

MOORLANDS SCHOOL

COMPLAINTS and CONCERNS POLICY



Policy date	September 2023
Policy review	Every 2 years
Date ratified	October 2023
Ratified by	Dr A Cook (Chief Executive)
Review date	September 2025

Moorlands School is committed to developing a strong sense of partnership with parents/carers and other members of the local community. This provides a good basis for understanding and resolution when things appear to go wrong.

We aim to deal with all worries and complaints in a positive and supportive manner. In most cases, where the complaint concerns the education of a child, the class teacher is the first point of contact and we try to deal with all concerns quickly and effectively.

Addressing concerns has been adopted by the school as a framework for addressing concerns, complaints and concerns that may arise. The school prides itself on the quality of care provided for the children and staff.

General Principles

- An anonymous complaint will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances
- To implement a proper investigation, complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. Any matter raised more than three months after the event will not be considered unless there are exceptional circumstances
- Investigation of any complaint will begin within five school days of receipt of the complaint, except in exceptional circumstances. The investigation will be completed as soon as reasonably practicable.

A complaint will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction, which requires a response. We therefore wish to ensure that any person wishing to make a complaint knows how to do so. The school will respond to a complaint within a reasonable time and in a courteous and efficient way. All complaints will be taken seriously and the school will take action where appropriate.

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 local authority. Any action taken will be in accordance with the school's safeguarding policy which can be found on the school's website and which is also available from the School Office.

Social Media

In order for complaints to be resolved as quickly and fairly as possible, Moorlands School requests the complainants do not discuss complaints publicly via social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Complaints will be dealt with confidentially for those involved, and we expect complainants to observe confidentiality also.

Complaints that result in staff capability or disciplinary

If at any formal stage of the complaint it is determined that staff disciplinary or capability proceedings are necessary in order to resolve the issue, the details of this action will remain confidential to the Executive Head/ Chief Executive. The complainant is entitled to be informed that the matter is being dealt with appropriately, but they are not entitled to participate in the proceedings and will not receive any detail about them or the outcome.

How to make a complaint

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

Any member of staff will be happy to help. It is requested that any concern initially be directed towards the member of staff most closely concerned with the issue, such as the Form Tutor. They may be able to sort things out quickly. Then, if required, you may choose to take the matter to a more senior member of staff.

The member of staff will make a written, dated record of all concerns and complaints. If the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily within seven days the complainant will be advised to proceed to Stage 2.

Stage 2 - Formal Resolution

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis the complainant should put their complaint in writing to the Executive Head. They will be contacted by the school within five working days and in most cases the Executive Head will meet with the complainant within this time frame, to respond to concerns and to explain how the school proposes to address the complaint. The Executive Head may have to discuss the matter with colleagues and wait to receive a response. If a detailed exploration of the issues is required then a letter or report will be forwarded to the complainant to explain the reasons why there might be a delay. A final letter will inform the complainant of the outcome of the complaint within 28 days.

The Executive Head will keep written records of all meeting and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

It is hoped that a resolution will be reached at this stage.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If the Stage 2 resolution fails to reach a resolution the complainant can seek to invoke Stage 3 and the complaint will be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration.

The Panel will consist of three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. Each of the Panel members shall be appointed by the Chief Executive/ Executive Head. A hearing will take place as soon as practicable and normally within fourteen days. If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than two days prior to the hearing.

The complainant may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a colleague, relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, agreed within seven days of the hearing. The Panel will write to the complainant informing them of its decision and the reasons for it.

Confidentiality

A concern or complaint will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Chief Executive/ Executive Head and those directly involved. It is the School's policy that complaints made should not rebound adversely on to pupils directly.

We cannot entirely rule out the need to make third parties outside the school aware of the complaint and possibly also the identity of those involved. This would be likely to happen where, for example, a child's safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the police. The complainant would be fully informed. Correspondence, statements and records will be confidential, except in so far as is required of the school by Standard 7 (k) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) regulations 2014. Information relating to specific complaints will be kept confidentially on file. A copy of the findings and recommendations will be sent electronically or otherwise to the complainant, and where relevant, the person complained about. Action, which needed to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of complaints, would be handled confidentially within the school.

A complainant can, at any time, submit a complaint to OFSTED about any aspect of registered childcare provision.

<https://contact.ofsted.gov.uk/online-complaints-schools>

