Christ Church & Holy Trinity CE Primary Schools Federation
Complaints Policy and Procedure
April 2025

Our shared vision for Christ Church and Holy Trinity Schools

We take inspiration from the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:3-23) teaching children to "See with their eyes, hear with their ears and understand with their hearts".

Our schools are united in the Christian vision to educate children for life in all its fullness, working together so that each child may flourish with a delight in seeking wisdom and knowledge. We are learning to love God, one another and ourselves.

As a Church of England School, Christian values are at the heart of all we do. We value our relationship with parents and all members of the school and local community. If you have a concern, we want to know about it so that it can be dealt with immediately. Most concerns can be dealt with easily and quickly but to ensure all concerns are handled effectively the Governing Body has adopted a complaints policy and procedure.

Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents and carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to the Christ Church and Holy Trinity CE Primary Schools Federation about any provision or facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

The School's Complaints Procedure is devised with the intention that it will:

- usually be possible to resolve problems by informal means;
- be simple to use and understand;
- treat complaints confidentially;
- allow problems to be handled swiftly;
- inform future practice so that the problem is unlikely to recur;
- reaffirm the partnership between parents, staff, stakeholders, the community and governors as they work together for the good of the pupils in the school;
- ensure that the school's attitude to a pupil would never be affected by a parental complaint;
- discourage anonymous complaints;
- actively encourage strong home-school links;
- ensure that all staff have opportunities to discuss and understand the school's response to concerns and complaints made by parents;
- ensure that any person complained against has equal rights with the person making the complaint;
- regularly review its system for monitoring concerns and complaints received from parents, partners, stakeholders and the community.

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 a lack of action*'.

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

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. Christ Church and Holy Trinity CE Primary Schools Federation take concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have a concern

Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher or Headteacher; we would like you to tell us about it so that we can talk with you and see how best to resolve your concern. The majority of concerns can be resolved informally by speaking to a member of staff; the concern however, can be made in person, in writing or by telephone, but we would respectfully ask you to please NOT use email.

If you have any difficulty discussing your concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the Headteacher will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff involved feels unable to deal with your concern, the Headteacher 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.

We welcome suggestions for improving our work in the school. Whatever your concern, please know that we shall treat it as strictly confidential.

Be assured that no matter what you wish to share with us, our support and respect for you, and where applicable, your child in the school will not be affected in any way; please do not delay telling us of your concern. It is difficult for us to investigate properly an incident or problem which is more than a day or two old.

After hearing your concern, we will act as quickly as we can; we will let you know the timescale within which you may expect a response. Please allow time for any action we may take to be effective. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

We also understand, that there are occasions when people would like to raise concerns formally. In this case, Christ Church & Holy Trinity CE Primary Schools Federation will attempt to resolve the issue internally through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

Making a complaint

A complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone but please refrain from using email. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf on a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

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.

Complaints against school staff (except the Headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to Avis Hawkins via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the Headteacher should be addressed to Richard Steenberg (the Chair of Governors), via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to Anita Ferns (the Clerk to the Governing Body) via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the 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, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

Serial or Persistent Complaints and Harassment

Complainants whose actions fall under the above category will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures specified in the policy appendix starting on page 15 of this document.

Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Time scales

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.

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.

Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Christ Church and Holy Trinity CE Primary Schools Federation, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
• Admissions to schools • Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs • School re-organisation proposals	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with the local authority; Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Richard Stanley Richard.Stanley@rbkc.gov.uk

• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). *Sarah Stalker* sarah.stalker@rbkc.gov.uk
• Exclusion of children from school*	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions. **complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure.*
• Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus. Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.
• Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
• Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school'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 direct.
• National Curriculum - content	Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

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 a complainant commences legal action against Christ Church and Holy Trinity CE Primary Schools Federation in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Christ Church and Holy Trinity CE Primary Schools Federation wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- time to discuss your issue with a small representative group of governors
- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.

Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

Stage 1

Formal complaints must be made to the Headteacher (unless they are about the Headteacher), via the school office. This may be done in person, in writing (preferably on the Complaint Form), or by telephone.

The Headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within **2** school days.

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

Note: The Headteacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but not the decision to be taken.

During the investigation, the Headteacher (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 Headteacher will provide a formal written response within **10** school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the Headteacher 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 Christ Church and Holy Trinity CE Primary Schools Federation will take to resolve the complaint.

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

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, or a member of the governing body (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 1.

Complaints about the Headteacher or member of the governing body must be made to the Clerk, via the school office.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the governing body

Stage 1 will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the governing body or the LDBS or Local Authority. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

Stage 2

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

A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the Clerk, via the school office, within **10** school 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 **2** school days.

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within **15** 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.

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 amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Committee. If there are fewer than three governors from Christ Church and Holy Trinity CE Primary Schools Federation available, the Clerk will source any additional, independent governors through another local school or

through their LA's Governor Services team, in order to make up the committee. Alternatively, an entirely independent committee may be convened to hear the complaint at Stage 2.

The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs.

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, 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.

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 **6** 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 **10** school days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least **6** 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. 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 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 complainant and Christ Church and Holy Trinity CE Primary Schools Federation 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 Christ Church and Holy Trinity CE Primary Schools Federation.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the governing body

Stage 2 will be heard by a committee of independent, co-opted governors.

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 Christ Church and Holy Trinity CE Primary Schools Federation will take to resolve the complaint.

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

Next Steps

If the complainant believes the school 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 2.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Christ Church and Holy Trinity CE Primary Schools Federation. They will consider whether Christ Church and Holy Trinity CE Primary Schools Federation has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

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:

Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester

M1 2WD.

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
- co-operate 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 complainant 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 co-ordinator 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.

Complaints Co-ordinator *(this could be the Headteacher / designated complaints governor or other staff member providing administrative support)*

The complaints co-ordinator 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 for 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 relating 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 meeting, 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
- the 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 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 co-ordinator, 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

  We recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find in 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 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.

COMPLAINTS FORM	
Christ Church and Holy Trinity C of E Primary Schools Federation	
When we receive a written complaint, we aim to acknowledge its receipt within 2 days and send a full or interim response within 10 school days.	
Name of complainant:	
Address:	
Telephone number:	
What is your concern and how has it affected you?	
Have you discussed this matter with a member of staff before filling in this form? If so, who did you speak to and what was the response?	
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please list below:	
What would you like to happen as a result of making this complaint?	
Signature:	Date:
Please return this form to: Headteacher or Chair of Governors	
Official Use	
Date acknowledgement sent:	By who:
Complaint referred to:	Date:

Appendix to the Federation Complaints Policy

DEALING WITH SERIAL OR PERSISTENT COMPLAINTS AND HARASSMENT 2020-21

INTRODUCTION TO APPENDIX

The Federation of Christ Church and Holy Trinity CofE Primary Schools strongly encourages close links between parents and our wider community. It believes that pupils greatly benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one.

The vast majority of our parents, carers and other partners always work with us in a considerate and respectful manner. However, on the rare occasions when negative attitudes towards the school are expressed, our staff and community can be subjected to aggression and abuse.

The Governing Body of the Federation expects and requires its members of staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and to attempt to defuse the situation where possible, seeking the involvement or mediation of other colleagues where required. However, all members of staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse.

We expect parents and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards members of the school community. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable.

The Head Teacher and staff deal with specific concerns as part of their day-to-day management of the school and will address complaints in accordance with the procedures of the Federation's 'Complaints Policy'. The majority of concerns and complaints are handled in an informal manner and are resolved quickly, sensitively and to the satisfaction of the complainant. However, there are rare occasions when complainants behave in an unreasonable manner when raising and/or pursuing concerns. The consequences are that the actions of the complainants begin to impact negatively on the day-to-day running of the school and directly or indirectly impact the overall well-being of the children or staff in the school. In these exceptional circumstances the school may take action in accordance with this policy.

1. AIMS OF THE POLICY APPENDIX

The aims of this policy appendix are to:

* Uphold the standards of courtesy and reasonableness that should characterise all communication between the school and persons who wish to express a concern or pursue a complaint;
* Support the well-being of children, staff and everyone else who has a legitimate interest in the work of the school, including governors and parents;
* Deal fairly, honestly, openly and transparently with those who make serial or persistent complaints and those who harass members of staff in school or outside whilst ensuring that other stakeholders suffer no detriment.

2. PARENTS' EXPECTATIONS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents, carers and members of the public who raise either informal concerns or formal complaints with the school can expect the school to:

1. Treat every matter in confidence, engage respectfully with the complainant to try and informally resolve the issues swiftly and to the satisfaction of all parties. During this process we will clearly explain the procedures listed below if relevant:

* How and when problems can be raised with the school;

* How to lodge a formal complaint when necessary and the existence of the Federation's 'Complaints Policy' and its relevant appendices and procedures.

2. Respond within a reasonable time; we will endeavour to respond to all correspondence in relation to concerns or complaints within three working days.

* We appreciate that many parents like to send messages 'outside school hours' and we are happy to encourage flexibility in communication so that we can better meet parent needs. However, we would respectfully ask all communicants to remember that while some staff are only too happy to respond outside school hours others are often not available immediately and we will not require them to respond outside the normal hours of the school day. Staff do sometimes provide parents/carers with their personal phone numbers/messaging details to better help support them and their children; we would like to respectfully remind everyone that this can place undue pressure on our staff to be available at all times and we will always support them to limit this access out of school hours where appropriate to prioritise their well-being.

3. Be available for consultation within reasonable time limits bearing in mind the needs of the pupils within the school and the nature of the complaint;
4. Respond with courtesy and respect;
5. Attempt to resolve problems using reasonable means in line with the school's complaints procedures, other policies and practice and in line with advice from the Local Authority (LA) to keep complainants informed of progress towards a resolution of the issues raised.

3. THE SCHOOL'S EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS/CARERS/MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The school can expect parents, carers, members of the public and stakeholders who wish to raise concerns or complaints with the school to:

1. Respect the needs and well-being of pupils and staff in the school;
2. Treat all school staff with courtesy and respect;
3. Be available for consultation within reasonable time limits bearing in mind the needs of the pupils within the school and the nature of the concern or complaint;
4. Avoid any use, or threatened use, of violence to people or property;
5. Avoid any aggression or verbal abuse whether in person or by phone, email, message or video call;
6. Recognise and be considerate of the time constraints under which members of staff in schools work and allow the school or staff member a reasonable time to respond;
7. Recognise that resolving a specific problem can sometimes take some time;
8. In the case of a formal complaint, follow the procedures outlined in the Federation's Complaints Policy.

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated are:

* Shouting at members of the school community, either in person or over the telephone or video call;
* Racial abuse or sexual harassment or slurs;
* Making explicit or implied threats to the school or our staff via email, text message, social media platform or messaging app;
* Engaging in malicious communications with a member of the school community;
* Physically intimidating a member of the school community, for example by deliberately invading their personal space, using aggressive hand gestures including finger pointing, shaking or holding a fist, and making cutting, stabbing or slicing gestures;
* Wilfully spreading malicious and untrue rumours about the school or a member of staff in a way designed to cause harm or upset. In this instance, witness statements will be sought from anyone who reports this.

* Swearing, pushing, striking, kicking and spitting;
* Wilfully breaching school security procedures.

The list above is not exhaustive but should provide an illustration of a variety behaviours that will never be deemed acceptable.

