Godstone Primary and Nursery School

Complaints Policy

REVIEW DATE: September 2026
REVIEWED BY: Governing Body
NEXT REVIEW: September 2027
WRITTEN BY: Nick Usher

Headteacher: Nick Usher
Chair of Governors: Liam McGivern

1. Introduction and purpose
Godstone Primary and Nursery School is committed to providing the best possible education and care for all pupils in an open, inclusive and transparent environment. The school welcomes feedback from parents, pupils, staff and members of the wider community. We recognise that feedback will not always be positive and that, from time to time, individuals may have concerns or complaints about the school. The school aims to deal with all complaints:

- fairly;
- openly and transparently;
- promptly and proportionately;
- impartially and without prejudice;
- with appropriate confidentiality; and
- in accordance with relevant legislation, statutory guidance and the school's policies.

The Governing Body has established this procedure in accordance with its duty under section 29 of the Education Act 2002 to establish and publish procedures for dealing with complaints about the school and any community facilities or services that the school provides, where no separate statutory procedure applies.

The procedure is designed to ensure that complaints are investigated properly, that complainants receive a clear response and that the school learns from complaints where appropriate. This policy applies to complaints made by anyone about the school or services provided by the school, unless a separate statutory procedure applies.

2. Definition of 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 reassurance is sought.

A complaint may be defined as:
An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken or a lack of action.
It is in everyone's interests that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage.

Many concerns can be resolved informally without the need to use the formal complaints procedure. The school will make every reasonable effort to resolve concerns quickly and constructively.

A complainant does not have to use the word "complaint" for an issue to be considered under this procedure.

3. Complaints outside the scope of this procedure
This procedure does not apply where a separate statutory or established procedure exists. Examples include:

School admissions and admission appeals

Complaints or appeals relating to school admissions or admission appeals will be dealt with under the relevant admissions and appeals arrangements. For a maintained school, responsibility for admissions may rest with the local authority or the school, depending on the circumstances.

Statutory SEND assessments

Concerns relating to statutory Education, Health and Care needs assessments should normally be raised with Surrey County Council through the appropriate SEND process.

Suspensions and permanent exclusions

Challenges to suspensions and permanent exclusions must be dealt with through the statutory arrangements for exclusions. This complaints procedure cannot be used to overturn a suspension or permanent exclusion. The current statutory guidance applies to maintained schools and sets out the relevant responsibilities and review arrangements.

However, a complaint about the application or implementation of the school's Behaviour Policy may be considered under this complaints procedure, provided it does not seek to replace or circumvent the statutory exclusion process.

Child protection and safeguarding matters

Complaints or concerns which indicate that a child may be at risk of harm will be dealt with under the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and relevant safeguarding procedures.

Staff grievances and employment matters

Complaints relating solely to an employee's own employment, contract, pay, working conditions or treatment as an employee should normally be dealt with through the relevant grievance or employment procedure.

Whistleblowing

Concerns raised by workers about serious wrongdoing within the school should be dealt with under the school's Whistleblowing Policy where appropriate.

Services provided by external organisations

Where a complaint relates solely to a service provided by an independent external organisation using the school premises, the complainant should normally raise the matter directly with that organisation under its own complaints procedure.

Where the complaint concerns the school's own involvement, management or commissioning of the service, the school will consider whether the matter falls within this procedure.

Data protection

Complaints concerning the handling of personal data should be raised through the school's data protection/privacy arrangements and, where appropriate, with the school's Data Protection Officer (Judicium) or the Information Commissioner's Office.

Freedom of Information

Complaints or requests for review concerning Freedom of Information requests will be dealt with under the school's Freedom of Information arrangements.
Where there is uncertainty about which procedure applies, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will determine the appropriate route and will explain this to the complainant.

4. Raising an informal concern

The majority of concerns can be resolved without using the formal complaints procedure. Where appropriate, parents and other individuals should initially raise their concern with the member of staff best placed to address it. Examples include:

Nature of concern	**First point of contact**
Educational matters	Class teacher
Pastoral care	Class teacher
Pupil behaviour or a behaviour sanction	Member of staff who imposed the sanction, class teacher or relevant senior leader
Financial or administrative matters	School Business Manager or relevant member of the school office
Complaint about a member of staff's conduct	Headteacher, or another appropriate senior leader where necessary
Safeguarding concern	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL
Complaint about the Headteacher	Clerk to the Governing Body
Complaint about a governor	Clerk to the Governing Body

Concerns can be raised by telephone, email, in person or in writing. The member of staff receiving the concern will listen carefully, clarify what the concern is about and seek to resolve it where possible. Where a concern is raised verbally and it appears likely to require further consideration, the school may make a written record of the concern.

