



Complaints Policy

Written by: Carl Rogers
Adopted by Governors: February 2026
Date for review: February 2027

1. Introduction

Pathway Primary Federation is committed to providing the highest possible standard of education and care for all pupils. We recognise, however, that concerns or complaints may arise from time to time. This policy sets out a clear, fair, and transparent process for raising and resolving concerns, while protecting the interests of children, staff, and the wider school community.

This policy reflects the Federation's core values, Christian foundation, and commitment to respectful dialogue, proportionality, and procedural fairness.

2. Aims and Principles

The complaints process aims to:

- Resolve concerns at the earliest appropriate stage;
- Ensure complaints are handled fairly, consistently, and without undue delay;
- Maintain confidence in the school's systems and governance;
- Protect children's welfare while respecting professional judgement;
- Ensure staff are treated fairly and protected from unreasonable demands;
- Provide a clear audit trail should external scrutiny occur.

The school will deal with complaints objectively and impartially. Raising a complaint will not disadvantage a child or family in any way.

3. Scope of the Complaints Procedure

Leadership Roles Within the Federation

Pathway Primary Federation operates with a federated leadership structure.

- The Executive Headteacher holds overall strategic and operational responsibility across the Federation and is accountable to the Governing Body for standards, safeguarding, and compliance.
- Heads of School are responsible for the day-to-day leadership and management of their individual schools and act under the direction of the Executive Headteacher.

For the purposes of this policy, references to senior leadership actions may involve either the Head of School or the Executive Headteacher, depending on the nature and level of the concern. Complaints relating to strategic leadership, safeguarding oversight, or federation-wide matters will be managed by the Executive Headteacher.

3. Scope of the Complaints Procedure

This policy applies to complaints about:

- The actions or decisions of the school or its staff;
- The delivery of education or care to an individual child;
- The application of school policies and procedures.

This policy does not replace or override:

- Statutory safeguarding procedures;
- SEND statutory processes;
- Staff disciplinary or grievance procedures;
- Whistleblowing arrangements.

Where a concern is more appropriately dealt with under a different procedure, the school will explain this clearly and signpost accordingly.

4. Informal Stage – Raising a Concern

Most concerns can be resolved quickly and effectively through informal discussion.

Parents and carers should, in the first instance, raise concerns with:

- Their child's class teacher.

Staff will seek to resolve issues promptly and professionally. Early discussion is encouraged to prevent escalation.

5. Escalation to Senior Leadership

If a concern cannot be resolved informally, or is of a more serious nature, parents may request a meeting with:

- A member of the School Leadership Team, or
- The Executive Headteacher.

Senior leaders will investigate the matter proportionately and aim to resolve concerns at this stage wherever possible.

6. Complaints About Senior Leaders or the Executive Headteacher

- Complaints about a member of the School Leadership Team should be raised with the Executive Headteacher.
- Complaints about the Executive Headteacher should be raised informally with the Chair of Governors.

The Chair of Governors will seek to resolve concerns through dialogue. Where this is not possible, the matter may proceed to the formal stage.

7. Formal Complaints to the Governing Body

A formal complaint should only be submitted where earlier stages have not resolved the issue.

Formal complaints must:

- Be made in writing;
- Clearly state the nature of the complaint;
- Outline what steps have already been taken.

Complaints should be addressed to the Chair of Governors.

The complaint will be acknowledged in writing within a reasonable timeframe and will include:

- An outline of the next steps;
- Indicative timescales;
- The name of the person overseeing the process.

The Chair of Governors will determine whether the complaint should be:

- Investigated by the Executive Headteacher;
- Investigated by the Chair;
- Referred to the Complaints Committee.

External advice may be sought where appropriate.

8. Complaints Committee

The Complaints Committee will:

- Consist of three governors drawn from the Federation Governing Body;
- Exclude the Executive Headteacher and any Head of School;
- Exclude any governor with a conflict of interest or prior involvement in the matter;
- Act on behalf of the full Governing Body across all schools within the Federation.

Where a complaint relates to one school within the Federation, governors with a direct connection to that school may be excluded where appropriate to ensure impartiality.

The Committee will invite the complainant to attend a meeting, providing at least three working days' notice.

Following consideration of the evidence, the Committee will provide a written outcome within 48 hours of the meeting.

The Committee's role is to determine whether the complaint is upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld, and to identify any appropriate actions.

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- Exclude the Executive Headteacher;

- Exclude any governor with a conflict of interest.

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9. Recording and Confidentiality

The school will:

- Maintain accurate records of complaints and outcomes;
- Keep brief notes of meetings and telephone calls;
- Hold records centrally.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to support complainants with communication needs.

Records may be disclosed in accordance with data protection and freedom of information legislation.

10. Outcomes

Written responses will include:

- The complaint considered;
- The scope of the investigation;
- Findings and conclusions;
- Any actions arising.

Where a complaint is upheld, outcomes may include:

- An expression of regret;
- Appropriate remedial action;
- Review of procedures.

Where a complaint is not upheld, reasons will be clearly explained.

11. Safeguarding Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

All safeguarding allegations will be managed in line with statutory guidance.

Any allegation meeting the threshold will be referred immediately to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) via First Point of Contact (03456 789021).

Such matters are not investigated through the complaints procedure.

12. Systemic Safeguards and Proportionality

The school will manage complaints in a way that is fair, proportionate, and sustainable.

Complaints will not normally be used to:

- Re-investigate issues already concluded unless new and significant evidence emerges;
- Override lawful policies or professional judgement;
- Address anonymous complaints, unless safeguarding concerns apply.

The completion of the complaints process represents the conclusion of the school's internal consideration of the matter.

13. Managing Unreasonable or Persistent Complaints (Protocol)

The school recognises that some complainants may feel strongly about their concerns. However, where complaints become unreasonable or disproportionate, the school may take steps to protect staff and resources.

A complaint may be deemed unreasonable where it:

- Is repetitive and raises no new issues;
- Seeks to reopen matters already concluded;
- Places excessive demands on staff time;
- Uses aggressive, abusive, or inappropriate language.

Measures may include:

- Appointing a single point of contact;
- Setting clear limits on communication;
- Declining further correspondence that raises no new matters.

Any decision to apply this protocol will be documented and communicated clearly.

14. External Escalation

There is no automatic right of appeal against the Governing Body's decision. Parents may raise concerns with the Local Authority, Diocese, Ofsted or Secretary of State if they believe the process was not conducted fairly.



Executive Headteacher



Chair of Governors

Complaints

Please complete this form and return it to the school who will then forward it to the Chair of the Governing Body.
Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

Name:.....

Address:.....

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Telephone No.:.....

Name of Child:.....

Details of the Complaint (please include the date or period of time to which your complaint relates and confirm whether you have already expressed your concerns informally, and to whom and when).

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Do you have a suggestion for change?

Please attach copies of any more information you have to back up your complaint, such as letters or reports.

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Signed: **Date:** ...