4. WHO IS A SERIAL OR PERSISTENT COMPLAINANT?

For the purpose of this policy, a serial or persistent complainant is a parent/carer or member of the public who complains about issues, either formally or informally, or frequently raises issues that the complainant considers to be within the remit of the school, and whose behaviour is unreasonable and disproportionate. Such behaviour may be characterised by:

* Actions which are harassing, obsessive, persistent, prolific and repetitious;
* Prolific correspondence or excessive digital communication or telephone contact about a concern or complaint or making unreasonable or inappropriate demands;
* Use of Freedom of Information requests excessively or unreasonably
* An insistence upon pursuing unsubstantial complaints and/or unrealistic or unreasonable outcomes;
* An insistence upon pursuing complaints in an unreasonable manner;
* An insistence on only dealing with the Head Teacher on all occasions irrespective of the issue and the level of delegation in the school to deal with such matters;
* An insistence upon repeatedly pursuing a complaint when the outcome is not satisfactory to the complainant but cannot be changed (for example, if the desired outcome is beyond the remit of the school because it is unlawful).

Harassment

For the purpose of this policy, harassment is the unreasonable pursuit of such actions as exampled above, in such a way that they**:**

1. Appear to be targeted over a significant period of time on one or more members of school staff;
2. Cause ongoing distress to individual members of school staff

3. Have a significant adverse effect on the whole or parts of the school community and impact on the day to day operations of the school;
4. Are pursued in a manner which can be perceived as intimidating and oppressive by the recipient.

This may include situations where persistent demands and criticisms, whilst not particularly taxing or serious when viewed in isolation, have a cumulative effect over time of undermining confidence and negatively affecting well-being and health.

5. THE SCHOOL'S ACTIONS IN CASES OF SERIAL OR PERSISTENT COMPLAINTS OR HARASSMENT

Stage 1

* In the first instance the school will inform the complainant VERBALLY that his or her behaviour is considered to be becoming unreasonable/unacceptable and, if it is not modified, action may be taken in accordance with this policy. In the event that the complainant is regularly uncontactable, we will reserve the right to notify them by email instead.

Stage 2

If the behaviour is not modified, the school will take some or all of the following actions as necessary, having regard to the nature of the complainant's behaviour and the effect of this on the school community**:**

* Inform the complainant in writing that his or her behaviour is now considered by the school to be unreasonable/unacceptable and, therefore, to fall under the terms of the policy appendix entitled 'Serial or Persistent Complaints and Harassment.'
* Inform the complainant that all meetings with any member of staff will be conducted with a governor present and will be by pre-arranged appointment only and that notes of these meetings may be taken in the interests of all parties;
* Inform the complainant that, except in emergencies, all routine communication between them and the school should be by letter only and be addressed to a designated contact nominated by the Governing Body;

* In the case of physical or verbal aggression, following advice from the Local Authority, instructing and warning the complainant about the possibility of being barred from the school site or in extreme cases proceeding immediately to a temporary ban;
* Consider taking advice from the Local Authority on pursuing a case under Anti-Harassment legislation;
* Consider taking advice from the HR / Legal Services of the LA about putting in place a specific procedure for dealing with complaints from the complainant, (for example, the complainant will not be able to deal directly with the Head Teacher or a member of staff but only with a panel of governors to be nominated by the Governing Body of the school, who will investigate to determine whether or not the concern or complaint is reasonable and then advise the Head Teacher accordingly);
* At all times the Federation will seek to protect the legal rights of its employees and the children in its care and will consider and take all appropriate actions to protect the safety of our community and preserve it as a safe space to work and learn;

Thus without prejudice, legitimate new complaints may still be considered even if the person making them is, or has been, subject to the Complaints Policy appendix for 'Serial or Persistent Complaints and Harassment'. However, the school will be advised by the HR / Legal Services of the Local Authority, or take private legal instruction as is appropriate in each case.

If a complainant's persistent complaining or harassing behaviour is initially modified but is then resumed at a later date, the school may resume the process identified above at an appropriate level. In these circumstances advice may again be sought from the HR/Legal Services of the Local Authority or a privately instructed legal service.

REVIEW - The Federation will review this policy annually or as deemed appropriate by the Governing Board.