2 of the procedure.

Complaints against school staff (except the head teacher) should be made in the first instance to the head teacher via the school office. Please mark them as 'private and confidential'. Complaints that involve or are about the head teacher should be addressed to 'The chair of governors' via the school office. Please mark them as 'private and confidential'.

Complaints about the chair of governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the clerk to the governing body via the school office. Please mark them as 'private and confidential'.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations such as Citizens Advice to help you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

Anonymous complaints

The school will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the head teacher or chair of



Lovelace Primary School Complaint Procedures

governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Duplicate complaints

If, after closing a complaint at the end of the complaints procedure, we receive a duplicate complaint from a spouse, a partner, a grandparent or a child not attending this school, we will remind them that we have already considered the complaint and the local process is complete. Complainants will be advised to contact the DfE if they are dissatisfied with our handling of the complaint.

Complaint campaigns

If we receive what we consider to be a large volume of complaints, all based on the same subject and possibly from complainants not connected to the school, then we will treat these complaints as being part of a campaign and respond in one of the following two ways, depending upon the nature and scale of the complaint:

- send the same response to all complainants; or
- publish a single response on the school's website.

Timescales

Complainants 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. In general, any matter raised more than 3 months after the event, being complained of, will not be considered. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

Complaints received outside of term time

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

Scope of this complaints procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Lovelace Primary School other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of special educational needs • School reorganisation proposals 	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of special educational needs or school reorganisation proposals should be raised with the Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation 	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority Single Point of Access Team on 0208 547 5008 or online: Children, families and young people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion of children from school* 	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at https://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions <i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistleblowing 	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The secretary of state for education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistle-blowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at www.education.gov.uk/contactus . Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain directly to the local authority or the DfE (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff grievances 	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.



Lovelace Primary School Complaint Procedures

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities e.g. clubs 	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them directly.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National curriculum - content 	Please contact the DfE at www.education.gov.uk/contactus

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against Lovelace Primary School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

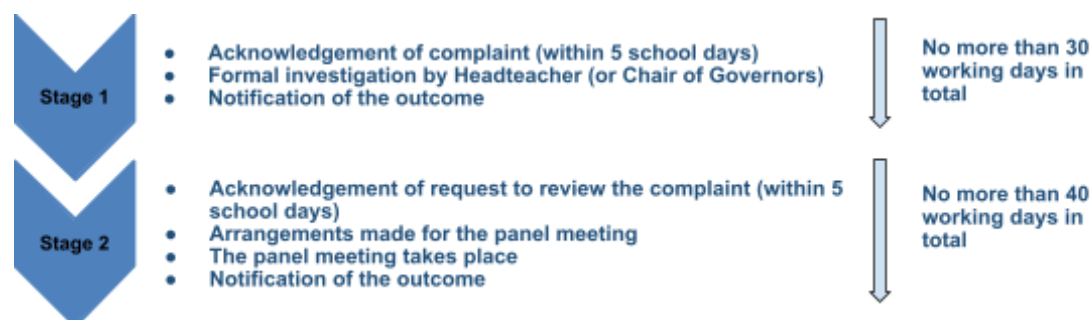
Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Lovelace Primary School wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- **an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur;**
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made;
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint;
- an apology.

Withdrawal of a complaint If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

Timescale of a formal complaints process



Refer to [Appendix 1](#) for a full list of roles and responsibilities in the formal complaints process.



Lovelace Primary School Complaint Procedures

Stage 1 – Formal Complaint

Formal complaints must be made to the head teacher (unless they are about the head teacher), via the school office. This may be done in person, in writing (preferably on the complaint form), or by telephone. The head teacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days. Within this response, the head teacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The head teacher can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

Note: The head teacher usually delegates the investigation to another member of the school's headship team (usually the deputy or assistant headteacher) or the school's Family Liaison Office but not the decision to be taken.

During the investigation, the head teacher (or investigator) will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the head teacher will provide a formal written response within twenty five school days of the date of receipt of the complaint. If the head teacher is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Lovelace Primary School will take to resolve the complaint.

The head teacher will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1. If the complaint is about the head teacher 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.

Complaints about the head teacher or member of the governing body must be made to the clerk, via the school office.