5. Accessibility and reasonable adjustments

The school is committed to ensuring that its complaints procedure is accessible to all. Formal complaints should normally be submitted in writing. However, where a complainant has difficulty doing so, the school will provide appropriate assistance and may accept a complaint in another accessible format, including by telephone or in person.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered for complainants with disabilities or other needs that affect their ability to access the complaints process. A complainant may ask another

person to assist them with making a complaint. A third party may make a complaint on behalf of another person where the school has appropriate consent, subject to any safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection considerations. The school will take reasonable steps to ensure that language, communication or accessibility needs do not prevent an individual from using the complaints procedure.

6. Safeguarding

Any complaint that indicates that a child may be at risk of harm will be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy DSL and handled in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Where appropriate, the matter will be referred to Children's Social Care, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the police.

If a child is in immediate danger, the police should be contacted on 999.

Safeguarding concerns must not be delayed while the complaints procedure is followed. The school's safeguarding procedures take precedence where a complaint raises a child protection concern.

This reflects current statutory safeguarding guidance, which requires staff to act immediately on safeguarding concerns and follow the school's child protection procedures.

7. Confidentiality and social media

The school will treat complaints confidentially wherever reasonably possible. However, information may need to be shared with relevant staff, governors, professional advisers, the local authority, safeguarding agencies, the police or other bodies where this is necessary or required by law.

The school asks all parties to respect the confidentiality of the complaints process and to avoid publishing information that identifies pupils, staff or witnesses. This does not prevent a complainant from:

- seeking confidential advice;
- contacting a recognised trade union, legal adviser, Citizens Advice or other support organisation;
- contacting an appropriate public body;
- exercising their statutory or legal rights; or
- raising a safeguarding or whistleblowing concern through an appropriate route.

The school does not seek to prevent individuals from exercising their legal rights. However, publishing personal information about pupils, staff or other individuals may create safeguarding, privacy or data protection concerns.

8. Complaints that result in staff capability or disciplinary proceedings
A complaint may result in the school commencing separate staff capability or disciplinary proceedings. Where this happens, the complainant will normally be informed that the matter is being dealt with appropriately.

However, employment proceedings are confidential. The complainant will not normally be entitled to receive details of the proceedings or their outcome, or to participate in them. This does not prevent the school from taking appropriate action to address the substance of the complaint or to improve practice.

9. Informal resolution
Where appropriate, the school will seek to resolve complaints informally before they become formal. This may include:

- discussion with the relevant member of staff;
- a meeting with the Headteacher or senior leader;
- clarification of misunderstandings;
- an explanation of the school's decision or actions;
- an apology where appropriate;
- agreed actions to resolve the concern; or
- mediation, where appropriate.

Mediation may help repair relationships but will not normally be used as a substitute for a formal investigation where a formal investigation is necessary. If informal resolution has been attempted and the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may proceed to Stage 1.

10. Timeframes
All timescales in this procedure refer to school working days, excluding weekends, school holidays and INSET days, unless otherwise stated. The school will endeavour to abide by the timeframes set out in this policy. Where this is not possible because of the complexity of the complaint, the availability of relevant people, the need for further information or circumstances outside the school's control, the school will explain the reason for the delay and agree a revised timeframe with the complainant. The school will aim to acknowledge formal complaints within five school days**.** DfE guidance recommends realistic and reasonable timescales and recognises that additional time may sometimes be required where further investigation is necessary.

11. Time limit for making a complaint
The school will normally expect a complaint to be submitted within three months of the incident complained of**.** The school may consider a complaint submitted more than three months after the incident complained of where there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances may include:

- new evidence having become available;
- the complaint concerns a particularly serious matter;

- the complainant was unable to raise the matter earlier for a reasonable and evidenced reason; or
- there is another compelling reason why it would be fair and proportionate to consider the complaint.

The decision about whether to apply the complaints procedure will be made by the Headteacher or, where appropriate, the Chair of Governors. The decision will be recorded and communicated to the complainant. The school will not operate a blanket policy of refusing to consider complaints outside the normal timeframe.

12. The formal complaints procedure
The school operates a two-stage complaints procedure**:**

- Stage 1 – Formal investigation
- Stage 2 – Complaint Review Panel

The two-stage process is consistent with DfE best practice guidance, which recommends that Stage 2 provides an independent consideration of the complaint afresh by members of the governing body.

A complaint will not be prevented from progressing to the next stage simply because the school does not consider escalation necessary, provided that the complaint meets the requirements of this policy.

13. Stage 1 – Formal investigation
Stage 1 will normally be investigated by the Headteacher or a suitably senior member of staff who has had no prior involvement in the matter. Where the complaint concerns the Headteacher, the arrangements in Section 15 will apply.

<u>Making a Stage 1 complaint</u>
Formal complaints should normally be submitted in writing. The complainant should provide:

- their name and contact details;
- the name of the pupil and their relationship to the pupil, where applicable;
- details of the complaint;
- the action taken so far;
- any response or solution already offered;
- why the matter remains unresolved; and
- what action they believe would resolve the complaint.

Where the complainant cannot reasonably provide this information in writing, the school will provide appropriate assistance. The school may ask the complainant to clarify the complaint where necessary.

Stage 1 process
The school will:

1. Acknowledge receipt of the complaint, normally within five school days.
2. Identify the appropriate investigator.
3. Consider the complaint fairly and impartially.
4. Review relevant documents and records.
5. Speak to relevant individuals where necessary.
6. Give the complainant an opportunity to explain their concerns.
7. Identify what outcome the complainant is seeking.
8. Take appropriate action where the complaint is upheld.
9. Provide a written response normally within **15 school days** of receipt of the formal complaint.

The response will:

- summarise the complaint;
- explain the investigation undertaken;
- provide the findings;
- state whether the complaint is upheld, upheld in part or not upheld;
- explain the reasons for the decision;
- identify any actions to be taken, where appropriate; and
- explain how to request a Stage 2 Complaint Review Panel if the complainant remains dissatisfied.

Where a complaint is not upheld, this does not mean that the complainant's concerns were not taken seriously. It means that, having considered the available evidence, the investigator did not find sufficient grounds to uphold the complaint. A record of the complaint, investigation and outcome will be retained securely.

14. Stage 2 – Complaint Review Panel
If the complainant remains dissatisfied following Stage 1, they may request a Stage 2 Complaint Review Panel. The request should normally be made within 10 school days of the date of the Stage 1 response. The complainant should explain:

- which aspects of the complaint remain unresolved;
- why they remain dissatisfied;
- any evidence they believe has not been properly considered; and
- what outcome they are seeking.

The school will not require the complainant to demonstrate that the Stage 1 investigation was procedurally flawed before allowing the complaint to proceed. The Stage 2 panel will consider the unresolved complaint afresh**.** It will review the evidence and conclusions from the earlier stage, consider the substance of the complaint and determine whether the school followed its

policies and procedures. The panel may seek further information where this is necessary to reach a fair decision, but it will not normally repeat investigative steps unnecessarily.

15. Complaints about the Headteacher or governors

Complaints about the Headteacher or governors should be submitted to the Clerk to the Governing Body**,** rather than directly to the individual who is the subject of the complaint. The Clerk will acknowledge the complaint and determine, in consultation with appropriate independent advice where necessary, the most appropriate person to investigate it.

Complaint about the Headteacher

A complaint about the Headteacher will normally be investigated at Stage 1 by a suitably skilled and impartial governor who has had no prior involvement in the matter. Where appropriate, an independent investigator may be appointed. The person who investigates the complaint at Stage 1 will not sit on the Stage 2 Complaint Review Panel.

Complaint about an individual governor

A complaint about an individual governor will normally be investigated by a suitably skilled and impartial person appointed through the Clerk. The governor who is the subject of the complaint will not take part in the investigation or decision-making. They will not sit on the Stage 2 Complaint Review Panel.

Complaint about the Chair of Governors

A complaint about the Chair of Governors will be referred to the Clerk. The Clerk will arrange for an appropriately independent person to investigate the complaint. The Chair will take no part in the investigation or decision-making.

Complaint about the Chair and Vice-Chair

Where a complaint concerns both the Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors, the Clerk will seek independent advice and arrange for an independent investigator where appropriate.

