Complaints Policy
2026-2029

A policy for all Flying High Partnership schools

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Flying High Partnership

Contents

Overview: 3

Scope of this Policy 4

Expectations: 4

General Principles 5

Submitting a clear and concise complaint 6

Length and supporting information 7

Use of Artificial Intelligence 7

Complaint Timescales 8

Withdrawal of a complaint 9

Stage One - Complaint heard by staff member (informal stage) 9

Who will consider a formal complaint? 10

Stage Two – Formal complaint: Investigation by a member of the Senior Leadership Team 12

Stage 3 – Formal complaint submitted to Headteacher 14

Stage 4 - Complaint heard by the Local Governing Body Appeal Panel 15

Complaints concerning staff conduct 18

Role of Flying High Partnership 19

Flying High Trust Central team support for school level complaints: 19

Complaints not covered by this policy: 20

GDPR and Data Complaints: 21

Policy for Unreasonable Complainants 22

Monitoring and Review 24

Equality Duty 24

Complaints received outside of term time 25

Next Steps 25

Appendix 1: School Formal Complaint Form 27

Flying High Partnership

Overview:

Our school aims to be an inclusive school providing high-quality teaching and learning, where everyone's contribution to school life is valued. We provide children with the opportunity to learn in a stimulating, caring, supportive and respectful environment where staff are committed to our aims. Your comments, either positive or developmental, are helpful for our future planning. As a school we are committed to continuous improvement and you are an important part of this. We recognise that there are occasions where you may need to discuss issues with us and this policy sets out the procedure for doing so.

Should you wish to register a complaint, the different stages of the process are detailed below.

Should you have any queries on the process please contact office@hillsideprimary.com

The process should be followed sequentially. Occasionally it might be necessary to circumvent a stage or stages due to either the complexities of the case or the subject of the complaint. You will be kept fully informed as to what stage your complaint is being managed at.

For all complaints, a written record will be kept for each case, including the outcome and whether the complaint was resolved following a formal procedure or progressed to a panel hearing.

Any resulting actions taken as a result of the complaint will also be documented by the school or Trust. Complaint records will be stored securely and access will be restricted in accordance with applicable data protection, confidentiality and records-management requirements.

The complainant will receive the written outcome appropriate to each formal stage of the complaints procedure. Any request for further information or copies of records will be considered in accordance with applicable data protection and freedom of information legislation and subject to any necessary restrictions or redactions relating to the rights and confidentiality of others.

In this document 'we' is the school and 'you' refers to the person making the complaint. Flying High Partnership may also appear as FHP.

The Central Team are those that support schools in a wider context and form the 'employer'.

Scope of this Policy

This complaints procedure principally applies to complaints from parents and carers of pupils currently attending the school concerning the provision of education or other services for their child.

The school and Flying High Partnership recognise that concerns may also be raised by individuals who are not parents or carers of current pupils, including former parents, prospective parents and members of the wider community. Such concerns will be considered respectfully and appropriately, although the school or Trust may adapt this procedure where the statutory requirements applying to complaints from parents of current pupils do not apply.

Certain matters are subject to separate statutory, regulatory or Trust procedures and therefore fall outside the scope of this complaints procedure. These are identified in the section "Complaints not covered by this policy".

Where there is uncertainty about the appropriate procedure, the school or Trust will determine which procedure should apply and will explain this to the complainant. Where different aspects of a complaint fall within different procedures, these may be considered separately or alongside one another where appropriate.

Nothing within this policy prevents the school or Trust from taking immediate action where a complaint raises concerns relating to safeguarding, pupil or staff safety, criminal activity, statutory duties or another matter requiring urgent action.

Expectations:

As a school we will:

- Look into your complaint thoroughly and fairly.
- Deal with your complaint with honesty, integrity, and in a professional manner.
- Keep you up to date with the progress and outcome of your complaint.

