



Complaints Policy

Policy Creation & Review	
Author(s)	Sue Ferguson & SLT
Last review date	June 2024 <small>(Covid addendum removed, legislation & expectations updated)</small>
Ratified by Governing Body	June 2024
Previous Review Dates	June 2021 <small>(timeliness change, greater detail about recording & GDPR, update of contact details, CP investigations, campaign & anonymous complaints & Covid)</small> January 2020 September 2017 <small>(following sections have been added) Timeliness, Difference between concerns and complaints, Procedures for different stakeholders Unreasonable complaints</small> September 2015
Next Review Date	June 2027

Please note that this policy also pertains to practice in Little Ellies Childcare. Therefore the term 'school' is used to cover both provisions.

Ellen Wilkinson Primary School COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Aims

Ellen Wilkinson Primary School is dedicated to providing the best possible education and support for all its pupils. This means having a clear, fair, and efficient procedure for dealing with any complaints, so that any issues that arise can be dealt with as swiftly and effectively as possible.

We value the feedback and well-being of all members of our community and are committed to always acting in a professional manner and in accordance with our policies and procedures.

We believe that concerns are best dealt with as they arise and that care must be taken to treat concerns with respect and to protect the rights of all the individuals involved

We always aim to uphold the standards of courtesy and reasonableness that should characterise all communication between the school and persons who wish to express a concern or pursue a complaint.

To support this commitment the following policy has been created and outlines the specific arrangements in place for different stakeholders in the unlikely event that you may wish to make a complaint. Please ensure that you follow the procedure that is appropriate to your situation. If you are unsure which this would be please contact the main office who will be happy to advise you.

2. Expectations

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

- 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;
- Be impartial and non-adversarial
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel, where necessary
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response
- Make sure that any decisions we make are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate, in line with the principles of administrative law
- Respect complainants' desire for confidentiality
- 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 (LA) keep complainants informed of progress towards a resolution of the issues raised.
- We will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and make any reasonable adjustments needed to accommodate individuals.

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 well-being 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.

3. Concern or Complaint?

At EWPS we want to ensure that any concerns and/or complaints are dealt with appropriately so there is resolution for all parties. In order to do this it is important to establish the difference between a concern and a complaint. At EWPS, following DFE guidance on best practice, we have agreed the following:

3.1 Concern: expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought.

Concerns are usually more general in nature rather than related to specific incidents. In these cases we urge you to speak to your child's class teacher or to any member of staff at the school gate or main office who will discuss your concerns and hopefully alleviate your worries, or will ensure you are contacted by an appropriate member of staff who can do so. Alternatively you can email us.

3.2 Complaint: expression of dissatisfaction about actions taken or lack of them.

Complaints are usually related to a specific event or incident. In these cases please follow the procedures later in this document.

4. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements of section 29 of the Education Act 2002, which states that schools must have and make available a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides.

It also addresses guidance for schools on complaints procedures from the Department for Education (DfE), including the model procedure, and model procedure for dealing with serial and unreasonable complaints.

In addition, it addresses duties set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework with regards to dealing with complaints about the school's fulfilment of Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.

4.1 Complaints about our fulfilment of early years requirements

We will investigate all written complaints relating to the school's fulfilment of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements, and notify the complainant of the outcome within 28 days of receiving the complaint. The school will keep a record of the complaint (see section 10) and make this available to Ofsted on request.

Parents and carers can notify Ofsted if they believe that the school is not meeting Early Years Foundation Stage requirements, by:

- Calling 0300 123 4666
- Emailing enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
- Using the online contact form available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted#org-contacts>

We will notify parents and carers if we become aware that the school is to be inspected by Ofsted. We will also supply a copy of the inspection report to parents and carers of children attending the setting on a regular basis.

5. Complaints not in the scope of this policy

This policy covers all complaints about provision of facilities or services with the exception of the areas listed below. In each case we have indicated in brackets who to contact

- Admissions
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)
- Safeguarding matters
- Suspension and permanent exclusion
- Whistle-blowing
- Staff grievances
- Staff discipline
- School re-organisation proposals
- Curriculum
- Collective worship

Please see our separate policies for procedures relating to these types of complaints.

Complaints about services provided by other providers who use school premises or facilities should be directed to the provider concerned.

If there is an allegation or concern about physical or sexual misconduct towards a child, or there is a belief that a child may be at risk of serious harm, the school may immediately refer the case to child protection and welfare services. If it is decided that there is cause for an official investigation, the decisions by these authorities will supersede those made by

the school and outlined in this document. Where the complaint relates to a safeguarding referral made by a member of staff at the school, any consideration of that complaint by the school will be limited to a review of the reasonableness of the decision to make the referral in light of the evidence available to the member of staff at that time and in light of the school's safeguarding policies.

For more information on our school's provision for protecting our pupils, read our child protection and safeguarding policy,

6. Who can make a complaint?

Any person, including members of the general public, may make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that the school provides, unless separate statutory procedures apply (such as exclusions or admissions). To help guide you through this process details of how to do this for different stakeholders is outlined on pages 7 to 12.

6.1 Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will not be examined under this document.

6.2 Staff

Staff who have a concern about a colleague or a volunteer member of staff should refer to our whistleblowing policy.

The procedure for dealing with any other staff complaints or employment grievances is set out in the school's staff discipline, conduct and grievance policy which can be found on the Google Drive in Staff Information.

7. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The complainant

The complainant will get a more effective and timely response to their complaint if they:

- Follow these procedures
- Co-operate with the school throughout the process, and respond to deadlines and communication promptly
- Ask for assistance as needed
- Treat all those involved with respect
- Do not publish details about the complaint on social media

8.2 The investigator

An individual will be appointed to look into the complaint and establish the facts. They will:

- Interview all relevant parties, keeping notes
- Consider records and any written evidence and keep these securely
- Prepare a comprehensive report to the headteacher or complaints committee, which includes the facts and potential solutions

8.3 The complaints co-ordinator

The complaints co-ordinator will:

- Keep the complainant up to date at each stage in the procedure
- Make sure the process runs smoothly by liaising with staff members, the headteacher, chair of governors, cler
- Be aware of issues relating to:
 - Sharing third-party information
 - Additional support needed by complainants; for example, interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person
- Keep records

8.4 Clerk to the governing board

The clerk will:

- Be the contact point for the complainant and the complaints committee, including circulating the relevant papers and evidence before complaints committee meetings
- Arrange the complaints hearing
- Record and circulate the minutes and outcome of the hearing

8.5 Committee chair

The committee chair will:

- Chair the meeting, ensuring that everyone is treated with respect throughout
- Make sure all parties see the relevant information, understand the purpose of the committee, and are allowed to present their case

9. Access arrangements

The first stage of the complaints process usually involves speaking to a relevant member of staff. Ideally this will be in person or alternatively can be arranged through a telephone call. If you require translation support, please feel free to bring someone with you or let us know and we will arrange this for you.

If your complaint proceeds into a formal stage then you will be asked to complete a complaints form so that it is clear what has been done so far and what actions may help resolve the issue. This can be as a paper or virtual copy. Translation facilities can also be made available. If you require support in completing the form please contact the main office who will discuss the options available.

5. The process & principles for investigation

When investigating a complaint, we will try to clarify:

- What has happened
- Who was involved
- What the complainant feels would put things right

8. Timeliness

Complaints need to be considered and resolved as quickly, and efficiently as possible in the interest of all parties involved; therefore at each stage of the procedures you will see an indicative time frame for each stage. Please note however that these may need to be extended if further investigations are necessary. In this case, new time limits for actions and an explanation for the delay will be shared with you.

In order for complaints to be considered and resolved quickly we do stress the importance of them being made as soon as possible after an incident arises as this enables the greatest opportunity to investigate and ideally resolve the issue. Therefore the Governing Body at EWPS have agreed that any complaint should be lodged no later than 3 months after the incident in question, this is in line with DFE guidance on best practice. If the complaint is about a series of related incidents, they must raise the complaint within 3 months of the last incident.

After this time period the school will only consider complaints in exceptional circumstances (such as safeguarding related issues) and the complaint can still be investigated in a fair manner for all involved.. This will be decided on a case by case basis by the Headteacher.

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.

If at any point we cannot meet the timescales we have set out in this policy, we will:

- Set new time limits with the complainant
- Send the complainant details of the new deadline and explain the delay

10. Record Keeping, Confidentiality and GDPR

We will respect the confidentiality of all complaints. At no point of this process should electronic recording take place without the agreement of all parties. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of mobile phones, microphones, dictaphones etc.

Therefore we refuse to accept, as evidence, recordings (audio and/or visual) of conversations that were obtained covertly and without informed consent of all parties being recorded.

Please note that we cannot disclose information to a third third party acting on behalf of the complainant without written consent from them.

The school will record the progress of all complaints, including information about actions taken at all stages, the stage at which the complaint was resolved, and the final outcome. The records will also include copies of letters and emails, and notes relating to meetings and phone calls.

This material will be treated as confidential and stored securely, and will be viewed only by those involved in investigating the complaint or on the review panel.

This is except where the secretary of state (or someone acting on their behalf) or the complainant requests access to records of a complaint through a freedom of information (FOI) request or through a subject access request under the terms of the Data Protection Act, or where the material must be made available during a school inspection.

Records of complaints will be kept securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with data protection law, our privacy notices and [records management policy/record retention schedule].

The details of the complaint, including the names of individuals involved, will not be shared with the whole governing board in case a review panel needs to be organised at a later point.

Where the governing board is aware of the substance of the complaint before the review panel stage, the school will (where reasonably practicable) arrange for an independent panel to hear the complaint.

Complainants also have the right to request an independent panel if they believe there is likely to be bias in the proceedings. The decision to approve this request is made by the governing board, who will not unreasonably withhold consent.

11. What if a complaint involves the Headteacher or a member of the Governing Body?

Headteacher

11.1.1 Stage 1 - Informal

If the Headteacher is the subject of the complaint it is still recommended that you contact them to discuss why you are unhappy and how you would like it to be resolved. If this is unsuccessful, inappropriate and/or you are not comfortable to do so, please complete the complaints form at the end of this policy and submit it in a sealed envelope to the main office marked 'Confidential - for the attention of the Chair of Governors'. Confirmation of receipt will be provided. Alternatively this can be emailed to the Chair of Governor's secure email account. The main office can advise you on this.

If the complaint is about a Governor the same procedure should be followed unless it is about the Chair of Governors & then the Clerk of Governors should be contacted (the main office can assist with this)

11.1.2 Stage 2 - Formal

If you feel that your complaint is still not addressed after this and is concerning the Headteacher you can choose to escalate it to the Governors Panel.

