



Policy for Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints

July 2025

Policy for Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints

Long Sutton Primary School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

This policy covers both formal and informal complaints and managing unreasonable or persistent contact not directly associated with, or resulting from, formal complaints.

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

- Refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- Refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- Introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- Raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists that these are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- Makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- Repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- Refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaints procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed, including referral to the Department for Education
- Seeks an unrealistic outcome
- Makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- Uses threats to intimidate
- Uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- Knowingly provides falsified information
- Publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the Head Teacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Long Sutton Primary School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from Long Sutton Primary School.

Parents' Expectations of the School

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

- Regularly communicate to parents/carers in writing:
 - How and when problems can be raised with the school
 - The existence of the school's complaints procedure
 - The existence of the Policy for Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints
- Follow the complaints procedure
- Respond within a reasonable time
- 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
- Respond with courtesy and respect
- Attempt to resolve problems using reasonable means in line with the school's complaints procedure, other policies and practice and in line with advice from the Local Authority keep complainants informed of progress towards a resolution of the issues raised

The School's Expectations of Parents/Carers/Members of the Public

The school can expect parents/carers/members of the public who wish to raise problems with the school to:

- Treat all school staff with courtesy and respect
- Respect the needs and wellbeing of pupils and staff in the school
- Avoid any use, or threatened use, of violence to people or property
- Avoid any aggression or verbal abuse
- Recognise the time constraints under which members of staff in schools work and allow the school a reasonable time to respond
- Recognise that resolving a specific problem can sometimes take some time
- In the case of a complaint, follow the school's complaints procedure