- Adhere to stated timeframes for response or communicate with you where the complaint investigation will require a longer period of time to manage expectations and ensure clear and timely communication.
- Where appropriate tell you what we are going to do to put things right in terms of actions to be taken or lessons learnt for the future.
- Give you a full and clear written reply providing you with intended next steps and an indication of time scales.
- Respect the confidentiality of all individuals involved.

You should:

- Inform the school of the complaint at the earliest possibility. You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.
- Follow this complaints procedure and provide the information reasonably required to enable the school to understand and investigate your complaint. Complainants are encouraged to use the complaint form provided at Appendix 1.
- Talk to staff or other adults in a calm and polite way.

General Principles

- Where possible we hope that we can make an informal resolution to any complaint.
- All stages of the complaints procedure will be based on thorough investigation not assumptions.
- The responsibility for dealing with initial general complaints lies solely with us the school. The Flying High Partnership will redirect complaints back to us unless all steps in this complaints procedure have already been undertaken or the nature, severity, or complexity of the complaint requires escalation to a later stage of the process – you will be informed as to what stage the complaint is being managed in line with.
- An anonymous complaint will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances. These would include serious concerns such as Child Protection issues, where we would either involve appropriate external agencies or else conduct our own internal review to test whether there is any corroborative evidence which might trigger a formal investigation.

- It is unhelpful if a complaint is shared with the wider school community. Therefore, we will make it clear to any person who raises a concern that we will treat the matter with a high degree of confidentiality and ask you to do likewise. This enables the focus to be purely on the complaint you have raised.
- Where letters are sent the time taken for delivery is not included within stated timeframes for response.
- It might be decided that any new items will be treated as a separate complaint rather than an addition to an existing complaint – we encourage complainants to raise all concerns at the initial submission of a complaint whether informal or formal.
- A complaint may be escalated where the complainant remains dissatisfied with the way the complaint has been handled and/or believes that the outcome reached was unreasonable.

Submitting a clear and concise complaint

- Formal complaints should normally be submitted using the complaint form at Appendix 1. The form is provided to help complainants clearly identify the issues they would like investigated, the relevant facts and the outcome they are seeking. A formal complaint will not be rejected solely because the complainant has provided the required information in another written format.
- Where a complainant has difficulty submitting a complaint in writing, the school will provide appropriate assistance and make reasonable adjustments where required. This may include the school recording the complaint on the complainant's behalf and asking them to confirm that the recorded information accurately reflects their complaint.
- Formal complaints should:
- clearly state what has happened and why this is a concern;
- identify the specific issue or issues the complainant would like investigated;
- include the key facts, including relevant dates where known;
- explain what action has already been taken to try to resolve the matter; and
- state what outcome or resolution the complainant is seeking.

Length and supporting information

- Complainants should normally keep the main narrative of a formal complaint concise and focused and, where reasonably possible, to no more than two sides of A4. Relevant supporting evidence, including correspondence or other documents, may be attached separately.
- The suggested length is intended to help the school identify and investigate the issues efficiently and is not an absolute limit. A complaint will not be rejected solely because it exceeds the suggested length.
- Where a submission is exceptionally lengthy, repetitive or unclear, the school may ask the complainant to identify or clarify the specific matters they would like investigated. The school may also ask the complainant to distinguish supporting evidence from additional or separate complaints.
- In applying these arrangements, the school will take account of the complexity of the complaint, accessibility requirements, reasonable adjustments and any exceptional circumstances.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

Complainants may use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to help them prepare or structure their complaint. However, the complaint submitted must accurately reflect the complainant's own concerns and circumstances. The complainant remains responsible for ensuring that the information provided is accurate, relevant and appropriate.

The use of AI should not result in complaints which are unnecessarily lengthy, repetitive, overly legalistic or which introduce allegations, legal arguments or requested outcomes that are not directly relevant to the circumstances of the complaint.

We ask complainants to focus on explaining, in their own words, what has happened, why they are concerned and what they would like us to do about it.

Where these requirements are not followed

Where a complaint is exceptionally lengthy, repetitive or unclear to the extent that the matters requiring investigation cannot reasonably be identified, the school may ask the complainant to clarify or summarise the issues they would like investigated before the investigation proceeds. The school will provide appropriate assistance where required.

Where clarification is reasonably required, the school will explain what information is needed. The original date on which the formal complaint was received will normally remain the date of receipt for the purposes of the complaints procedure.

This requirement will not be applied where doing so would prevent a complainant from accessing the complaints procedure, including where a reasonable adjustment is required. Exceptional circumstances will also be considered.

Complaint Timescales

For the purposes of this policy, a "school day" means a day on which the school is open to pupils for normal teaching. It does not include weekends, bank holidays, school holidays or staff training days. Unless expressly stated otherwise, all timescales within this policy are measured in school days.

The school aims to resolve concerns and complaints promptly and fairly. The following timescales will normally apply:

Formal complaints will be acknowledged within 2 school days.

- Stage One informal concerns will normally receive a response within 10 school days.
- Stage Two formal complaints will normally receive a written response within 10 school days.
- Requests for consideration at Stage Three should normally be made within 10 school days of receiving the Stage Two outcome.
- Stage Three formal reviews will normally receive a written outcome within 10 school days.
- Requests for escalation to a Stage Four complaints panel should normally be submitted within 10 school days of receiving the Stage Three outcome.
- A Stage Four complaints panel will normally be convened within 15 school days of receiving a valid request for escalation.
- The complainant will normally receive the panel's findings and recommendations within 10 school days of the hearing.

Where additional investigation is required, or where any of these timescales cannot reasonably be met, the complainant will be informed of the reason for the delay and provided with a revised timescale.

Withdrawal of a complaint

If you wish to withdraw your complaint, you should do so in writing.

Stage One - Complaint heard by staff member (informal stage)

You should, wherever possible, arrange to visit us and discuss the concern directly with the member of staff concerned e.g. class teacher in the first instance.

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible opportunity. Complaints concerning the school curriculum and other related matters are usually settled quickly and informally by visiting us, where the staff member will discuss and consider the matter of concern to you.

Should further information be required the outcome at this stage may be to mutually agree a timeframe and a follow-up in person meeting to resolve the matter.

Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at potential later stages of the procedure.

At the conclusion of this informal stage, the appropriate person will provide an informal written response within 10 school days of the date of receipt of the informal complaint.

If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is for you to make a formal complaint

Flying High Partnership

Who will consider a formal complaint?

The person appointed to consider a complaint will depend upon the subject of the complaint. No person will investigate, review or determine a complaint at a formal stage where their previous involvement in the matters complained about would reasonably call their impartiality into question.

Complaint about a member of school staff
The complaint will normally be considered at Stage Two by an appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team and reviewed at Stage Three by the Headteacher.

Complaint about a member of the Senior Leadership Team
The Headteacher will determine the appropriate person to consider the complaint at Stage Two. The Stage Three review will be undertaken by the Headteacher, provided they have not previously determined the complaint.

Complaint about the Headteacher
The complaint should be submitted via the school office and will be referred to the Chair of the Local Governing Body. Appropriate arrangements will be made for the complaint to be investigated and considered by a person who has not been directly involved in the matters complained about. Any subsequent formal review will be undertaken by a suitably independent governor or appropriate representative of Flying High Partnership who has not previously considered the complaint.

Complaint about an individual governor
The complaint will be referred to the Chair of the Local Governing Body and appropriate arrangements will be made for it to be considered by a suitably skilled governor or other appropriate person who has not been directly involved in the matter.

Complaint about the Chair of the Local Governing Body
The complaint will be referred to the Vice-Chair or, where this would not be appropriate, to Flying High Partnership, which will determine an appropriate person to consider the complaint.

Complaint about the Vice-Chair of the Local Governing Body
The complaint will be referred to the Chair or, where this would not be appropriate, to Flying High Partnership.