If the complaint is:

- Jointly about the chair and vice-chair or
- The entire governing board or
- The majority of the governing board

An independent investigator will carry out the steps in stage 2. They will be appointed by the governing board and will write a formal response at the end of their investigation.

11.1.3 Stage 3 - Review Panel

If you feel that your complaint is still not addressed after this, you can choose to escalate it to the Governors Appeals Panel

If the complaint is:

- Jointly about the chair and vice-chair or
- The entire governing board or
- The majority of the governing board

A committee of independent governors will hear the complaint. They will be sourced from local schools, the local authority and will carry out the steps at stage 3.

12. Unreasonable complaints

EWPS is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. Most complaints raised will be valid, and therefore we will treat them seriously. However, a complaint may become unreasonable if it meets the following definition

12.1 Definition of unreasonable complaints

EWPS defines unreasonable complainants as 'those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the school, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints'.

- Has made the same complaint before, and it's already been resolved by following the school's complaints procedure
- Makes a complaint that is obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, defamatory or repetitive
- Insists on pursuing a complaint that is unfounded, or out of scope of the complaints procedure, beyond all reason
- Pursues a valid complaint, but in an unreasonable manner, e.g. refuses to articulate the complaint, refuses to co-operate with this complaints procedure, changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds; or insists that the complaint is dealt with in ways that are incompatible with this procedure and the timeframes it sets out
- Refuses to cooperate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- Makes a complaint designed to cause disruption, annoyance or excessive demands on school time
- Seeks unrealistic outcomes, or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value
- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- Makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.
- Repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to-face, by telephone or in writing or electronically:

- maliciously;
- aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowing it to be false;
- using falsified information;
- publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media, websites and newspapers.

12.2 Steps we will take

We will take every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns, and give them a clear statement of our position and their options. We will maintain our role as an objective arbiter throughout the process, including when we meet with individuals. We will follow our complaints procedure as normal (as outlined in this policy) wherever possible.

If the complainant continues to contact the school in a disruptive way, we may put communications strategies in place. We may:

- Give the complainant a single point of contact via an email address
- Limit the number of times the complainant can make contact, such as a fixed number per term
- Ask the complainant to engage a third party to act on their behalf, such as Citizens Advice
- Put any other strategy in place as necessary

12.3 Stopping responding

We may stop responding to the complainant when all of these factors are met:

- We believe we have taken all reasonable steps to help address their concerns
- We have provided a clear statement of our position and their options
- The complainant contacts us repeatedly, and we believe their intention is to cause disruption or inconvenience

Where we stop responding, we will inform the individual that we intend to do so. We will also explain that we will still consider any new complaints they make.

12.4 Serious incident of aggression or violence

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the Local Authority and police informed. This may include banning an individual from the school.

12.5 Excessive communication

Complainants should limit the number of communications with a school while a 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 Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking. If the behaviour continues the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it.

For complainants who excessively contact EWPS causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan.

This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

12.6 Duplicate complaints

If we have resolved a complaint under this procedure and receive a duplicate complaint on the same subject from a partner, family member or other individual, we will assess whether there are aspects that we hadn't previously considered, or any new information we need to take into account.

If we are satisfied that there are no new aspects, we will:

- Tell the new complainant that we have already investigated and responded to this issue, and that the local process is complete
- Direct them to the DfE if they are dissatisfied with our original handling of the complaint

If there are new aspects, we will follow this procedure again.

12.7 Complaint campaigns

For the purposes of this policy, a complaint campaign is defined as a complaint from three or more separate individuals (whether or not connected with the school) which are all based on the same subject. Depending on the subject in question, the school may deviate from the procedure set out in this policy and instead:

- send a template response to all complainants and/or
- publish a single response on the school's website (as applicable).

13. Learning lessons

The governing board will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the [headteacher where appropriate, and respecting confidentiality, to determine whether there are any improvements that the school can make to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

14. Monitoring arrangements

The Curriculum & Standards Committee on behalf of the governing board will monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure in making sure that complaints are handled properly. This will include the number and nature of complaints, and review underlying issues as stated in section 12.

The complaints records are logged and managed by SLT.

This policy will be reviewed by the headteacher & Curriculum & Standards Committee every 3 years.

15. Links with other policies

Policies dealing with other forms of complaints include:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures
- Suspension and permanent exclusion policy
- Staff grievance procedures
- Staff disciplinary procedures
- Special educational needs policy and information report
- Privacy notices

16. Contact details

The school can be contacted in the following ways:

Telephone: 020 7511 9414

Email: info@ellenwilkinson.newham.sch.uk

(please mark your correspondence clearly as CONFIDENTIAL COMPLAINT)

Address: Ellen Wilkinson Primary School, Tollgate Road, Beckton. E6 5UP



Stage 1 – (Informal) Talk to the teacher concerned.

This is usually the quickest way to sort out difficulties.

The school will take informal concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter quickly. It may be the case that the provision or clarification of information will resolve the issue.

- Please contact the main office or speak to the teacher directly to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet.
- This meeting is usually held quite quickly and in the vast majority of cases no later than 5 working days.
- You can bring a friend to support you, for example to help you put your case across. It would be good manners to inform the school if you are going to do this.
- If you need a translator please let us know in advance so that this can be arranged.
- We hope you can reach an agreement that satisfies you and the School. If you cannot, then you can go to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – (Formal) Contact the Headteacher

This can usually only happen if you have been through Stage 1. We do recognise however that some complaints may go straight to the Headteacher because of the nature or seriousness of your concerns.

