



# **Greenholm Primary School Official Policy**

**Name of Policy:** Complaints Policy

**Date Reviewed:** February 2025



## Greenholm Primary School Complaints Policy

### Policy Aim and Statement

At Greenholm Primary School, we are committed to resolving concerns and complaints in a manner that reflects our core values of respect, responsibility, and kindness. Our mission is to work closely with parents and carers to address issues in the best interest of the child. This policy ensures complaints are handled fairly, inclusively, and transparently, promoting positive relationships and fostering trust within our school community.

This policy complies with the **Education Act 2002, Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014**, and relevant equality legislation. It aims to:

- Provide a clear process for addressing concerns and complaints.
- Ensure all complaints are dealt with promptly and appropriately.
- Promote continuous school improvement by learning from feedback.

### Application

This policy applies to all complaints made by parents, carers, and pupils at Greenholm Primary School, except those covered by separate statutory procedures, such as complaints about admissions, exclusions, or safeguarding issues. Complaints involving these matters will follow the relevant policies.

### Related Policies and Frameworks

This policy operates in conjunction with the following Greenholm Primary School policies and documents:

- **Admissions Policy:** For complaints about admissions decisions.
- **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy:** For complaints relating to safeguarding concerns.
- **Behaviour Policy:** For concerns regarding pupil behaviour and school discipline.
- **Suspension and Exclusion Policy:** For issues relating to pupil exclusions.
- **Whistleblowing Policy:** For staff concerns about serious wrongdoing.
- **Grievance Policy:** For complaints made by staff about employment conditions.
- **Data Protection Policy:** For complaints related to the handling of personal data.
- **Records Management Policy:** For information about data retention and confidentiality.

Complaints relating to these specific areas will be referred to the procedures outlined in the respective policies.



## Stages of the Complaints Process

### Stage 1: Informal Resolution

We encourage parents, carers, and pupils to raise any concerns informally in the first instance. This ensures that issues can often be resolved promptly and without the need for formal procedures.

- **How to Raise Concerns:**
  - Concerns can be raised verbally (in person or by phone) or in writing (e.g., via email).
  - Parents and carers are encouraged to speak directly with a **Senior Leader** (e.g., a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Deputy Headteacher). This ensures concerns are handled by experienced staff.
- **Acknowledgement:**
  - The Senior Leader will acknowledge the concern within **2 school days** and work to understand the issue and desired resolution.
- **Resolution Actions:**
  - The Senior Leader will review the concern, consult relevant staff if necessary, and aim to resolve the matter through discussion and collaboration.
- **Resolution Timescale:**
  - We aim to resolve all informal concerns within **10 school days** from the date the concern is raised. If additional time is required, the Senior Leader will inform the complainant of the revised timeline.
- **Escalation:**
  - If the concern remains unresolved, the Senior Leader will inform the complainant of the option to escalate the matter to **Stage 2: Formal Complaint**.

### Stage 2: Formal Complaints

If an informal concern remains unresolved, or if the issue is serious and requires immediate formal action, parents and carers can escalate their complaint to the formal stage.

- **Submitting a Formal Complaint:**
  - Formal complaints must be submitted in **writing**, unless accessibility reasons prevent this, in which case a verbal complaint will be accepted and documented by the school.
  - Complaints should be addressed to the **Headteacher** and include all relevant details (e.g., dates, names, and the desired resolution).



- **Acknowledgement and Timescale:**
  - Complaints will be acknowledged within **5 school days** of receipt.
  - The Headteacher (or their designate) will investigate and respond with the outcome within **20 school days**.
- **Resolution Actions:**
  - The Headteacher may meet with the complainant if further clarification or discussion is required. The outcome will be communicated in writing.
- **Escalation:**
  - If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the Headteacher's investigation, they may escalate the complaint to the **Chair of Governors** under Stage 3.

### **Stage 3: Review by the Chair of Governors**

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Headteacher's response, they may request a review by the Chair of Governors.

- **Trigger for Escalation:**
  - Complaints may escalate to this stage only after the Headteacher's involvement has been unsuccessful.
- **Chair's Role:**
  - The Chair of Governors will review the complaint and decide whether to investigate it personally or delegate it to the Vice-Chair. The Chair may meet with the complainant if further clarification is needed.
- **Investigation Process:**
  - The Chair will consider all previous records, interview relevant parties if necessary, and review any additional documentation provided.
  - A meeting with the complainant may be held to ensure full understanding of the concerns.
- **Timescale:**
  - The review will be completed, and a written response provided within **20 school days** of the request being received.
- **Escalation:**
  - If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may request a **Panel Hearing** under Stage 4.



#### **Stage 4: Panel Hearing**

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may request a Complaint Panel Hearing. This is the final stage of the complaints process.

- **Panel Composition:**
  - The panel will consist of three individuals, including one independent member not connected to the school.
  - Panel members will be selected from a pool of appropriate professionals.
- **Attendance:**
  - The complainant may bring a supporter for moral support.
  - The school will be represented by a member of staff who has been involved in earlier stages.
- **Procedure:**
  - Both parties will present their case, answer questions, and discuss evidence before the panel.
  - The panel will deliberate privately after the hearing.
- **Outcome Notification:**
  - The panel's decision will be communicated in writing to all parties within **5 school days** of the hearing.

#### **Special Considerations**

- **Anonymous Complaints:**
  - Anonymous complaints will not usually be acted upon but may be investigated at the school's discretion if safeguarding issues are involved.
- **Using Complaints for Improvement:**
  - Complaints and their outcomes will be reported annually to the Governing Body to identify trends and areas for improvement.



### **Publication and Review**

- **Review Period:**
  - This policy will be reviewed every **two years** to ensure it remains compliant and effective.
- **Publication:**
  - The policy will be published on the school website and made available upon request.

This policy reflects Greenholm Primary School's commitment to handling complaints in a way that is fair, inclusive, and transparent, fostering trust and mutual respect within our community.