Complaint jointly about the Chair and Vice-Chair, a majority of the Local Governing Body or the entire Local Governing Body
The complaint will be referred directly to Flying High Partnership. An appropriate member of the Trust's leadership or governance arrangements who has had no prior involvement in the matters complained about will be appointed to consider the complaint.

Complaint about a member of the Flying High Partnership Central Team
The complaint will be referred to that employee's appropriate senior manager or another suitably senior person who has had no direct involvement in the matters complained about.

Complaint about the Chief Executive Officer
The complaint will be referred to the Chair of Trustees, who will determine appropriate arrangements for its investigation and consideration by a person or persons who have had no prior involvement in the matter.

Complaint about an individual trustee
The complaint will be referred to the Chair of Trustees or, where the complaint concerns the Chair, to the Vice-Chair or another suitably independent trustee.

Complaint about the Chair of Trustees, a majority of the Board of Trustees or the entire Board of Trustees
Flying High Partnership will make arrangements for the complaint to be considered by suitably independent persons who have had no prior involvement in the matter and who are able to consider it fairly and impartially.

Where any of the above complaints progresses to the final panel stage, the Trust will ensure that the panel is constituted in accordance with the requirements set out under Stage Four, including the requirement for at least three panel members and at least one member who is independent of the management and running of the school concerned.

Where the circumstances of a particular complaint mean that the allocation set out above would create an actual or potential conflict of interest, Flying High Partnership may appoint an alternative suitably skilled and impartial person. The complainant will be informed of any variation from the normal process and the reason for it.

Stage Two – Formal complaint: Investigation by a member of the Senior Leadership Team

If the matter has not been resolved at Stage One, the complainant may make a formal complaint. Formal complaints should normally be submitted using the complaint form at Appendix 1 and sent to the Headteacher via the school office. Where a complainant has difficulty submitting a complaint in writing, the school will provide appropriate assistance and make reasonable adjustments where required.

The complaint should clearly explain:

- what has happened and why this is a concern;
- the specific issue or issues the complainant would like investigated;
- the key facts, including relevant dates where known;
- what action has already been taken to try to resolve the matter; and
- the outcome or resolution the complainant is seeking.

The SLT member will record the date the formal complaint is received and the school will acknowledge receipt in writing, either by letter or email, within 2 school days.

An appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team will be appointed to investigate the complaint. The investigator will not have been directly involved in the matters complained about where this could reasonably call their impartiality into question.

During the investigation, the investigator will, as appropriate:

- consider the matters raised by the complainant and the outcome sought;

- review relevant documentation and other available evidence;
- meet with or speak to the complainant where further information or clarification is required;
- interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained about, allowing them to be accompanied where appropriate;
- ensure that those whose actions are the subject of the complaint have an appropriate opportunity to respond; and
- keep an appropriate written record of the investigation.

Following the investigation, the member of the Senior Leadership Team considering the complaint will provide the complainant with a formal written response, normally within 10 school days of receipt of the formal complaint.

The response will:

- explain how the complaint has been investigated;
- address the substantive issues raised;
- state whether each substantive aspect of the complaint is upheld, partially upheld or not upheld, where it is appropriate to do so;
- explain the reasons for the conclusions reached;
- identify any action that the school intends to take as a result of the complaint, where appropriate and subject to confidentiality requirements; and
- explain how the complainant may request consideration at Stage Three if they remain dissatisfied.

Where the investigation cannot reasonably be completed within 10 school days, the school will inform the complainant of the reason for the delay and provide a revised response date.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, or if it would otherwise be inappropriate for the Headteacher to appoint or oversee the Stage Two investigation, the complaint will be referred to the Chair of the Local Governing Body or another appropriate person determined in accordance with this policy.

Stage 3 – Formal complaint submitted to Headteacher

Stage Three – Formal review by the Headteacher
If the complainant remains dissatisfied following the Stage Two response, they may request that the complaint is considered at Stage Three.

A request for Stage Three should normally be made within 10 school days of receiving the Stage Two response. The complainant should explain why they remain dissatisfied and identify the aspects of the Stage Two response that they would like the Headteacher to review.

