




Complaints Procedure

Version:	V4
Reviewed:	August 2025
Effective Until:	31 August 2027 or when there is a change in circumstances, in work practices or the introduction of new legislation.
Lead	Principal
Approved	

1. Policy Statement

Raise Education & Wellbeing School is committed to providing the highest quality of education and care. We recognise that, on occasion, parents, carers, or others with a legitimate interest in the school may wish to raise concerns or make a formal complaint.

This policy sets out how complaints will be handled fairly, transparently, and without prejudice, in accordance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Complaints should normally be raised within **three months** of the event.
- Complaints outside this timeframe will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

2. Scope of this policy

This policy covers complaints relating to:

- The education and welfare of students.
- The application of school policies and procedures.
- The behaviour or conduct of staff or students, where not covered by other processes.

This policy does not cover complaints relating to:

- Admissions decisions (which are governed by the school's Admissions Policy).
- Child Protection & Safeguarding (which follow the Chard protection & Safeguarding Policy)
- Exclusions (which follow the Exclusion Policy and statutory guidance).
- Employment matters (covered by HR procedures).

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

- **A concern** is defined as “an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought”. The school will resolve concerns through day-to-day communication as far as possible
- **A complaint** is defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action”

3. Principles

- Complaints will be taken seriously and handled promptly, fairly, and confidentially.
- The school will make reasonable adjustments for students or parents with additional needs.
- Treat complainants with respect and courtesy.
- Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process
- Complaints will be resolved, wherever possible, at the informal stage.
- Consider how the complaint can feed into school improvement evaluation processes
- Complainants will not be disadvantaged for raising a concern in good faith.

4. Legislation and statutory guidance

This document meets the requirements of regulation 33, set out in part 7 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which states that we must have and make available a written procedure to deal with complaints from parents of young people at the school.

It is also based on guidance published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on creating a complaints procedure that complies with the above regulations, and refers to good practice guidance on setting up complaints procedures from the Department for Education (DfE).

5. Stages of the Procedure

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- Concerns should be raised with the relevant member of staff (e.g. form teacher, SENCO, key worker).
- Most issues will be resolved quickly at this stage.
- If unresolved, the matter can be escalated to the Head of School.

It is hoped that most concerns can be resolved speedily and informally. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the complainant will be advised to escalate to a formal complaint, within 5 school days.

Complaints about the Head of School must be made to the Proprietor, via the school office.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint (Head of School/Principal)

- If the complaint has not been resolved informally the complainant should request a Formal Complaints Form, by phoning 10204 431946, or email at Office@raise-school.co.uk. This, along with any relevant documentation, should be submitted to the Head of School.
- The Head of School (or person appointed by the Head of School) will investigate. The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant. We aim to complete this process with 28 school days.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the response and wishes to proceed to the next stage of this procedure, they should inform the Head of School, in writing, within 5 school days.
- If the complaint concerns the Head of School, it should be addressed to the Chair of Governors/Proprietor.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If the complainant is not satisfied with the school's response, they may request a panel hearing.

- The panel will be appointed by, or on behalf of the Proprietor, and consist of at least three people, not directly involved in the matter
- The complainant must have reasonable notice of the date of the review panel; however, the review panel reserves the right to convene at their convenience rather than that of the complainant.
- The panel hearing may be in person or via Microsoft Teams
- Each party will have an opportunity to set out written or oral submissions prior to the meeting.
- The complainant may be accompanied to the hearing, by one other person.
- The panel will consider the complaint, review evidence, and make findings.
- A written outcome will be provided within 15 school days of the hearing.

The panel's decision is final within the school.

6. Complaints against the Proprietor.

6.1 Stage 1: informal

A suitably skilled person will carry out the steps at stage 1 (set out in section 6 above) where the complaint or concern is raised about the Proprietor.

6.2 Stage 2: formal

A suitably skilled person will carry out the steps at stage 1 (set out in section 6 above) where the written complaint is raised about the Proprietor.

6.3 Stage 3: review panel

At least 2 suitably qualified people will carry out the steps at stage 3 (set out in section 6 above).

7. Recording & Confidentiality

- A written record will be kept of all formal complaints, noting whether they were resolved at Stage 2 or Stage 3.
- Records will include the action taken by the school as a result of complaints.
- All correspondence, statements, and records will remain confidential, except where disclosure is required by Ofsted, the Secretary of State, or legal proceedings.

8. Monitoring & Review

- The Governing Body will review the record of complaints annually.
- Lessons learned will inform policy and practice improvements.

9. Appeal to External Bodies

- If the complainant remains dissatisfied after the panel, they may refer their complaint to:
- Ofsted (for matters relating to welfare, safeguarding, or regulatory standards).
- Department for Education (Independent Education & Boarding Team).

10. Unreasonable, Vexatious or Repeated Complaints

While the school welcomes feedback and legitimate complaints, it will not accept behaviour which is unreasonable, abusive, or persistent in nature. Unreasonable behaviour may include (but is not limited to):

- Repeating the same complaint with no new evidence.
- Persisting in pursuing a complaint after all stages have been completed.
- Submitting multiple complaints which appear intended to disrupt the school's work.
- Using offensive, abusive, or threatening language.
- Refusing to engage with the school's process in good faith.

Where a complaint is deemed vexatious, the school may:

- Decline to consider further complaints on the same matter.
- Restrict communications to a single point of contact.
- End communication if behaviour is abusive, while ensuring safeguarding duties are met.

Any decision to designate a complaint as vexatious or to limit communication will be approved by the Head of School (and, where appropriate, Proprietor) and confirmed in writing to the complainant with reasons.

11. Confidentiality & data protection

Records of complaints will be kept securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with data protection law, our privacy notices and any data retention policy.

12. Policy Availability

This policy is available on the school website and on request from the school office.