- Formal complaints can be raised by letter or email, over the phone, in person, and by a third party acting on behalf of the complainant
- Please contact the school office who will pass your concerns on to the Headteacher or another member of the Senior Leadership Team, for example the Deputy or Assistant Headteacher.
- Please make sure you include details of your concern, why you are still dissatisfied and what action you would like to resolve the complaint.
- We aim to contact you as quickly as possible and definitely within 5 working days.
- The headteacher (or designated member of the senior leadership team) will call a meeting to clarify concerns, and seek a resolution. The complainant may be accompanied to this meeting, and should inform the school of the identity of their companion in advance.
- In certain circumstances, the school may need to refuse a request for a particular individual to attend any such meeting – for example, if there is a conflict of interest. If this is the case, the school will notify the complainant as soon as they are aware, so that the complainant has the opportunity to arrange alternative accompaniment.
- In most cases complaints can be resolved quite quickly after this contact, however please note others may require significant further investigation or involve other agencies. In these exceptional cases we aim to ensure that this is completed within 20 school days wherever possible.
- The written conclusion of any investigation will be sent to the complainant within 20 school days.
- We hope that the outcome of this process will address your concern. However, if it does not, then you can go to Stage 3.

Stage 3 – (Formal) Complaint Heard By Appeals Panel

The complaint is heard by the Governing Body. This is the final stage of the process.

- Complaints can be escalated by contacting the clerk to the governing board: by using the form at the end of this policy, by letter or email, over the phone, in person, or through a third party acting on behalf of the complainant. Please label correspondence CONFIDENTIAL
- If the complaint is provided verbally, a written copy of this will be sent to the complainant to agree before the matter is escalated so the scope of the complaint is clear and agreed.
- The clerk will then contact the Chair of Governors to arrange a review panel of Governors who form a complaints appeal panel. No governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it. Please note at EWPS the panel may also include a governor from another school.
- The panel will convene a meeting to discuss the complaint and all the investigation evidence to make a final decision on how to progress. A clerk is present to take notes of the meeting and records must be kept
 - The complainant will be given reasonable notice of the date of the review panel. The clerk will aim to find a date within 20 school days of the request, where possible.

- If the complainant rejects the offer of 3 proposed dates without good reason, the clerk will set a date. The hearing will go ahead using written submissions from both parties.

At the meeting

- The meeting will be held in private and electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally allowed unless as agreed access requirements by all parties
- The meeting will be held in private and electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally allowed unless as agreed access requirements by all parties
- The complainant must be allowed to attend the panel hearing and be accompanied by a suitable companion if they wish. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.
- At the meeting, each individual will have the opportunity to give statements and present their evidence, and witnesses will be called as appropriate to present their evidence.
- The panel, the complainant and the school representative will be given the chance to ask and reply to questions. Once the complainant and school representatives have completed presenting their cases, they will be asked to leave, and evidence will then be considered.

The committee can:

- Uphold the complaint, in whole or in part
- Dismiss the complaint, in whole or in part

If the complaint is upheld, the committee will:

- Decide the appropriate action to resolve the complaint
- Where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future
- The school will inform those involved of the decision in writing within 20 school days.

The panel's decision is final.

Further Information

The outcome letter from the School Complaints Panel exhausts the 3 Stage procedures. If you are dissatisfied with the process, you are able to contact:

www.gov.uk/complain-about-school

It is important to note that the DfE will not re-investigate the matter of the complaint. It will look at whether the school's complaints policy and any other relevant statutory policies that the school holds were adhered to. The DfE also looks at whether the school's statutory policies adhere to education legislation.

The DfE will intervene where a school has:

- Failed to act in line with its duties under education law
- Acted (or is proposing to act) unreasonably when exercising its functions

If the complaints procedure is found to not meet regulations, the school will be asked to correct its procedure accordingly.

Appendix 2 - Students & Volunteers Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – (Informal) Talk to the teacher/mentor you are assigned to

This is usually the quickest way to sort out difficulties.

- Please contact the main office or speak to the teacher directly to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet.
- This meeting is usually held quite quickly and in the vast majority of cases no later than 5 working days.
- We hope you can reach an agreement that satisfies you and the School. If you cannot, then you can go to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – (Formal) Talk to your designated lead at the school

This can only happen if you have been through Stage 1.

- All students and volunteers at EWPS have a designated ITT or Parent Volunteer Lead.
- Talk to your designated lead at a convenient time in order that you may reach a satisfactory agreement based on the nature of the complaint.
- Your lead will guide you through the university guidelines or volunteer agreement.
- Please note that your designated ITT or parent volunteer lead may need to conduct an investigation into the nature of your complaint with other members of staff.
- If you cannot reach an amicable solution go to stage 3.

Stage 3 – (Formal) Member of Senior Leadership & Your ITT provider (where applicable)

This can usually only happen if you have been through Stages 1 & 2. We do recognise however that some complaints may go straight to a member of the Senior Leadership Team because of the nature or seriousness of your concerns.

- Please contact the school office who will pass your concerns on to the Headteacher or another member of the Senior Leadership Team, for example the Deputy or Assistant Headteacher.
- Please make sure you include details of your concern, why you are still dissatisfied and what action you would like to resolve the complaint.
- We aim to contact you as quickly as possible and definitely within 5 working days.
- In most cases complaints can be resolved quite quickly after this contact, however please note others may require significant further investigation or involve other agencies. In these exceptional cases we aim to ensure that this is completed within 20 school days wherever possible.
- We hope that the outcome of this process will address your concern. However, if it does not, then you can go to Stage 4.

Stage 4 – (Formal) Complaint Heard By Appeals Panel

The complaint is heard by the Governing Body. This is the final stage of the process.

- Complaints can be escalated by contacting the clerk to the governing board: by using the form at the end of this policy, by letter or email, over the phone, in person, or through a third party acting on behalf of the complainant. Please label correspondence CONFIDENTIAL
- If the complaint is provided verbally, a written copy of this will be sent to the complainant to agree before the matter is escalated so the scope of the complaint is clear and agreed.
- The clerk will then contact the Chair of Governors to arrange a review panel of Governors who form a complaints appeal panel. No governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it. Please note at EWPS the panel may also include a governor from another school.
- The panel will convene a meeting to discuss the complaint and all the investigation evidence to make a final decision on how to progress. A clerk is present to take notes of the meeting and records must be kept
- The complainant will be given reasonable notice of the date of the review panel. The clerk will aim to find a date within 20 school days of the request, where possible.
- If the complainant rejects the offer of 3 proposed dates without good reason, the clerk will set a date. The hearing will go ahead using written submissions from both parties.

At the meeting

- The meeting will be held in private and electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally allowed unless as agreed access requirements by all parties
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- The complainant must be allowed to attend the panel hearing and be accompanied by a suitable companion if they wish. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

- At the meeting, each individual will have the opportunity to give statements and present their evidence, and witnesses will be called as appropriate to present their evidence.
- The panel, the complainant and the school representative will be given the chance to ask and reply to questions. Once the complainant and school representatives have completed presenting their cases, they will be asked to leave, and evidence will then be considered.

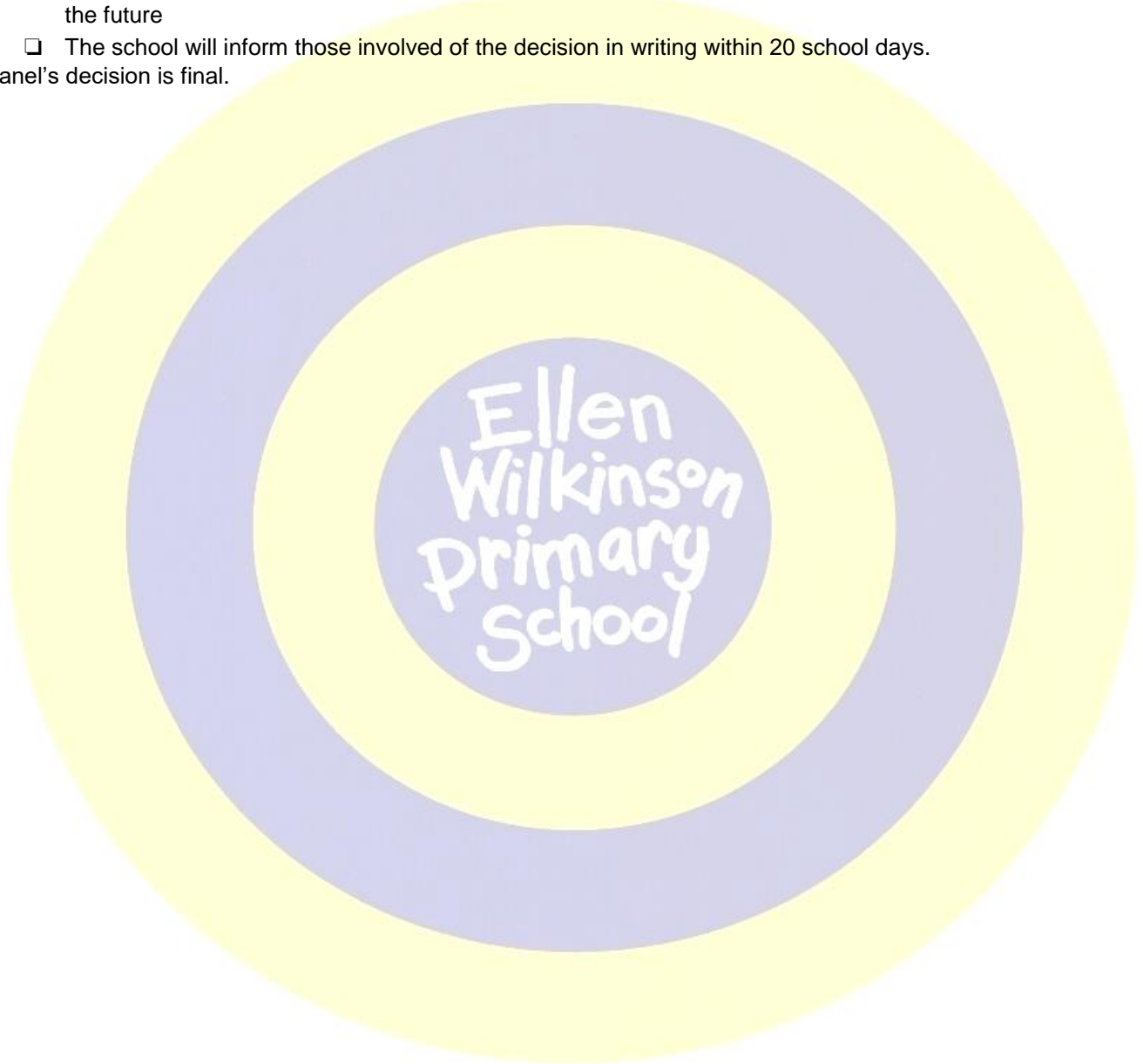
The committee can:

- Uphold the complaint, in whole or in part
- Dismiss the complaint, in whole or in part

If the complaint is upheld, the committee will:

- Decide the appropriate action to resolve the complaint
- Where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future
- The school will inform those involved of the decision in writing within 20 school days.

The panel's decision is final.



Appendix 3 - Visitors Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – (Informal) Talk to the host you are assigned to

This is usually the quickest way to sort out difficulties.

- Please ensure that you approach members of staff outside of teaching time and away from children so that a mutually convenient time can then be arranged, this is likely to be during breaks or at the end of the school day.
- We hope you can reach an agreement that satisfies you and the School. If you cannot, then you can go to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – (Formal) Member of Senior Leadership

This can usually only happen if you have been through Stages 1. We do recognise however that some complaints may go straight to a member of the Senior Leadership Team because of the nature or seriousness of your concerns.

- Please contact the school office who will pass your concerns on to the Headteacher or another member of the Senior Leadership Team, for example the Deputy or Assistant Headteacher.
- Please make sure you include details of your concern, why you are still dissatisfied and what action you would like to resolve the complaint.
- We aim to contact you as quickly as possible and definitely within 5 working days.
- In most cases complaints can be resolved quite quickly after this contact, however please note others may require significant further investigation or involve other agencies. In these exceptional cases we aim to ensure that this is completed within 20 school days wherever possible.
- We hope that the outcome of this process will address your concern. However, if it does not, then you can go to Stage 3.

Stage 3 – (Formal) Complaint Heard By Appeals Panel

The complaint is heard by the Governing Body. This is the final stage of the process.

- Complaints can be escalated by contacting the clerk to the governing board: by using the form at the end of this policy, by letter or email, over the phone, in person, or through a third party acting on behalf of the complainant. Please label correspondence CONFIDENTIAL
- If the complaint is provided verbally, a written copy of this will be sent to the complainant to agree before the matter is escalated so the scope of the complaint is clear and agreed.
- The clerk will then contact the Chair of Governors to arrange a review panel of Governors who form a complaints appeal panel. No governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it. Please note at EWPS the panel may also include a governor from another school.
- The panel will convene a meeting to discuss the complaint and all the investigation evidence to make a final decision on how to progress. A clerk is present to take notes of the meeting and records must be kept
 - The complainant will be given reasonable notice of the date of the review panel. The clerk will aim to find a date within 20 school days of the request, where possible.
 - If the complainant rejects the offer of 3 proposed dates without good reason, the clerk will set a date. The hearing will go ahead using written submissions from both parties.

At the meeting

- The meeting will be held in private and electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally allowed unless as agreed access requirements by all parties
- The meeting will be held in private and electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally allowed unless as agreed access requirements by all parties
- The complainant must be allowed to attend the panel hearing and be accompanied by a suitable companion if they wish. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.
- At the meeting, each individual will have the opportunity to give statements and present their evidence, and witnesses will be called as appropriate to present their evidence.

- The panel, the complainant and the school representative will be given the chance to ask and reply to questions. Once the complainant and school representatives have completed presenting their cases, they will be asked to leave, and evidence will then be considered.

The committee can:

- Uphold the complaint, in whole or in part
- Dismiss the complaint, in whole or in part

If the complaint is upheld, the committee will:

- Decide the appropriate action to resolve the complaint
- Where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future
- The school will inform those involved of the decision in writing within 20 school days.

The panel's decision is final.

Appendix 4 - General Public Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – (Informal) Contact the main office

This is usually the quickest way to sort out difficulties.

- In the majority of cases they may be able to resolve the concern quickly or if this is not possible they will arrange for another member of staff to contact you.
- We hope you can reach an agreement that satisfies you and the School. If you cannot, then you can go to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – (Formal) Member of Senior Leadership

This can usually only happen if you have been through Stages 1. We do recognise however that some complaints may go straight to a member of the Senior Leadership Team because of the nature or seriousness of your concerns.

- Please contact the school office who will pass your concerns on to the Headteacher or another member of the Senior Leadership Team, for example the Deputy or Assistant Headteacher.
- Please make sure you include details of your concern, why you are still dissatisfied and what action you would like to resolve the complaint.
- We aim to contact you as quickly as possible and definitely within 5 working days.
- In most cases complaints can be resolved quite quickly after this contact, however please note others may require significant further investigation or involve other agencies. In these exceptional cases we aim to ensure that this is completed within 20 school days wherever possible.
- We hope that the outcome of this process will address your concern. However, if it does not, then you can go to Stage 3.

Stage 3 – (Formal) Complaint Heard By Appeals Panel

The complaint is heard by the Governing Body. This is the final stage of the process.

- Complaints can be escalated by contacting the clerk to the governing board: by using the form at the end of this policy, by letter or email, over the phone, in person, or through a third party acting on behalf of the complainant. Please label correspondence CONFIDENTIAL
- If the complaint is provided verbally, a written copy of this will be sent to the complainant to agree before the matter is escalated so the scope of the complaint is clear and agreed.
- The clerk will then contact the Chair of Governors to arrange a review panel of Governors who form a complaints appeal panel. No governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it. Please note at EWPS the panel may also include a governor from another school.
- The panel will convene a meeting to discuss the complaint and all the investigation evidence to make a final decision on how to progress. A clerk is present to take notes of the meeting and records must be kept
 - The complainant will be given reasonable notice of the date of the review panel. The clerk will aim to find a date within 20 school days of the request, where possible.

- If the complainant rejects the offer of 3 proposed dates without good reason, the clerk will set a date. The hearing will go ahead using written submissions from both parties.

At the meeting

- The meeting will be held in private and electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally allowed unless as agreed access requirements by all parties
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- The complainant must be allowed to attend the panel hearing and be accompanied by a suitable companion if they wish. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.
- At the meeting, each individual will have the opportunity to give statements and present their evidence, and witnesses will be called as appropriate to present their evidence.
- The panel, the complainant and the school representative will be given the chance to ask and reply to questions. Once the complainant and school representatives have completed presenting their cases, they will be asked to leave, and evidence will then be considered.

The committee can:

- Uphold the complaint, in whole or in part
- Dismiss the complaint, in whole or in part

If the complaint is upheld, the committee will:

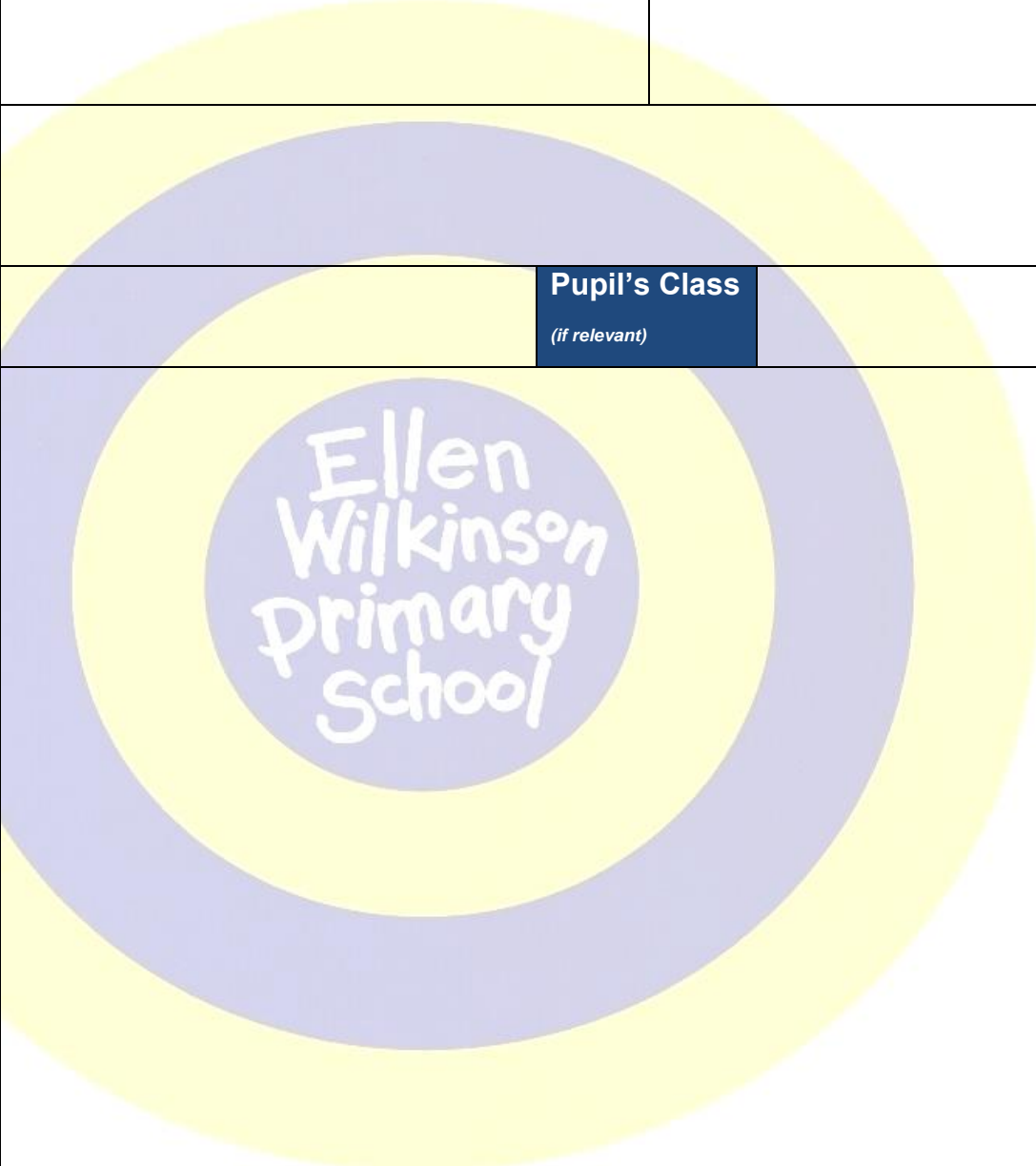
- Decide the appropriate action to resolve the complaint
- Where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future
- The school will inform those involved of the decision in writing within 20 school days.

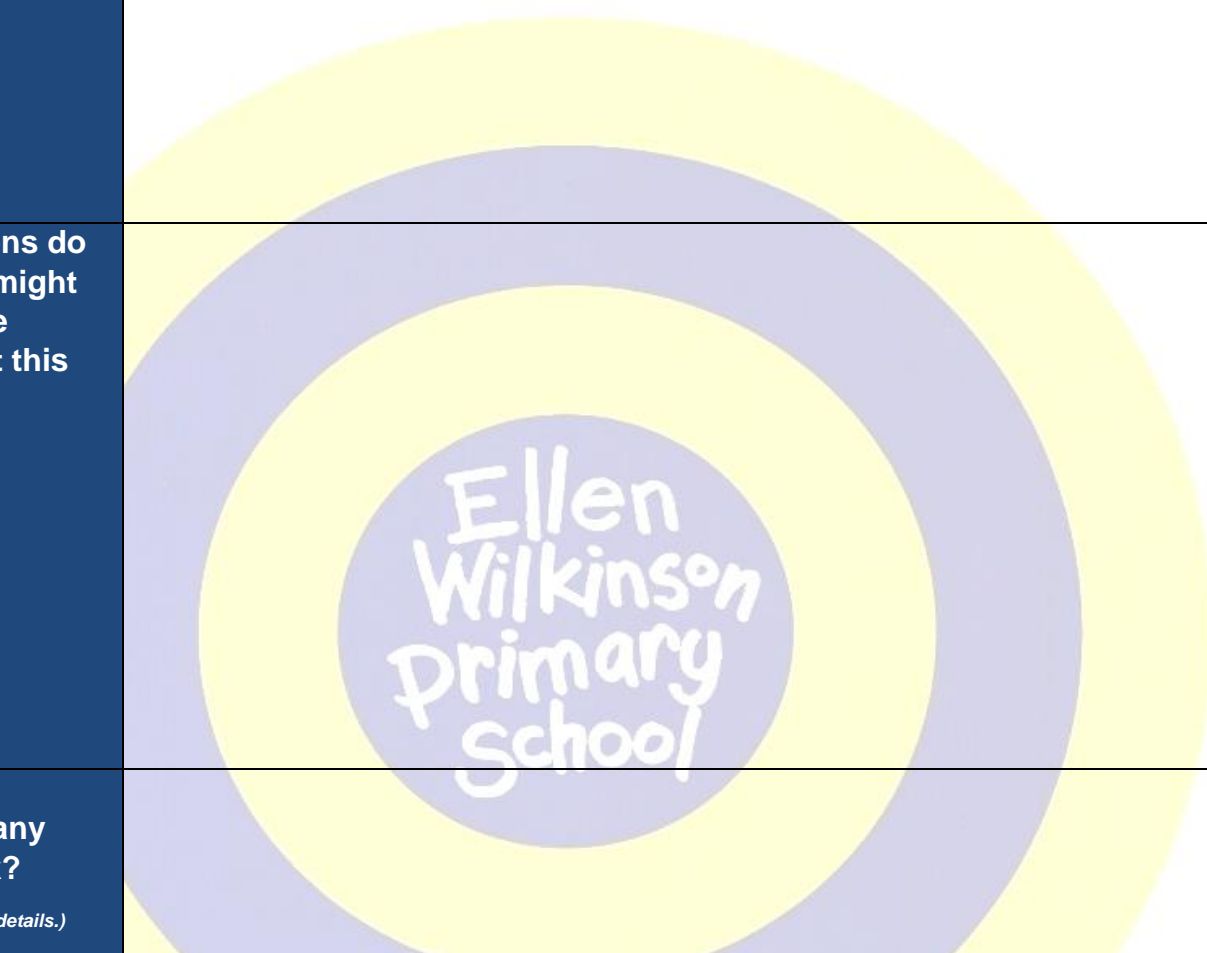
The panel's decision is final.

The logo for Ellen Wilkinson Primary School is centered on the page. It consists of three concentric circles. The innermost circle is purple and contains the text 'Ellen Wilkinson Primary School' in a white, rounded, sans-serif font. The middle circle is yellow, and the outermost circle is purple. The text is arranged in four lines: 'Ellen', 'Wilkinson', 'Primary', and 'School'.

Appendix 5 - Complaints Form

Please complete and return this form to the main office in a sealed envelope marked **‘Confidential - for the attention of the Clerk of Governors’**. Confirmation of receipt will be provided.

Your name		
Your contact details	<u>Address</u>	<u>Telephone Nos:</u>
		<u>Email:</u>
Relationship with the school <small>(e.g. parent of pupil, visitor, member of the general public)</small>		
Pupil's full name <small>(if relevant)</small>	Pupil's Class <small>(if relevant)</small>	
Details of your complaint		

<p>What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint?</p> <p><i>(i.e. who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?)</i></p>	
<p>What actions do you think might resolve the problem at this stage?</p>	
<p>Are you attaching any paperwork?</p> <p><i>(If so please give details.)</i></p>	

Signature	
Date	

Official Use					
Date acknowledgement sent		Method <i>(post or email)</i>		By <i>(name)</i>	
Next steps					