

Complaints Procedure

Alcester Grammar School



Approved by:	Governing Board
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Last reviewed on:	September 2025
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Next review due by:	July 2026
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Introduction, Legislation and Guidance

- 1.1. The school prides itself on the quality of the teaching and pastoral care provided to its students. However, if parents (or others) do have a complaint, they can expect it to be treated by the school in accordance with this procedure.
- 1.2. Parents and others can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required in the course of the school's inspection or where any other legal obligation prevails
- 1.3. This Procedure does not apply to complaints where there are other avenues of appeal available e.g. exclusions, admissions, statutory assessments of SEN, safeguarding matters, whistle blowing, staff grievances, staff discipline etc. Please see our separate policies for procedures relating to these types of complaint.
- 1.4. When responding to complaints, we aim to:
 - 1.4.1. Be impartial and non-adversarial
 - 1.4.2. Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel, where necessary
 - 1.4.3. Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response
 - 1.4.4. Respect complainants' desire for confidentiality,
 - 1.4.5. Treat complainants with respect and courtesy
 - 1.4.6. Make sure that any decisions we make are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate, in line with the principles of administrative law
 - 1.4.7. Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process
 - 1.4.8. Consider how the complaint can feed into school improvement evaluation processes
- 1.5. This document meets the requirements 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 pupils at the school.

- 1.6. 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).
- 1.7. This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Time Scales

- 1.8. The complainant must raise the complaint within 3 months of the incident. If the complaint is about a series of related incidents, they must raise the complaint within 3 months of the last incident. Complaints involving allegations of abuse should, however, be raised immediately.
- 1.9. We will consider exceptions to this time frame in circumstances where there were valid reasons for not making a complaint at that time and the complaint can still be investigated in a fair manner for all involved.
- 1.10. When complaints are made out of term time, we will consider them to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- 1.11. If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child's Head of Year. If a complaint refers to a member of the Senior Leadership Team, they should contact the Principal. If a complaint refers to the Principal, it should be made to the Chair of the Governing Board.
- 1.12. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this means to the satisfaction of all. If the Year Head cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult a Head of Department, an Assistant or Vice Principal.
- 1.13. In the event that the matter is not resolved or if the complainant is not satisfied with the response made in accordance with Stage 1, then the complainant may proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this Procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

- 1.14. If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the complaint should be made in writing by email to the Principal, making it clear that they believe the complaint to now be at Stage 2. The complaint should be marked Private and Confidential. The Principal will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.
- 1.15. The Principal will investigate the matter within 10 working school days of receiving the complaint. We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period. Note - the Principal may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's leadership team, but not the decision to be taken.
- 1.16. Once the Principal is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents/guardians will be informed of this decision and the reasons in writing within 10 working school days. The Principal may refer the complaint to Stage 3 if deemed appropriate.
- 1.17. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

- 1.18. If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution), they will be referred to the Governance Professional, who has been appointed by the Governors to call hearings of the Complaints Panel. Parents must set out in full the details of their complaint and submit all relevant supporting documents within 10 working days of receiving the Principal's decision under Stage 2.
- 1.19. Where a complaint is made to the governing board, the Chair of Governors will first consider whether the complaint falls within the scope of the procedures and may take advice from the school's legal advisers. They may also decide if there is a need to appoint an investigator to clarify the nature and details of the complaint in order to support any panel hearing which may follow.
- 1.20. The Chair of Governors will also consider whether the complaint is vexatious and/or spurious, or whether the complainant is unreasonably persistent, harassing or abusive, and s/he will also decide on the action to be taken if this is the case. This may include proceeding no further with the complaint. Any such decision and the reasons will be given to the complainant in writing.
- 1.21. The matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel for consideration. The Panel will consist of at least three persons not directly

involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of whom shall be independent of the management and running of the school. The Governance Professional will acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 15 working school days of receiving the parent's complaint under Stage 3.

- 1.22. If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties prior to the hearing.
- 1.23. The parents (or others) may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.
- 1.24. The Panel will review the Principal's decision. The Panel will not consider any new complaints that have not been raised as part of the initial complaint. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision. If the complaint is not made out, the Panel will dismiss the complaint. If the complaint is made out, the Panel will uphold the complaint and may make recommendations.
- 1.25. The Panel will write to the complainant informing them of its decision and the reasons for it within 10 school days after the Hearing. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the Principal, the Governors and, where relevant, the person complained of. The Panel's findings and recommendations will also be made available for inspection on the school premises.
- 1.26. A written record will be kept of all complaints and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a Panel Hearing.
- 1.27. Stage 3 is the final stage in the school's procedure. Should complainants remain dissatisfied they may make a complaint to the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) via the following link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complain-about-an-academy/complain-about-an-academy>

Monitoring and Review

- 1.28. In the absence of intermediate reviews due to changes in statutory guidance, this policy will be updated, reviewed, and approved by the

school governors annually. The document name shows the date of the last review. All staff involved in handling complaints will be suitably trained to do so.