



Complaints Procedure

October 2026

Due for review: Autumn Term 2028

How we resolve concerns and complaints

If something has gone wrong

Your child's experience is important to everyone at our Trust. We want to work together with you to ensure that your child is happy at school, and that they achieve their best. If you feel something has gone wrong, we want to hear from you.

Step one: Talk to us

Start by contacting the school as soon as possible. Explain what has happened and what you would like the school to do to put things right. You can speak to your child's class teacher, Head of Year or House, or another appropriate member of staff. They will respond as soon as possible, usually within five school days.

We hope that most concerns can be resolved by talking them through with the relevant person. However, if you have raised your concerns with the school and feel they have not been resolved, you can make a formal complaint (Step two).

Step two: Write to us

If you still have concerns, you can make a formal complaint in writing. For all complaints about your child's school, please contact the Headteacher through the school office. If your complaint concerns the Headteacher, the Trust and its governance, please contact Julie Gregory, Governance Professional (jgregory@bep.ac). When you write, include brief details of what happened, who was involved, who you've already spoken to, and what you would like to happen next.

You don't need to write a long letter – in fact, keeping it short usually helps achieve a quicker reply. There is a form in Appendix 1 that asks for the details needed.

Receipt of your query will be acknowledged within five school days. If your letter is unclear, a meeting or call may be requested first to ensure your concern has been understood before a written response is provided. You will be told if any more information is needed. The most appropriate person to deal with your complaint will be identified and their details shared with you. Wherever possible, that person will not have been involved in the issues you have raised.

After considering your complaint, you will receive a formal reply setting out the response and any actions taken or planned, usually within another 20 school days.

Please see Appendix 2.

Step three: Meet with a review panel

Where agreement can't be reached, you can ask for a formal meeting to discuss your complaint, called a panel hearing.

The panel will include at least three people not directly involved in the complaint, including one person who is independent of the management and running of the school or Trust.

You don't have to attend but, if you want to, every effort will be made to agree a time and date with you for the meeting, usually within 20 school days. The meeting will usually

be in person, but it can be held online if that is more convenient for everyone. You can bring someone to the meeting to help you, for example a friend or relative.

After the meeting, the review panel will send their recommendations to you and to anyone you have complained about. The headteacher and the trust will also get a copy.

There are more details about how panels run in Appendix 3.

Other things that are good to know

Who can raise concerns: This policy only applies to parents/carers of children at our schools. If you are not a parent/carer at one of our schools you can still get in touch, but we will consider your concerns outside of this policy.

The type of concerns that can be considered: This policy is for general concerns about how our schools are run. Some areas have processes required by law or regulations. This includes admissions, exclusions and suspensions, safeguarding concerns, staff grievances, disciplinary matters, and whistleblowing. If your concern would be better handled through one of these processes, you will be informed and the alternative process will be explained.

Time scales: Any problem should be reported within three months of it happening; older problems cannot normally be investigated. Every effort will be made to keep to the time scales set out here, but complex queries may take longer to answer. You will be informed if this is the case. If no response is received from you for four weeks after a reply, your enquiry will be closed in writing. You can ask for it to be reopened if there are special circumstances.

Help from other organisations: You might want to raise concerns with other organisations that oversee the school or Trust, such as the Government or Ofsted. It is best to contact the school or Trust first and go through the steps in this guide because this helps put things right more quickly and avoids duplicating work. In most cases, external organisations will expect you to have completed the complaints policy before getting involved.

Duplicate enquiries: Concerns will usually be considered and answered individually. If lots of similar concerns are received at the same time – for example from a campaign group – they may be considered together, with a shared reply addressing the common concerns.

Mutual respect: In most cases, parents/carers and the school or Trust work well together to resolve concerns. Emotions can run high, but communication is expected to remain respectful. Where behaviour becomes unreasonable, abusive, or intimidating, or where there is a refusal to engage with the policy and process, achieving a resolution can become more difficult. In these cases, consideration of a complaint may be suspended, or proportionate restrictions may be placed on how contact is managed.

Confidentiality: Some complaints may involve confidential details of pupils and staff. As much information as possible will be shared with you, while respecting their privacy and legal rights. A written record of written complaints, review panels and any resulting actions will be kept. Details will remain confidential but may need to be shared with the Secretary of State for Education or an inspection organisation such as Ofsted if requested.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) childcare complaints: Parents/carers wishing to raise an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) childcare complaint can contact Ofsted by emailing enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or calling 0300 123 4666.

If you need help raising concerns

This process is intended to be easy for everyone to use. If you need help to set out your concern or complaint, or access the complaints process, please contact the school or Trust so that an appropriate adjustment can be identified. Advice can be provided, or sources of independent support suggested. Requests for things like interpreters, accessible venues, and alternative formats will be considered.

The school and Trust are committed to ensuring that no one is disadvantaged in accessing the complaints process because of a disability, communication need, protected characteristic or personal circumstance.

Using AI

Some people like to use AI tools to help organise their thoughts. The use of public AI tools is not recommended because they can store and republish personal information, such as sensitive details about your child. AI tools can also introduce inaccurate information, like old rules or laws from other countries. This can delay the response to your complaint. You should always carefully check the output to make sure it is accurate.

If the key concerns are difficult to identify clearly from what you have shared, a meeting or call may be suggested to focus on what matters most and support an accurate and helpful response.

Help with special educational needs

The school and local authority work together to provide support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Every effort will be made to help, but matters outside the school's control will be referred to the local authority.

- **The school's responsibilities:** The school provides teaching, with reasonable adjustments to help your child, and support from its own resources (known as SEN support). The school monitors your child's progress, puts support plans in place, and reviews these with you.
- **The local authority's responsibilities:** The local authority decides whether to assess a child for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), issues and maintains the EHCP, and provides the funding and services specified within it.
- **What an EHCP sets out:** An EHCP describes your child's needs, the provision required to meet those needs, and who must deliver it. Schools must implement the parts of the plan that fall within their control, and the local authority must provide the provision it is responsible for.

Some support depends on national or local funding decisions that are outside the school's control. Every effort will be made within the resources available. If you are unsure about who is responsible for a particular aspect of SEND support, please ask.

This policy meets the requirements of Part 7 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and follows the Department of Education's expectations for school trusts to have a clear and accessible way for parents to raise concerns.

Something gone wrong? Let us know

Your name:	Pupil name:
Your relationship to the pupil:	Pupil date of birth:
Address and postcode:	Daytime phone:
	Evening phone:
	Email:
What are you concerned about? Include the names of any people involved and the dates and times of relevant events.	
Who have you spoken to at the school or trust about your concerns?	
What can we do to help put things right?	
Signature:	Date:

Useful contact

Governance Professional: Mrs J Gregory
 Blackdown Education Partnership
 c/o Orchard Grove Primary School, Egremont Road, Trull, Taunton, TA3 7FD
 Email: jgregory@bep.ac

Parent's/carer's guide: Considering your concerns

Parents/carers are encouraged to talk to school staff informally about any concerns to begin with. If agreement on a way forward cannot be reached, you can then raise a formal written complaint.

Step two: Write to the school or Trust

If you have not had an informal conversation with a member of staff about your concerns, please get in touch to see whether the matter can be resolved straight away.

If you have already spoken to the school or Trust, your written complaint will be checked to make sure all the necessary information has been provided. This includes the names of anyone involved, the date and time of any events, and what you would like the school or Trust to do to put things right. You will be contacted if anything is unclear.

Wherever possible, your complaint will be considered by someone not directly involved. This may include a member of Trust staff, or someone involved in school or Trust governance. You will be told who this is and how to get in touch for updates.

The type of concerns that can be considered

This policy is for general concerns. Some areas have processes required by law or regulations. This includes admissions, exclusions and suspensions, safeguarding concerns, staff grievances, disciplinary matters, and whistleblowing. If your concern would be better handled through one of these processes, you will be informed and the alternative process explained.

Time scales

Any problem should be reported within three months of it happening; older problems cannot normally be investigated. Every effort will be made to keep to the time scales set out here, but complex queries may take longer to answer. You will be informed if this is the case.

What to expect next

The person looking after your complaint will speak to relevant people and collect any information that might help provide a response. After considering your concerns, you will receive a formal reply setting out the response and any actions taken or planned, usually within another 20 school days.

If agreement still cannot be reached, you can ask for a panel hearing. Further details will be provided with the written response.

Parent's/carer's guide: Panel hearings

Parents/carers are encouraged to talk to the school or Trust informally about any concerns to begin with. If agreement cannot be reached on a way forward, you can then raise a formal written complaint and receive a written response. If agreement still cannot be reached, you can ask for a panel hearing.

Step three: Meet with a review panel

If you don't agree with the written response from step two, you can ask for a formal meeting to discuss your concerns. This is called a panel hearing.

To ask for a panel hearing, contact the Governance Professional and give them a brief explanation of why you are not happy and what outcome you are seeking. This should normally be within 10 school days of the written reply, unless there are special circumstances. This helps ensure events are fresh in everyone's minds and matters can be resolved quickly.

The panel hearing will look again at your original complaint and any concerns you have about how it was handled. It won't consider any new complaints.

The purpose of the panel hearing is to look at your complaint afresh. The panel will independently review how your complaint was considered at Step Two, including the decisions made, the process followed and the reasons you remain dissatisfied. It will not carry out a new investigation or consider new complaints.

What to expect next

You don't have to attend the panel if you don't want to. If you do want to attend, every effort will be made to agree a time and date with you for the meeting, usually within 20 school days of your request. The meeting will usually be in person, but it can be held online if that is more convenient for everyone.

Please tell the Governance Professional if you need help to attend, such as an accessible meeting room or an interpreter.

Around a week before the meeting, copies of letters and other relevant information will be provided to you and the panel members.

Who will be at the meeting

The panel will have at least three people not directly involved in the complaint, including one person who is independent of the management and running of the school and Trust. The panel will be assisted by a member of staff who will take notes and provide advice on procedures.

People involved in the complaint may also attend, or they may give their views in writing. Pupils will not normally be asked to attend.

You can bring someone, like a friend or relative, to the meeting to help you. If your complaint is about a member of staff, they may bring a friend or colleague to support them.

The meeting is confidential and is not open to the public or the media.

What will happen at the meeting

The meeting will be led by one of the panel members. If you choose to attend, they will ask you to outline your concerns. They and the other panel members may ask you questions. They may also talk to other people involved in the complaint.

The meeting is not a legal hearing, and you don't need to bring legal representation. There is no 'cross examination' of witnesses, and you will not be able to ask other people questions directly.

Before the hearing ends, you will have another chance to share your views.

In most cases the panel will not give an instant decision. Instead, they will meet again separately to discuss your concerns and what they have heard from other people and write to you later with their recommendations.

After the meeting

After the meeting, the panel will send their recommendations to you and to anyone you have complained about. The headteacher and the trust will also get a copy.

A panel hearing is the end of the Trust's complaints procedure. If you are still not happy, you can complain to the Department for Education using the complaint form on [their website](#). The Department can look at whether your complaint was handled properly, but it won't investigate the details of any underlying complaint.

Parents/carers wishing to raise an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) childcare complaint can contact Ofsted by emailing enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or calling 0300 123 4666.