Complaint about a majority or the whole Governing Body

Where a complaint concerns a majority of governors or the Governing Body as a whole, the Clerk will seek appropriate external advice and arrange for an independent investigation where necessary.

The Stage 2 panel may include suitably skilled and independent governors from another school or appropriately appointed co-opted governors, where necessary. DfE guidance specifically recognises the use of independent investigators and suitably independent governors from other schools where complaints concern the whole governing body or involve the Chair and Vice-Chair.

Independence and conflicts of interest

A person who has had prior involvement in a complaint or has detailed knowledge of it will not normally sit on the Stage 2 panel. The person who investigated Stage 1 will not sit on the Stage 2 panel. Governors must declare any actual or potential conflict of interest. Individual governors act only within authority formally delegated to them by the Governing Body. The wider Governing Body will not receive unnecessary details of a live complaint. Information will be shared only where necessary for the Governing Body to discharge its responsibilities.

16. Stage 2 panel membership

The Complaint Review Panel will normally consist of three governors**.** Panel members will:

- have had no prior involvement in the complaint;
- be impartial;
- have no conflict of interest;
- approach the matter with an open mind; and
- act within the authority delegated to them by the Governing Body.

Where the Governing Body cannot identify sufficiently independent governors, it may appoint suitably skilled governors from another school or seek other appropriate independent arrangements.

17. Stage 2 procedure

The Clerk will:

1. Acknowledge the Stage 2 request, normally within five school days.
2. Arrange the panel.
3. Agree a date and venue that are reasonably accessible.
4. Provide the complainant with information about the process.
5. Collate the relevant documents.
6. Distribute the documentation to panel members and relevant parties at least five school days before the meeting, where practicable.
7. Record the proceedings.
8. Communicate the panel's decision.

The Stage 2 meeting will normally take place within 30 school days of receipt of the request. If no mutually convenient date can be agreed after reasonable attempts, or the complainant does not attend without good reason, the panel may proceed in the parties' absence and consider the documentary evidence available. The panel will take reasonable steps to ensure that the complainant is able to participate effectively.

18. Attendance at the Stage 2 meeting

The panel may invite:

- the complainant;

- the Headteacher;
- the Stage 1 investigator;
- relevant staff;
- relevant witnesses;
- an appropriate Surrey County Council representative or independent procedural adviser, where available and appropriate.

The panel will determine who needs to attend based on the circumstances of the complaint. The complainant may normally be accompanied by a friend, relative, advocate, trade union representative or other appropriate supporter.

The complainant should notify the Clerk in advance of the name and role of their companion. The companion's role is to support the complainant. They should not normally answer questions on the complainant's behalf unless the panel considers this appropriate as a reasonable adjustment. The school will consider reasonable requests for adjustments to the format or arrangements of the meeting.

Legal representation

Legal representation is not normally necessary at a complaints panel because the meeting is not a legal proceeding. However, any request for legal representation will be considered reasonably and on its individual circumstances. The school will also respect any separate entitlement of an employee or other participant to appropriate trade union or legal representation where applicable.

19. Children attending a complaints meeting

Children will not normally be expected to attend a complaints meeting. Where a child's evidence or views are relevant, the school will consider the most appropriate and least distressing way of obtaining them. If a pupil's attendance at a meeting is considered necessary, appropriate consent will be sought from their parent or carer where required. The school will consider the child's age, understanding, vulnerability and best interests before deciding whether and how their views should be obtained.

20. Stage 2 decision

The Complaint Review Panel may:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- not uphold the complaint;
- make findings on individual elements of the complaint;
- recommend or direct appropriate action within its delegated authority;
- recommend changes to school systems, policies or procedures;
- recommend further investigation where necessary; or
- take any other proportionate action within its authority.

The panel will not normally reinvestigate matters where the evidence has already been properly considered unless further investigation is necessary to reach a fair decision. The panel's decision will be communicated in writing normally within 10 school days of the meeting. The decision will explain:

- the issues considered;
- the panel's findings;
- the reasons for those findings;
- any actions or recommendations arising from the complaint; and
- that this is the final stage of the school's complaints procedure.

The Stage 2 decision is final within the school's complaints procedure.

21. Mediation

Mediation may be considered at an appropriate point where it could help restore a constructive relationship between the school and complainant. Mediation will not normally replace an investigation where investigation is required. If mediation is offered and declined, the complainant will not be prevented from completing the complaints procedure.

22. Complaints about staff conduct and confidentiality

A complaint about a member of staff may result in the school taking action under its disciplinary or capability procedures. The complainant will be informed that appropriate action is being taken where it is lawful and appropriate to do so. However, the details of confidential employment proceedings will not normally be disclosed. The school will balance the complainant's legitimate interest in knowing how their complaint has been addressed with the privacy and employment rights of staff.

23. Managing serial, persistent or unreasonable complaints and contact

Godstone Primary and Nursery School is committed to dealing with complaints fairly and impartially. The school will not normally restrict a complainant's contact with the school. However, the school does not expect staff to tolerate behaviour that is abusive, threatening, intimidating, discriminatory or otherwise unacceptable.

A complaint or contact may be considered serial, persistent or unreasonable where its frequency, nature or manner prevents the school from properly considering the complaint or other legitimate matters. Examples may include:

- refusing to identify the grounds of a complaint despite reasonable assistance;
- refusing to cooperate with reasonable aspects of the investigation;
- repeatedly raising the same complaint after it has been fully considered;
- changing the substance of the complaint repeatedly without reasonable explanation;
- seeking unrealistic outcomes;
- making excessive and disproportionate demands on staff time;
- repeatedly sending lengthy or numerous communications on the same matter;

- insisting on a particular process that is incompatible with this policy;
- using abusive, offensive, threatening or discriminatory language;
- making threats of violence;
- knowingly providing false information; or
- using communication in a way intended primarily to harass, intimidate or disrupt.

The school will distinguish between a complainant who is persistent and a complaint which is genuinely new. A complaint will not normally be treated as serial or persistent before the relevant complaints' procedure has been completed. Restrictions will not prevent the school from considering a genuinely new complaint. Restrictions will not affect a person's statutory rights, including rights relating to pupil information, Freedom of Information or data protection. Where behaviour becomes unreasonable, the school may:

- agree a communication plan;
- nominate a single point of contact;
- specify reasonable methods of communication;
- limit the frequency of communications;
- require communication to be in writing;
- decline to respond to correspondence that repeats matters already addressed; or
- take other proportionate steps to protect staff time and wellbeing.

Any decision to impose significant restrictions on contact will be authorised by the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, recorded in writing and reviewed periodically. The school will normally give the complainant an opportunity to modify their behaviour before significant restrictions are imposed, unless the behaviour is sufficiently serious to require immediate action. A decision to restrict contact will not prevent the complainant from accessing the formal complaints procedure where they are entitled to do so.

24. Aggressive or threatening behaviour

The school will not tolerate violence, threats, intimidation or abusive behaviour towards pupils, staff, governors or visitors. In response to a serious incident, the school may:

- require an individual to leave the premises;
- restrict access to the school;
- involve the police;
- communicate only through specified channels; or
- take other lawful and proportionate action.

Any decision to restrict access to school premises will be confirmed in writing and will explain the arrangements for making representations.

25. Barring from school premises

Schools are private premises and there is no automatic right for members of the public to enter school premises. The Headteacher may ask an individual to leave school premises where their

behaviour gives reasonable cause for concern. In serious cases, the Headteacher or local authority may formally withdraw permission for an individual to enter the premises. Where permission to enter the premises is withdrawn, the individual will normally be given an opportunity to make representations. The decision will then be reviewed and may be confirmed, varied or withdrawn. Any restriction will normally state its duration and the arrangements for communicating with the school during the restriction. A complaint about a decision to restrict access should be made in writing to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors. The school will consider such a complaint under the appropriate procedure.

26. Record keeping and data protection

The school will maintain appropriate records of complaints, including:

- the complaint;
- correspondence;
- evidence;
- investigation notes;
- meetings;
- decisions;
- actions taken; and
- relevant outcomes.

Records will be maintained securely and accessed only by individuals who need the information for legitimate purposes. The school will process personal data in accordance with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, as amended by the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025**,** together with the school's privacy and data protection arrangements. The Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 amended, rather than replaced, the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

Complaint records will be retained securely in accordance with the school's approved records-retention schedule and only for as long as is necessary. Complaint records will be kept separately from staff and pupil records where appropriate.

27. Learning from complaints

The school will use complaints constructively to improve its provision. Where a complaint identifies a weakness or area for development, the school may:

- amend a policy or procedure;
- provide additional staff training;
- improve communication;
- review a decision-making process;
- introduce additional monitoring; or
- take other appropriate action.

The Headteacher will report appropriate information about complaints to the Governing Body without unnecessarily disclosing personal or confidential information. The Governing Body will monitor complaints to identify patterns, recurring issues and opportunities for improvement.

28. Roles and responsibilities

All those involved in the complaints process are expected to treat each other respectfully and to comply with this policy.

The complainant

The complainant can assist the process by:

- explaining the complaint clearly;
- providing relevant information and evidence;
- responding to reasonable requests for information;
- attending meetings where possible;
- identifying what outcome they are seeking;
- treating staff and governors respectfully; and
- asking for assistance or reasonable adjustments where required.

The Stage 1 investigator

The Stage 1 investigator will:

- investigate fairly and impartially;
- identify the issues requiring consideration;
- review relevant evidence;
- interview relevant people where necessary;
- keep appropriate records;
- maintain an open mind;
- consider what outcome might reasonably resolve the complaint;
- provide a clear written response; and
- explain the Stage 2 process where the complaint remains unresolved.

The Clerk

The Clerk will:

- act as the principal administrative contact for Stage 2;
- arrange the panel;
- identify potential conflicts of interest;
- circulate relevant documentation;
- ensure reasonable arrangements are made for the meeting;
- record the proceedings;
- communicate the panel's decision; and
- maintain appropriate records.

The Clerk does not make the panel's decision.

The Stage 2 Panel Chair
The Chair of the Complaint Review Panel will:

- explain the procedure;
- ensure that all parties have a fair opportunity to present relevant information;
- maintain an appropriate and respectful environment;
- ensure the panel remains within its remit;
- ensure the panel considers the complaint afresh;
- ensure conflicts of interest are managed;
- ensure that key findings are identified; and
- ensure that the panel's decision is properly recorded.

The Governing Body
The Governing Body is responsible for establishing and publishing the complaints procedure. It will ensure that complaints are dealt with fairly and in accordance with the school's published procedure. Governors who are involved in a complaint will not participate in decision-making where there is a conflict of interest or prior involvement.

29. External organisations and escalation
The school encourages complainants to complete the school's complaints procedure before approaching an external organisation, unless another route is specifically appropriate.

Department for Education
After completing the school's complaints procedure, a complainant may contact the Department for Education (DfE) through the current GOV.UK school complaints service. The DfE's current service can be used where a complainant is dissatisfied with how a maintained school handled their complaint, where the school is preventing them from completing its complaints procedure, or where certain safeguarding or education concerns arise.

The DfE does not normally act as a further appeal panel to rehear every aspect of an individual complaint. Its role in relation to maintained schools includes considering whether the school has complied with relevant education legislation and its duties, and whether the school's complaints process has been properly followed. The statutory framework also gives the Secretary of State powers to intervene in certain circumstances.

Current DfE complaints service:
Complain about a school to the Department for Education. Postal correspondence relating to a DfE school complaint may be sent to:

Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate

Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Ofsted
Ofsted may consider complaints that raise serious concerns affecting the school as a whole. Ofsted does not investigate or resolve individual complaints, cannot overturn the outcome of the school's complaints procedure and cannot require the school to provide a particular remedy. The current Ofsted service states that complaints about a state school should concern matters affecting the school as a whole rather than an individual dispute.

30. Surrey County Council
Where appropriate, the school may seek advice from Surrey County Council. The current generic contact for the Surrey School Relationships Service is:

School Relationships Service
Email: school.relationships@surreycc.gov.uk

The school will use the current Surrey County Council/Surrey Education Services contact information rather than relying on named officers whose roles may change. The generic School Relationships Service contact remains published by Surrey County Council.

31. Policy review
This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body at least annually and sooner where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance or DfE guidance.
The Governing Body will ensure that the current version of the policy is published on the school's website.
The school will monitor complaints and use appropriate learning from them to improve its provision.

32. Relevant guidance
This policy has been developed with regard to:

- Education Act 2002;
- Department for Education, *School complaints procedures: guidance for maintained schools*;
- Department for Education, *Best practice guidance for school complaints procedures*;
- Department for Education, *Keeping children safe in education*;
- relevant statutory guidance concerning suspensions and permanent exclusions;
- UK GDPR;
- Data Protection Act 2018, as amended by the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025; and
- relevant equality and human rights legislation.

Appendix A – School contact details

Godstone Primary and Nursery School
Ivy Mill Lane
Godstone
Surrey
RH9 8NH
Telephone: 01883 742326
Email: admin@godstone.surrey.sch.uk

Clerk to the Governing Body
Email: educationclerking@lbccloudadcroydongov.uk

Formal complaints concerning the Headteacher, Chair of Governors, Vice-Chair of Governors, an individual governor or the Governing Body should be addressed to the Clerk.

Appendix B – Roles and first points of contact

Issue	**Initial contact**
Educational matters	Class teacher
Pastoral care	Class teacher
Pupil behaviour concern	Class teacher or relevant senior leader
Pupil behaviour sanction	Member of staff who imposed the sanction, class teacher or relevant senior leader
Financial/administrative matter	School Business Manager/relevant school office staff
Staff conduct	Headteacher or appropriate senior leader
Safeguarding	DSL or Deputy DSL
Headteacher	Clerk to the Governing Body
Governor	Clerk to the Governing Body
Chair/Vice-Chair/Governing Body	Clerk to the Governing Body

Appendix C – Stage 1 Formal Complaints Form

Godstone Primary and Nursery School

Formal Complaints Form – Stage 1

Name of complainant:
Name of pupil, year group and relationship to pupil, where applicable:
Contact address:
Telephone:
Email:

Do you require any assistance or reasonable adjustments to access the complaints process?
☐ No
☐ Yes – please provide details:

Are you making this complaint on behalf of another person?
☐ No
☐ Yes
If yes, please provide details of the person and confirm that you have their consent:

Details of the complaint
Please explain what you are complaining about, including relevant dates, people involved and any supporting evidence.

Action taken so far
Please explain what you have done so far to try to resolve the matter and who you have spoken to.

Why has the matter not been resolved?

What outcome are you seeking?

Signed: _____
Date: _____
Official use
Date received: _____

Acknowledgement sent: _____
Investigator: _____
Target response date: _____

Appendix D – Stage 2 Complaint Review Form

Godstone Primary and Nursery School
Complaint Review Request – Stage 2
Name of complainant:
Name of pupil, year group and relationship to pupil, where applicable:
Contact address:
Telephone:
Email:

Date of Stage 1 response:

Do you require any assistance or reasonable adjustments to access the Stage 2 process?
☐ No
☐ Yes – please provide details:

Are you making this request on behalf of another person?
☐ No
☐ Yes
If yes, please provide details and confirm that you have appropriate consent:

Reasons for requesting a Stage 2 Complaint Review
Please explain why you remain dissatisfied following Stage 1.

Which elements of your complaint remain unresolved?

Evidence you believe has not been properly considered

What outcome are you seeking?

Signed: _____
Date: _____
Official use
Date received: _____
Stage 1 response date: _____
Acknowledgement sent: _____
Panel members: _____
Meeting date: _____
Outcome date: _____

Appendix E – Privacy statement for complaints

Information provided as part of a complaint will be processed for the purposes of investigating and responding to the complaint, managing school services and meeting the school's legal obligations.

Personal information will be handled in accordance with the school's privacy notice, the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, as amended by the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025. Information will be shared only where there is a lawful and appropriate reason to do so.

Complaint records will be retained in accordance with the school's approved records-retention schedule.

Appendix F – Summary of the complaints process

Step 1 – Informal concern
Raise the concern with the appropriate member of staff.
The school will try to resolve the concern promptly and informally.

Step 2 – Stage 1 formal complaint
If the concern cannot be resolved, submit a formal complaint.
The complaint will normally be acknowledged within five school days and investigated by an appropriate person.
A written response will normally be provided within 15 school days.

Step 3 – Stage 2 Complaint Review Panel
If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may request a Stage 2 review within 10 school days of the Stage 1 response.

A panel of three suitably independent governors will consider the unresolved complaint afresh.
The panel will normally meet within 30 school days.

A written outcome will normally be provided within 10 school days of the meeting.

Step 4 – External organisations
Once the school's procedure has been completed, a complainant may, where appropriate, contact the Department for Education or Ofsted.
The relevant external body's remit will determine whether it can consider the matter.