If the complaint is jointly about the chair and vice chair, or the entire governing body, or the majority of the governing body, stage 1 will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the governing body. At the conclusion of its investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

Stage 2 Formal Appeal Panel of Governors

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcomes after stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to stage 2 – a meeting with members of the governing body's complaints committee, which will be formed of the first three, impartial, governors available. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

A request to escalate to stage 2 must be made to the clerk, via the school office, within thirty school days of receipt of the stage 1 response.

The clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 35 school days of receipt of the stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant 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 complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

The complaints committee will consist of at least three governors with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, they will decide among themselves who will act as the chair of the complaints committee. If there are fewer than three governors from Lovelace Primary available, the clerk will source any additional, independent governors through another local school or



Lovelace Primary School Complaint Procedures

through their local authority's governor services team, in order to make up the committee. Alternatively, an entirely independent committee may be convened to hear the complaint at stage 2.

The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making its decision it will be sensitive to the complainant's needs.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring along legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate.

If a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and / or legal representation.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.
Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least 5 school days before the meeting, the clerk will:

- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible;
- request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least 2 school days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 2 school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not normally accept as evidence recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from stage 1 of the procedure.

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 meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee can:

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

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

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

The chair of the committee will provide the complainant and Lovelace Primary School with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 5 school days of the meeting.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the DfE if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by Lovelace Primary School.

If the complaint is jointly about the chair and vice chair or the entire governing body or the majority of the governing body, stage 2 will be heard by a committee of independent governors.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Lovelace Primary School will take to resolve the complaint.

The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.



Lovelace Primary School Complaint Procedures

Next steps

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 2.

The DfE will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Lovelace Primary School. They will consider whether Lovelace Primary School has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the DfE online at www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints

Lovelace 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 our 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, offensive or threatening.

Lovelace Primary School defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- 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 cooperate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- 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 and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the 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 headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.



Lovelace Primary School Complaint Procedures

If the behaviour continues, the headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Lovelace 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 be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from Lovelace Primary School.



Lovelace Primary School Complaint Procedures

Lovelace Primary Complaint Form

Your name:

Pupil's name (if relevant):

Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):

Address:

Daytime telephone number:

Evening telephone number:

Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.



Lovellace Primary School Complaint Procedures

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date:



Lovelace Primary School Complaint Procedures

Appendix 1 - 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
- cooperate 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.

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
 - keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting
 - ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal
 - be mindful of the timescales to respond
 - prepare a comprehensive report for the headteacher or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.
- The headteacher or complaints committee will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

Complaints Co-ordinator (this could be the headteacher / Clerk of Governors)

The complaints co-ordinator should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- liaise with staff members, headteacher, Chair of Governors, Clerk and LAs (if appropriate) to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure
- be aware of issues regarding:
 - sharing third party information
 - additional support. This may be needed by complainants when making a complaint including interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person
- keep records

Clerk to the Governing Body

The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the committee and should:

- ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties (if they are invited to attend) and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example; stage 1 paperwork, school and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale
- record the proceedings
- circulate the minutes of the meeting
- notify all parties of the committee's decision.



Lovelace Primary School Complaint Procedures

Committee Chair

The committee's chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint meeting, should ensure that:

- both parties are asked (via the Clerk) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting
- the meeting is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy
- complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person
- the remit of the committee is explained to the complainant
- written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR.
If a new issue arises it would be useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it; this may require a short adjournment of the meeting
- both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting or verbally in the meeting itself
- the issues are addressed
- key findings of fact are made
- the committee is open-minded and acts independently
- no member of the committee has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- the meeting is minuted
- they liaise with the Clerk (and complaints coordinator, if the school has one).

Committee Member

Committee members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so
No governor may sit on the committee if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- the aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant
We recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.
- many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting
Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child.
- extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child/young person and present during all or part of the meeting
Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated.
The committee should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.
If the child/young person is the complainant, the committee should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the child/young person's parent is the complainant, the committee should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child/young person needs to attend.
However, the parent should be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child/young person to attend a part of the meeting that the committee considers is not in the child/young person's best interests.
- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount.