



ENEMY OF BOREDOM

# COMPLAINTS

P O L I C Y



Approved by

Tracey Clark



Last reviewed

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Next review

September 2025



## Aims

Our setting aims to meet its statutory obligations when responding to complaints from parents of students and others.

**When responding to complaints, we aim to:**

1. Be impartial and non-adversarial
2. Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel, where necessary
3. Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response
4. Respect complainants' desire for confidentiality
5. Treat complainants with respect and courtesy
6. Make sure that any decisions we make are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate, in line with the principles of administrative law
7. Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process
8. Consider how the complaint can feed into our setting improvement evaluation processes



We try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed. There may be occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. This policy outlines the procedure relating to handling such complaints.

**This policy does not cover complaints procedures relating to:**

- Admissions
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)
- Safeguarding matters
- Suspension and permanent exclusion
- Whistle-blowing
- Staff grievances
- Staff discipline

The setting will aim to give the complainant the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full.

To support this, we will make sure we publicise the existence of this policy and make it available on the setting website.

Throughout the process, we will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and make any reasonable adjustments needed to accommodate individuals.

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## DEFINITIONS

The DfE guidance explains the difference between a concern and a complaint:



A **concern** is defined as “*an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought*”



A **complaint** is defined as “*an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action*”

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



### The complainant

The complainant will get a more effective and timely response to their complaint if they:

1. Follow these procedures
2. Cooperate with the setting throughout the process, and respond to deadlines and communication promptly
3. Ask for assistance as needed
4. Treat all those involved with respect
5. Do not publish details about the complaint on social media



### The investigator

An individual will be appointed to look into the complaint and establish the facts. They will:

1. Interview all relevant parties, keeping notes
2. Consider records and any written evidence and keep these securely
3. Prepare a comprehensive report to the director or head of academy, which includes the facts and potential solutions



### The complaints co-ordinator

The complaints co-ordinator can be:

1. The director
2. The Advisor
3. The Head of Academy
4. Admin Lead

The complaints co-ordinator will:

1. Keep the complainant up to date at each stage in the procedure
2. Make sure the process runs smoothly by liaising with staff members and the director
3. Be aware of issues relating to:
  - Sharing third party information
  - Additional support needed by complainants, for example, interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person
4. Keep records





## Pastoral Lead

The pastoral lead will:

1. Be the contact point for the complainant and the complaints committee, including circulating the relevant papers and evidence before complaints committee meetings
2. Arrange the complaints hearing
3. Record and circulate the minutes and outcome of the hearing



## Committee chair

The committee chair will:

1. Chair the meeting, ensuring that everyone is treated with respect throughout
2. Make sure all parties see the relevant information, understand the purpose of the committee, and are allowed to present their case

## PRINCIPLES FOR INVESTIGATION

### When investigating a complaint, we will try to clarify

1. What has happened
2. Who was involved
3. What the complainant feels would put things right

### Time scales

The complainant must raise the complaint within 3 months of the incident. If the complaint is about a series of related incidents, they must raise the complaint within 3 months of the last incident.

We will consider exceptions to this timeframe in circumstances where there were valid reasons for not making a complaint at that time and the complaint can still be investigated in a fair manner for all involved.

When complaints are made out of term time, we will consider them to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

If at any point we cannot meet the timescales we have set out in this policy, we will:

- Set new time limits with the complainant
- Send the complainant details of the new deadline and explain the delay



## STAGES OF COMPLAINT (NOT COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE DIRECTOR OR SLT)

### 1 Stage 1: Informal

The setting will take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter quickly. It may be the case that the provision or clarification of information will resolve the issue.

The complainant should raise the complaint as soon as possible with the relevant member of staff or the director as appropriate, either in person or by letter, telephone or email. If the complainant is unclear who to contact or how to contact them, they should contact the setting office at 01344 304978.

The setting will acknowledge informal complaints within 3 school days, and investigate and provide a response within 10 school days.

The informal stage will involve a meeting between the complainant and the director and/or the subject of the complaint.

If the complaint is not resolved informally, it will be escalated to a formal complaint.

### 2 Stage 2: formal

Formal complaints can be raised:

1. By letter or email
2. Over the phone
3. In-person
4. By a third party acting on behalf of the complainant

The complainant should provide details such as relevant dates, times, and the names of witnesses of events, alongside copies of any relevant documents, and what they feel would resolve the complaint.

If complainants need assistance raising a formal complaint, they can contact the school office on 01344 304978.

The director 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. The director (or designated member of the senior leadership team) will call a meeting to clarify concerns and seek a resolution. The complainant may be accompanied to this meeting and should inform the setting of the identity of their companion in advance.



In certain circumstances, the setting may need to refuse a request for a particular individual to attend any such meeting – for example, if there is a conflict of interest. If this is the case, the setting will notify the complainant as soon as they are aware, so that the complainant has the opportunity to arrange alternative accompaniment.

The director (or other person appointed by the director for this purpose) will then conduct their own investigation. The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant within 10 school days.

If the complainant wishes to proceed to the next stage of the procedure, they should inform the clerk to the governing board within 10 school days.

## How to escalate a complaint

Complaints can be escalated by contacting the Admin Lead:

1. By letter or email
2. Over the phone
3. In-person
4. By a third party acting on behalf of the complainant

The Admin Lead will need the details of the complaint as set out above, as well as details from the complainant on how they feel the previous stage of the procedure has not addressed their complaint sufficiently, and what they feel would resolve the complaint.

If the complainant wishes to proceed to the next stage of the procedure, they should inform the Admin Lead in writing within 10 school days. Requests received outside of this timeframe will be considered in exceptional circumstances.

The Admin Lead will acknowledge receipt of the request within 3 school days. The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant within 10 school days.

## At the meeting

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

At the review panel meeting, the complainant and representatives from the setting, as appropriate, will be present. Each will have an opportunity to set out written or oral submissions prior to the meeting.



The complainant must be allowed to attend the panel hearing and be accompanied by a suitable companion if they wish. We don't encourage either party to bring legal representation, but will consider it on a case-by-case basis. For instance, if a setting employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by their union.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At the meeting, each individual will have the opportunity to give statements and present their evidence, and witnesses will be called as appropriate to present their evidence.

The panel, the complainant and the setting representative will be given the chance to ask and reply to questions. Once the complainant and setting representatives have completed presenting their cases, they will be asked to leave and evidence will then be considered.

The panel will then put together its findings and recommendations from the case. The panel will also provide copies of the minutes of the hearing and the findings and recommendations to the complainant and, where relevant, the subject of the complaint, and make a copy of the findings and recommendations available for inspection by the director.

## **The outcome**

### **The committee can:**

- 1.** Uphold the complaint, in whole or in part
- 2.** Dismiss the complaint, in whole or in part

### **If the complaint is upheld, the committee will:**

- 1.** Decide the appropriate action to resolve the complaint
- 2.** Where appropriate, recommend changes to the setting's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future

The setting will inform those involved of the decision in writing within 10 school days.





## COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE DIRECTOR

Complaints made against the Director should be directed to the Governance Lead, contact via Admin Lead. They will then be investigated fully within 2 weeks.

## COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE DIRECTOR

The setting will record the progress of all complaints, including information about actions taken at all stages, the stage at which the complaint was resolved, and the final outcome. The records will also include copies of letters and emails, and notes relating to meetings and phone calls.

This material will be treated as confidential and held centrally, and will be viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint or on the review panel.

This is except where the secretary of state (or someone acting on their behalf) or the complainant requests access to records of a complaint through a freedom of information (FOI) request or through a subject access request under the terms of the Data Protection Act, or where the material must be made available during a school inspection.

Records of complaints will be kept securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with data protection law.

## MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Director and Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the CEO and Director of Enemy of Boredom. The effectiveness of the complaints procedure will be monitored to make sure complaints are handled properly. The number and nature of complaints will also be tracked.