Stage Three is a review of the complaint and the way it was investigated and determined at Stage Two. It is not normally a complete reinvestigation of the complaint.

The Headteacher will consider whether:

- the complaint was investigated fairly and appropriately;
- the relevant issues and available evidence were adequately considered;
- the conclusions reached at Stage Two were reasonable in light of the available evidence;
- the complaint was handled in accordance with this policy; and
- any proposed actions or remedies are reasonable and appropriate.

The Headteacher may undertake, or require, further investigation where they consider that there is a material gap in the Stage Two investigation or that further information is necessary to reach a fair conclusion.

The Headteacher will provide a written Stage Three outcome, normally within 10 school days of receiving the request for review. Where this timescale cannot reasonably be met, the complainant will be informed of the reason for the delay and provided with a revised response date.

The written outcome will explain the Headteacher's conclusions and reasons and will state whether the Stage Two outcome is confirmed, varied or reconsidered in whole or in part. Where appropriate, it will also identify any further action that the school intends to take.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following the Stage Three response, they may request that the complaint proceeds to Stage Four, where it will be considered by a complaints panel.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, the Stage Three review will be carried out by the Chair of the Local Governing Body, or another suitably independent person appointed on behalf of the Trust who has not previously been involved in considering the complaint. The person who conducted or determined Stage Two will not conduct the Stage Three review.

Contact Details for Headteacher:
Should you need to escalate a complaint to the Headteacher please contact:

Rhian Richardson via email head@hillsideprimary.com

Contact details for the governing body:
Should you need to escalate a complaint at this stage to the governing body please contact:

Nicola Hornby via email nhornby@hillsideprimary.com

Stage 4 - Complaint heard by the Local Governing Body Appeal Panel

At this stage you should contact the governing body to state the reason(s) why you are not satisfied with the process and/or outcome of the complaint.

If your complaint relates to the governing body you should contact the Flying High Partnership who will handle this stage of the complaint:

Contact FHP via info@flyinghightrust.co.uk

Contact details for the governing body:
Should you need to escalate a complaint at this stage to the governing body please contact:

Nicola Hornby via email nhornby@hillsideprimary.com

The complaints panel will be appointed on behalf of the Trust and will consist of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. Panel members must be able to consider the complaint fairly and impartially, and any actual or potential conflict of interest will be considered before appointments are confirmed.

At least one member of the panel will be independent of the management and running of the school concerned and will have no conflict of interest, prior involvement in, or material prior knowledge of the complaint. This may include a governor from another school, including another school within Flying High Partnership, provided that they meet these independence requirements. A trustee will not act as the independent panel member.

The panel will consider the complaint impartially and on the basis of the information and evidence presented to it.

When a complaint has reached this stage, a panel will normally be convened within 15 school days of receiving a valid request for escalation. The complainant will be invited to submit further representations to the panel, both in writing and orally. The complainant will also be invited to attend the meeting, if they wish, and may be accompanied by another person for support. Following the meeting, the complainant will normally receive the panel's written findings and recommendations within 10 school days. Copies will also be provided to the school and Flying High Partnership and, where relevant, the person complained about.

You may bring someone along to the panel meeting to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate. For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

The Chair of the Panel will provide the complainant and school with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 10 school days.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by the school.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions the school will take to resolve the complaint or to reduce likelihood of future occurrence.

The panel will ensure that those findings and recommendations are sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. Furthermore, they will be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the Headteacher.

A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing, along with what actions have been taken, regardless of the decision.

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where:

- access is requested by the Secretary of State or a representative acting on behalf of the Secretary of State;
- access is requested by a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008;
- disclosure is otherwise required by law.

Records will be retained in accordance with the Trust's records retention schedule and data protection requirements.

All correspondence statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential, except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Flying High Partnership

Complaints concerning staff conduct

Complaints about the conduct of a member of staff will be considered under this complaints procedure where they concern the service provided by the school or the way in which a pupil, parent or carer has been treated.

Where information arising from a complaint indicates that a staff member's conduct may need to be considered under the Trust's disciplinary, capability or other employment procedures, those matters will be considered separately and confidentially under the appropriate procedure. The complaints procedure will not determine whether disciplinary action should be taken against an employee.

The complainant will be informed of the outcome of their complaint to the extent that it is appropriate and lawful to do so. However, the school or Trust will not disclose confidential employment information, including whether disciplinary proceedings have been commenced or details of any disciplinary action taken against an individual employee.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 2 school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The panel will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

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

The panel will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The panel can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the panel will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint

- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

Role of Flying High Partnership

Flying High Partnership provides oversight, advice and support to schools in the management of complaints and may become directly involved where required by this policy, including where the subject of a complaint means that it would be inappropriate for the complaint to be considered solely at school level.

Complaints should normally follow the stages set out within this policy. Where a complaint is submitted directly to Flying High Partnership before the appropriate school-level stages have been completed, it will normally be referred to the school for consideration at the appropriate stage. This will not apply where the nature or subject of the complaint requires Trust involvement under this policy.

Contact Details for the Flying High Partnership:

The Flying High Trust Partnership
2A Vickery Way
Chilwell
Nottingham
NG9 6RY
Telephone: 0115 989 1915
Email: info@flyinghightrust.co.uk

Flying High Partnership Complaints Policy:
Key Documents | Flying High Partnership

Flying High Trust Central team support for school level complaints:

Where a complaint relates to a specialist area of Trust responsibility, the school may seek advice and support from the relevant Flying High Partnership team. This may include the Education Team, Inclusion Team, Safeguarding Team, Finance Team, Operations Team, Human Resources Team, Governance Team, Data Protection Officer or other specialist advisers. The involvement of a Trust team does not automatically escalate the complaint to a higher stage of the procedure, but ensures that complaints are investigated by colleagues with appropriate expertise.

Complaint area	Flying High Trust support
Teaching, Learning and Curriculum	Education Team
Behaviour and Attendance	Inclusion Team
Safeguarding and Pupil Welfare	Safeguarding Team
SEND Provision and Inclusion	Inclusion Team
Equality and Accessibility	Inclusion Team
Mental Health and Vulnerable Pupils	Inclusion Team
School Finance, Payments and Charges	Finance Team
Educational Visits	Head of Operations
Premises, Health and Safety	Operations Team
Catering, Cleaning and Facilities	Operations Team
Transport and Site Security	Operations Team
Governance and Governor Conduct	Deputy CEO
Complaint About Headteacher	Deputy CEO / Head of Operations / HR
Complaint About Governing Body	Deputy CEO
Staff Conduct	HR Team
Staff Employment Matters	HR Team
Whistleblowing Concerns	HR / Deputy CEO
Data Protection (UK GDPR)	DPO – Head of Operations
Subject Access Requests	DPO – Head of Operations
Freedom of Information Requests	DPO – Head of Operations
Admissions	Head of Operations
Suspensions and Exclusions	Inclusion Team
Complaints About Central Trust Services	Relevant Central Team

Complaints not covered by this policy:

- Admissions – refer to Admissions Policy and Appeals process
- SEND assessments and EHC plans
- Exclusions/suspensions
- Safeguarding investigations
- Staff grievances
- Staff disciplinary matters
- Whistleblowing

Please refer to the separate policies for each of the above as to how to raise a concern or complaint.

Flying High Partnership

GDPR and Data Complaints:

Complaints Relating to Personal Data (UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018)

Where a complaint concerns the school's processing, use, security, retention or disclosure of personal data, the matter may be considered under the Trust's Data Protection Policy and relevant data protection procedures.

Individuals who have concerns about how their personal data has been handled should initially contact the school's Data Protection Lead or the Trust's Data Protection Officer (DPO), providing details of the concern and the outcome sought.

The Trust will investigate data protection concerns in accordance with its obligations under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Where an individual remains dissatisfied following the Trust's response, they have the right to raise the matter with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO):

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Website: www.ico.org.uk
Telephone: 0303 123 1113

A complaint about the handling of personal data may be considered alongside a school complaint where appropriate; however, the Trust reserves the right to manage data protection issues through its dedicated data protection procedures where this is considered more appropriate.

Flying High Partnership

Policy for Unreasonable Complainants

We are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to you. We will not normally limit the contact you have with the school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive, or threatening.

We define unreasonable complainants as 'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints'. A complaint will not be regarded as unreasonable solely because it is not upheld or because the available evidence does not substantiate the concerns raised.

A complainant's contact may, however, be considered unreasonable where the frequency, nature or manner of that contact, or the repeated pursuit of matters that have already been fully considered through the appropriate procedure, places a disproportionate demand on the school or Trust or significantly hinders its ability to consider the complaint or carry out its other functions.

Any decision to apply the provisions within this section will be based on the complainant's behaviour and the nature and impact of their contact rather than simply on the number of complaints they have made.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;

- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- is deemed to be acting unreasonably to the point of harassment of an individual or individuals;
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically: -

- maliciously;
- aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowing it to be false;
- using falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.

Complainants should limit the numbers of communications with the school while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from our school.

Where a complainant's contact is considered unreasonable, the school or Trust may introduce proportionate arrangements for managing future communication. This may include specifying a single point of contact, limiting communication to a particular method or setting reasonable limits on the frequency of contact.

Any such communication arrangements will be confirmed to the complainant in writing, together with the reasons for the decision and the period for which the arrangements will apply. The arrangements will normally be reviewed after 6 months and may be reviewed earlier where circumstances materially change.

A communication plan or restriction will not prevent the school or Trust from completing a complaint that has been accepted under this procedure or from providing the complainant with an outcome at each applicable stage. It will not remove a complainant's ability to request escalation in accordance with this policy. However, the school or Trust will not be required to repeatedly respond to matters that have already been fully considered and concluded through the complaints procedure.

The purpose of these arrangements is to ensure that complaints can be considered fairly while also ensuring that unreasonable or excessive contact does not place a disproportionate demand on school resources or adversely affect the school's ability to support pupils, families and its wider operational responsibilities.

Monitoring and Review

The day-to-day monitoring of this policy is the responsibility of the Headteacher and Leadership Team. This policy will be reviewed on a two-yearly cycle or earlier if necessary by the Flying High Central Team.

Record of Complaints

Number of formal complaints received in 2025-26- 2

Equality Duty

In developing this policy, and in its implementation, we have had due regard to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and in particular our need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010,
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it,
- Foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- The protected characteristics are age, marriage or civil partnership, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and pregnancy or maternity.

Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.
If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations. If this happens, we will inform you of a proposed new timescale.

If a complainant commences legal action in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Next Steps

If the complainant believes our school / Flying High did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 4.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn decisions made by the school or Trust. It will consider whether the school or Trust has complied with relevant education legislation and statutory requirements and whether the complaints procedure complies with and has been operated in accordance with https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/schedule/made.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at:

www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Academy Complaints and Customer Insight Unit
Cheylesmore House
5 Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

Appendix 1: School Formal Complaint Form

Please tell us:

1. **What happened?**
2. **Why are you concerned?**
3. **What have you already done to try to resolve it?**
4. **What would you like the school to do?**

Once completed please return to the school office email / in-person

Your name	
Relationship with school (e.g. parent /carer)	
Pupil's name (if relevant to your complaint)	
Telephone number	
E-mail address	
Please give concise details of your complaint, (including dates, names of witnesses etc.), to allow the matter to be fully investigated:	
What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? (i.e. who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?)	
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?	
Signed: Date:	
School use **Date form received:** **Received by:** **Date acknowledgement sent:** **Sent by:** **Complaint referred to:** **This form and associated complaint records will be stored and disposed of in accordance with the Trust's records retention schedule and applicable data protection requirements.**	