



Complaints Procedure

Approved by: Full Governing Body

Version 4.0

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Version history

Version	Details
0.1	In collaboration with Jamie Maloy, head teacher, Jo Winters, chair of governors and Alexandra Hughes, management committee chair, slightly modified the Department for Education's model complaints procedure to reflect the practice at Grange.
1.0	The modified procedure was shared with all governors and ratified at the full governing body meeting on 22 September 2020.
1.1	Jo Winters, chair of governors, and Jamie Maloy, head teacher, reviewed the complaints procedure and proposed minor adjustments to a few words, to improve its readability, and updated a website links and contact details.
2.0	The procedure was shared with all governors and ratified at the full governing body meeting on 6 December 2022.
2.1	Policy updated by Jamie Maloy, Headteacher, to include latest best practice from DfE and policy and procedure on serial or unreasonable complaints
3.0	Policy ratified at the full Governing Body meeting on 17 th September 2025.
3.1	Policy reviewed by Jamie Maloy, Headteacher, and Tom Clarkson, Co-chair of governors. No changes recommended.
4.0	Policy ratified by the Governing Board on 23 rd September 2026.



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1. Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint at Grange Primary School about any provision of facilities or services that the school provides. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), this complaints procedure will be used.

2. The difference between a concern and a complaint

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

A complaint may be defined as *an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or lack of action*.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Grange takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, your views will be respected. In these cases, the head teacher (HT) will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the HT will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

It is understood, however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, the HT will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

3. How to raise a concern or make a complaint

Concerns or complaints can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

You should raise a concern first with the person with whom you have the concern to try to find resolution. If this is not achieved, then the concern should be raised with a member of the school's senior leadership team (SLT). If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

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 stage 2 of the procedure.



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Complaints against school staff (except the HT) should be made in the first instance to the HT, via the school office or by email to admin@grange.ealing.sch.uk. Please mark them as *Private and Confidential*.

Complaints that involve or are about the HT should be addressed to the chair of governors (CoG), via the school office or by email to chair-governor@grange.ealing.sch.uk. Please mark them as *Private and Confidential*.

Complaints about the CoG, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the clerk to the governing body, via the school office or by email to admin@grange.ealing.sch.uk. Please mark them as *Private and Confidential*.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included in Appendix A of this procedure. If you require help in completing this form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you.

In accordance with equality law, consideration will be given towards making reasonable adjustments, if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, by providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or by holding meetings in accessible locations.

3.1 Anonymous complaints

Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated. However, the HT or CoG, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

4. Time scales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents has occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. Complaints made outside of this time frame will be considered if exceptional circumstances apply. Exceptional circumstances will be determined at the discretion of the HT, CoG or chair of the governors' complaints committee, as appropriate.

4.1 Complaints received outside of term time

Complaints made outside of term time will be considered to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

5. Scope of this complaints procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Grange, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed in the following table.



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Exceptions	Who to contact
- Admissions to schools - Statutory assessment of special educational needs (SEN) - School re-organisation proposals	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessment of SEN, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Ealing Council's Children's Services, Perceval House, 14-16 Uxbridge Road, LONDON, W5 2HL Tel: 020 8825 8000
Matters likely to require a child protection investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under Grange's child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have any serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding, tel: 020 8825 8930, email: asv@ealing.gov.uk , or Ealing Social Services through 020 8825 8000 or ecirs@ealing.gov.uk
Suspension and exclusion of children from school*	Further information about raising concerns about suspension or exclusion can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion *Complaints about the application of the <i>Behaviour policy</i> can be made through the school's complaints procedure.
Whistleblowing	There is an internal whistleblowing procedure for all Grange employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relation to education for whistle blowers in education who do not want to raise matters directly with their employer. Referrals can be made at: https://www.gov.uk/contact-dfe Volunteer staff who have concerns about Grange should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain directly



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	to the LA (see Ealing Council's Children's Services details above) or to the DfE (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.
• Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under Grange's internal grievance procedures.
• Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under Grange's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
• Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them directly.
• National curriculum - content	Please contact the DfE at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example, the policy, LA safeguarding teams or tribunals, this may impact on Grange's 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 a complainant commences legal action against Grange in relation to their complaint, consideration will be given to suspending the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

6. Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Grange wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, it will be acknowledged that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, one or more the following may be offered

- An explanation
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- An assurance that attempt will be made to ensure the event complained of will not



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recur

- An explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that the event complained of will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- An undertaking to review relevant school policies in light of the complaint at the discretion of the HT and/or CoG
- An apology

6.1 Withdrawal of a complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, they will be asked to confirm this in writing.

7. Complaints procedure stage 1

Formal complaints must be made to the HT (unless they are about the HT), via the school office or by email admin@grange.ealing.sch.uk. This may be done in person, in writing (preferably by providing the information requested on the complaint form in Appendix A), or by telephone.

The HT will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within **three** school days.

Within this response, the HT will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The HT can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

Note, the HT may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's SLT but not the decision to be taken.

During the investigation, the HT (or investigator) will

- If necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- Keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation

At the conclusion of their investigation, the HT will provide a formal written response within **ten** school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the HT is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

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 Grange will take to resolve the complaint.

The HT will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of stage 1.



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If the complaint is about the HT, or a member of the governing body (including the CoG or vice CoG), a suitably skilled governor (the designated complaints governor and complaints coordinator for such a case) will be appointed by the governing body to complete all the actions at stage 1.

Complaints about the HT must be made to the CoG, via the school office or by email to chair-governor@grange.ealing.sch.uk. Complaints about a member of the governing body must be made to the clerk to the governing body, via the school office by email to admin@grange.ealing.sch.uk.

Stage 1 will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the governing body, if the complaint is

- Jointly about the CoG or vice CoG or
- The entire governing body or
- The majority of the governing body

At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

8. Complaints procedure stage 2

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to stage 2 – an appeal hearing with members of the governing body's complaints committee, which will be formed of three impartial governors. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

A request to escalate to stage 2 must be made to the clerk to the governing body, via the school office or by email to admin@grange.ealing.gov.uk, within **ten** days of receipt of the stage 1 response.

The clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within **three** school days.

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply. Exception circumstances will be determined at the discretion of the chair of the complaints committee.

The complaints committee will consist of at least three governors with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, they will decide among themselves who will act as the chair of the complaints committee. If there are fewer than three governors from Grange available, the clerk will source any additional, independent governors through another local school or through the LA's School Governance Team, in order to make up the committee. Where impartial governors from Grange are not available, an entirely independent committee will be convened to hear the complaint at stage 2.

The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a



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meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision, they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs.

If the appeal is to be heard through written representations, the complainant will be invited to provide written submissions. The HT / governor(s) against whom the complaint has been raised will be invited to respond in writing.

If the appeal is to be heard by way of a meeting, the complaints committee will decide its own procedures. The clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within **ten** school days of receipt of the stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, neither party is encouraged to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate.

Note, complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least **five** school days before the meeting, the clerk will

- Confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- Request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least **four** school days before the meeting

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least **three** 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 committee 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. A written minute will be kept of the meeting by the clerk to the complaints committee. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not



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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 recordings of meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in the minute of the meeting.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee 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 committee 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

The chair of the committee will provide the complaint and the school with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within **ten** school days.

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

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

The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.

9. Next steps after complaints procedure stage 2

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure, or if they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the DfE after they have completed stage 2.

The DfE will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Grange. They will consider whether Grange has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the DfE online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/contact-dfe>, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Ministerial and Public Communications Division
Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street



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MANCHESTER

M1 2WD

10. Policy for managing serial and unreasonable complaints

Grange Primary School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our 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.

Grange Primary defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- 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
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- 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
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by



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telephone while the complaint is being dealt with

- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the 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.

If the behaviour continues, the headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact [Grange Primary](#), causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from [Grange Primary](#).

Appendix A: Complaint form

Please complete and return to the head teacher, chair of governors or clerk to the governing body, as appropriate, who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupils' name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address:



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Postcode:
Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school, or a governor, about it.
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.
Signature: Date:
Official use



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Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date:



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Appendix B: Roles and responsibilities

Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they

- Explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- Cooperate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint
- Respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint
- Ask for assistance as needed
- Treat all those involved in the complaint with respect
- Refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality

Investigator

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by

- Providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through
 - Sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complaint to establish what has happened and who has been involved
 - Interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint
 - Consideration of records and other relevant information
 - Analysing information
- Liaising with the complainant and the complaints coordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right

The investigator should

- Conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- Keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting
- Ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal
- Be mindful of the timescales to respond
- Prepare a comprehensive report for the headteacher or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems

The headteacher or complaints committee will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.



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Complaints coordinator

The complaints coordinator could be the headteacher, designated complaints governor or other staff member providing administrative support.

The complaints coordinator should

- Ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- Liaise with staff members, headteacher, chair of governors, clerk and LAs (if appropriate) to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure
- Be aware of issues regarding
 - Sharing third party information
 - Additional support – this may be needed by complainants when making a complaint including interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person
- Keep records

Clerk to the governing body

The clerk is the contact point of the complainant and the committee and should

- Ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relation to school complaints, education law, the *Equality Act 2010*, the *Freedom of Information Act 2000*, the *Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018* and the *General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)*
- Set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties (if they are invited to attend) and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- Collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example, stage 1 paperwork, school and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale
- Record the proceedings
- Circulate the minutes of the meeting
- Notify all parties of the committee's decision

Committee chair

The committee's chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint appeal hearing, should ensure that

- Both parties are asked (via the clerk) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting
- A meeting is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy
- Complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease – this



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is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person

- The remit of the committee is explained to the complainant
- Written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR.

If a new issue arises, it would be useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it – this may require a short adjournment of the meeting.

- Both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting or verbally in the meeting itself
- The issues are addressed
- Key findings of fact are made
- The committee is open-minded and acts independently
- No member of the committee has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- The meeting is minuted
- They liaise with the clerk (and complaints coordinator, if the school has one)

Committee member

Committee members should be aware that

- The meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so
No governor may sit on the committee if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- The aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant

It is recognised that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.

- Many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting
Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child.
- Extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child/young person and present during all or part of the meeting

Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated.

The committee should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.

If the child/young person is the complainant, the committee should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the child/young



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person's parent is the complainant, the committee should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child/young person needs to attend.

However, the parent should be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child/young person to attend a part of the meeting that the committee considers is not in the child/young person's best interests.

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount