



Complaints Procedure (33a) **(Whole School including EYFS)**

In line with the Independent School Standards regulations, we are required to publish the number of complaints registered under the formal Complaints Procedure for the last academic year.

In the academic year 2022/2023 the school had no formal or panel complaints

Dealing with complaints

Avon House School takes great care with the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents of pupils at the School do wish to make a complaint it is our intention that the complaint will be treated seriously and dealt with promptly, impartially and sensitively. Parents can be assured that any concerns and complaints raised will not adversely affect a pupil or their opportunities at school.

We welcome suggestions for improving our work in school. Be assured that, no matter what you want to tell us, our support and respect for your child will not be affected in any way. Please tell us of your concern as soon as possible. The school keeps a written record of all complaints that are made. These complaints are recorded whether they are resolved at preliminary level or for complaints that go to a panel hearing. It is difficult for us to investigate an incident or problem properly if it took place some time ago. We do appreciate the assistance we receive from parents in addressing any problems that arise.

We receive very few complaints. Problems sometimes arise from misunderstandings which are easily addressed. Most concerns and complaints can be sorted out quickly by speaking with your child's class teacher. When parents and teachers treat each other with mutual respect and support, this provides a very good role model for all our pupils. This policy is made available on the school website or can be requested from the school office.

If, having spoken to the class teacher, you still have concerns, you should see the Head of Department or the Deputy Head who will investigate the problem and discuss their findings with you so that we can find a way forward together which serves the best interest of both the school and your child. In the unlikely event of the problem remaining unresolved you can make an appointment to see the Head Teacher.

Parents can request from the school office the number of complaints there were in the previous school year.

The school will observe confidentiality at all times in the complaints process, however the school cannot guarantee confidentiality where the Secretary of State or a school inspector may request access or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Definition of a complaint

A 'complaint', within the terms of the procedures described here is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, by a person or persons with a legitimate interest in the school but not being employed at the school, about the standard of teaching of members of the teaching staff, or about the conduct, actions or omissions of members of the teaching or non-teaching staff employed at the school. If a member of the school staff has a child at the school they should follow the school's complaints procedures.

Use of the Complaints Procedure

Although this Procedure is made available to parents of prospective pupils, it is not available for use by them; it may only be used by parents of current pupils. Complaints by parents of former pupils will be dealt with under this Complaints Procedure only if the complaint was initially raised when the pupil to which the complaint relates was still registered as a pupil at the School. "Parent(s)" means the holder(s) of parental responsibility for a [current] [or prospective] pupil about whom the complaint relates. We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Head or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

The procedure to be followed in the event of a complaint being made is summarized in the following stages:

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

- Parents should contact their child's teacher in the first instance in person, by email, by telephone or by letter.
- A stage 1 complaint will be dealt with within five working days. It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
- Parents discuss concerns with the class teacher. It is then recorded in the class incidents and concerns book.
- If the teacher is unable to deal immediately with the matter, a clear note is made, including complainant's name, phone number and date, and the parent is contacted as soon as the matter has been investigated. The teacher may also consult the Deputy Head at this stage.
- The teacher ensures that the parent is clear what action or monitoring of the situation has been agreed. The issue is clearly recorded in the school Complaints Ledger which is kept in the Head Teacher's office.
- If no satisfactory solution has been found, parents are asked if they wish their concern to be considered further.

Stage 2: Formal Resolution (Referral to the Head Teacher)

- If it has not been possible to achieve an informal resolution of the concern acceptable to the complainant, the complainant will be encouraged to make a formal complaint in writing to the Head Teacher. The complaint should include full details, including names and dates where appropriate.

- A meeting is arranged with the complainant to clarify and supplement any information given within 10 days of the referral.
- The Head Teacher investigates further, interviewing witnesses as appropriate. If the complaint centres on a pupil, the pupil would normally be interviewed with the Head Teacher and a member of staff who is not directly involved or, where appropriate, the pupil's head of house who acts as an advocate.

The Head Teacher keeps written records of meetings, telephone conversations and other documentation. The complaints log, notes of meetings and outcomes are kept as a record in the Head Teacher's office in a secure cabinet. This log then forms the basis for the annual return of complaints.

- Once all relevant facts have been established, the Head Teacher responds. If the complaint was in writing, a written response will be sent within 10 days of the meeting with the complainant.
- If the complainant is not satisfied, they are advised to write to the Governors.

Although this should typically resolve the complaint, the option is available for the complainant to refer the complaint to Stage 3 if they are not satisfied with the outcome. If the complaint is against the Head Teacher, the Stage 2 procedures are carried out by one of the Governors.

Stage 3: Review by the Governors (Panel hearing)

If the complainant is not satisfied by the outcome of the previous stage, a letter should be sent to the Chair of Governors setting out the grounds for the complaint in writing.

- The Chair of Governors acknowledges receipt of the written complaint, informing the complainant that the complaint is to be heard by a Committee of two members of the School's Governors plus an independent assessor within 20 working days.
- The Chair arranges to convene a Complaints Panel selected from members of the Governors plus an independent assessor. The independent assessor will be someone with no connection to Avon House School or the complainant. The members should not be directly involved in matters detailed in the complaint and they should elect a Chair for the committee. All relevant documentation regarding the complaint should be given to the members of the committee as soon as possible.
- The Chair of the Committee will write and inform all concerned of the date, time and place of the meeting at least 5 working days in advance. The notification to the complainant should also inform him/her of the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend or relative and the right to submit further written evidence. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate. The Head Teacher may be invited to attend the meeting in order to clarify the facts about the previous investigation.
- It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Committee to ensure that the meeting is properly minuted.
- After the meeting, the Committee will consider the evidence and a written decision will be sent to the Head Teacher, complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. They should be given a copy of the findings within 15 working days and a copy will be kept in school.

- A written decision will also be sent to all parties, who must acknowledge receipt. For this purpose the school reserves the right to insist on collection of a hard copy, delivery receipt or such other confirmation of delivery as may be necessary.
- This concludes the school's internal complaints procedure and the complainant may, if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome, notify the school that they wish to proceed to Stage 4.

Stage 4: Beyond the Governing Body

Complaints can be taken to the Secretary of State for Education under Education Act 1996 on the grounds that a Governing Body or LEA is acting or proposing to act unreasonably or has failed to discharge its duties under the Act.

Vexatious Complaints

Where repeated attempts are made by a parent to raise the same complaint after it has been considered at all three stages, this can be regarded as vexatious and outside the scope of this policy. If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published Complaints Procedure, or that it 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 Two or Stage Three. The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by the school. They will consider whether the school has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

With regard to pupils in EYFS, a record of complaints will be kept for at least three years.

Parents with pupils in the EYFS may refer complaints to OFSTED via their website <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/about-us/contact-us/contact> or in writing to:
Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD.

and / or

the Independent Schools' Inspectorate (Tel: 020 7760 0100)
ISI, Cap House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA.

if they believe that the school is not meeting EYFS requirements.

Complaints that the school is not fulfilling EYFS requirements will be investigated and the complainant notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days and such complaints are available to Ofsted and ISI upon request.

Records

The panel will ensure that written records of all complaints made at this stage are kept in the Complaints Log for at least three years, whether they are resolved following a formal procedure or proceed to a panel hearing. Action taken by the school as a result of the complaint will be recorded and kept regardless of whether it has been upheld. The panel's



finding and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the chair of Governors or the Head Teacher. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except when the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

A log is kept of all formal complaints and contains details of how they were resolved. The log is reviewed at the end of every term and a register is kept on the system.

Our school website includes information in the policies section regarding how to access the complaints numbers, categorized under Early Years, Pre-Prep, Prep and Whole School.

Complaints/Concerns Raised in the School Holidays

If a complaint is raised in the holidays the following applies:

Stage 1 – The parents should expect a resolution within 10 days of the start of the next term

Stage 2 – The parents should expect a resolution within 20 days of the start of the next term

Stage 3 – The parents should expect a panel hearing with 20 days of the start of the next term

Reviewed August 2020 AC

Reviewed August 2021 AC

Reviewed November 2021 Governors

Reviewed August 2022 AC

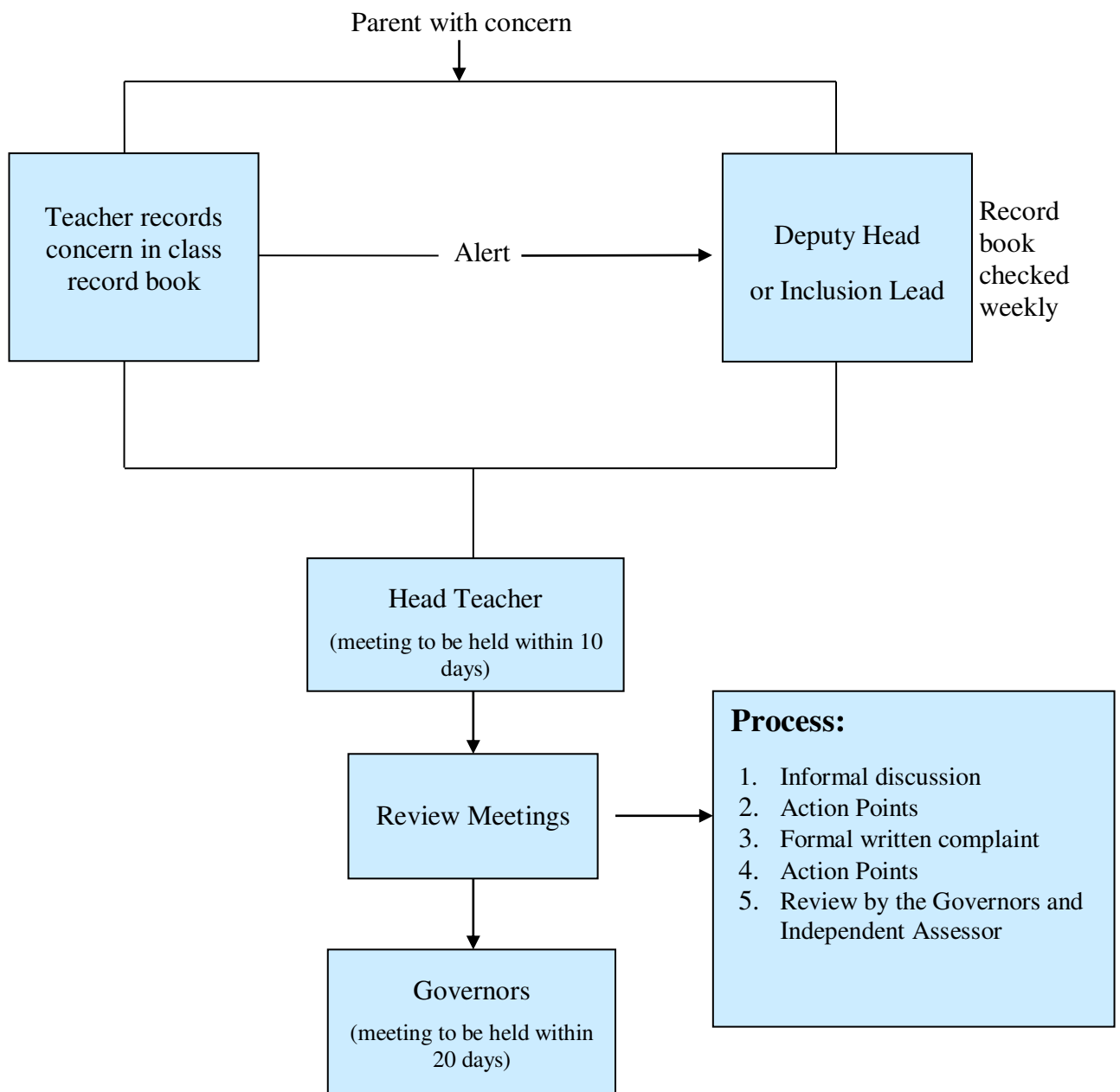
Reviewed February 2023 AC

Reviewed August 2023 AC

Reviewed August 2024 AC

Appendix I

Complaints Procedure Flowchart (Whole School including EYFS)



Appendix II

Complaints Form

Name of pupil or adult involved:

Name of parent/carer:

Year:

Date:

Those present at complaints meeting:

Please state your complaint from the pupil's perspective:

When did this occur?

Who was present?

Have there been other incidents (please state):

Have these incidents been reported and/or recorded?

Do you know any reason for this behaviour?

What action would you like taken?

Parent/carers should be aware that in a complaint situation the parent/carers of the other children involved will be invited to state their version of events and this may differ considerably from your own.

Action points taken by the school:

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Date of review: