



Grow Independent School

Complaints Policy

Policy Document (2025-2026)

Last Reviewed:	October 2025
Next Review Date:	October 2026
Signed by:	S Hawthorne 
Approved by:	A Lee: Chair of Governors

At Grow, we are committed to providing an accessible and inclusive environment for all our students, staff, parents, and visitors. We strive to ensure that everyone can fully participate in our educational community, regardless of any physical, sensory, cognitive, or neurodiverse conditions.

We can provide information in multiple formats, including printed, electronic, and audio versions. Please let us know your preferred format. We offer translation and interpretation services to support non English speakers and those who use sign language.

We value feedback from our community to help us improve our accessibility measures. If you have any suggestions or require assistance, please contact us: office@growschool.co.uk

Thank you for helping us make Grow a welcoming and accessible environment for everyone.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

Grow Independent School is passionately committed to providing the best teaching and pastoral care it can for its children. However, if parents do have a concern or complaint, they can expect that it will be dealt with sensitively, fairly and in a timely manner as detailed below.

Definition of Complaint

“A complaint is any matter about which a parent expresses dissatisfaction with a real or perceived problem and seeks action by the school” This policy applies to all parents of current registered pupils. It also applies to the parents of past pupils if the complaint was originally raised when the child was a registered pupil. The complaints procedure does not apply to prospective parents. The School’s aim is to resolve every concern or complaint informally, where possible. If a matter cannot be resolved informally, the matter may proceed as a formal complaint.

Complaints Timescales Summary

Stage	Timescale
Stage 1 (Informal)	Response within 5 working days. Resolution within 10 working days
Stage 2 (Formal)	Meeting/discussion within 5 working days. Written decision within 5 working days of receipt.
Stage 3 (Panel Hearing)	Acknowledgement and scheduling within 10 working days. Decision within 10 working days of hearing

Note: "Working days" means weekdays during term time

Potential impacts on timeframes

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example, the police, local authority safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on the School's ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If there are investigations being undertaken as the result of the complaint raising a legal issue as part of the complaint, this may impact on the School's ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until the school's legal team has completed their investigations. Where any such delays can be avoided, they will be

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

If parents have a concern or complaint, this should be addressed initially to the School Leader most closely connected with the issue. It is hoped that the matter will be resolved informally at this stage.

Staff may need to consult with others in order that they can resolve matters effectively and to the satisfaction of the parents. If this is the case, they will get back to the parents within 5 working days for an informal resolution.

If the complaint is against the Head, parents should address their complaint to the Chair of Governors and proceed through the three stage Complaints Procedure, as necessary.

The School will keep an informal log of Stage 1 concerns for monitoring purposes. A written record of all formal complaints (Stage 2 and 3) will be kept in accordance with regulatory requirements.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

If a complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents may put their complaint in writing to the Head, making sure they include the term 'Formal Complaint' in their letter or email. The Head will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the Head will either meet with or speak to the parents concerned, normally within 5 working days (i.e. weekdays during term time) of receiving the complaint to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

A senior member of staff delegated by the Head may investigate all written complaints. Once the Head is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made.

The parents will be informed of this decision in writing together with reasons for the decision as soon as reasonably practicable and normally within 5 working days of receipt of the written complaint, where possible. If the complaint raises matters of a legal nature, legal advice will be sought and timelines obtained from the School's legal advisors.

Written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint will be kept by the School. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the Regulatory Requirements of the Independent School Standards, where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection, or where any other legal obligation prevails. If the parents are not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with the formal procedure, parents should proceed to Stage 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If parents seek to invoke Stage 3, they must write to the Chair of Governors setting out in full the details of the complaint normally within 10 working days of receiving the Head's decision, or immediately if the complaint is against the Head.

Parents' letters should give full details of the complaint and enclose all relevant supporting documents. A request for a hearing will normally only be considered if parents have invoked Stage 1 and 2, however if the complaint is against the Head, parents reserve the right to invoke Stage 3 immediately.

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 the Chair of Governors, and one of whom shall be an independent member who must not be employed by the school, not be a member of the governing body or proprietorial body, and not otherwise involved with the management of the school (for example, regular advisors, solicitors, or consultants to the school). Each of the other Panel members shall be appointed by the Chair of Governors.

The Chair, on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 10 working days (i.e. weekdays during term time) of receiving the complaint. Parents may be accompanied to the hearing if they wish by one other person.

The Panel will review the Head'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 the Panel considers relevant, the Panel will reach a decision on the balance of probabilities as to whether or not the complaint is made out. 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.

The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it normally within 10 working days of the panel hearing. If the Panel deems it necessary, the Proprietor will arrange for the complaint to be further investigated. The Chair of Governors will inform the parents on the day after the panel hearing and a revised response date will be set.

If for any reason the Panel is unavoidably adjourned and reconvened, the Chair of Governors will inform the parents that day or no later than the day after the scheduled panel hearing, giving reasons for the adjournment and a new date for the panel hearing will be set. The decision of the Panel will be final.

The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise confirmed in writing to the parents, the Head, the Proprietor and, where relevant, the person complained of. The Panel's decisions, findings and any recommendations will also be made available for inspection on the School premises by the proprietor and the head teacher.

In the unfortunate event that parents are not satisfied with the Panel's decision, they will be advised that their final recourse should be with: The Secretary of State for Education, Department for Education, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD.

Anonymous Complaints

The School will not normally investigate anonymous complaints under this formal procedure, though safeguarding concerns will always be acted upon regardless of source."

Serial Complaints

Where a complainant repeatedly raises the same issue after the complaints procedure has been exhausted and without presenting significant new evidence."

Withdrawal of Complaints

A complainant may withdraw their complaint at any stage by notifying the school in writing.

Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour

Grow Independent School is committed to ensuring all complaints are dealt with fairly and impartially, providing our families with an excellent standard of care. However, we will always protect our staff from unreasonable behaviour from complainants. This might include behaviour which is threatening, abusive or offensive.

Should a complainant demonstrate threatening, aggressive or violent actions or behaviours towards the school or any of its stakeholders, the police will be contacted immediately. If a parent conducts themselves in such a manner that hinders our consideration of the complaint due to frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, we will consider this 'unreasonable'.

The School reserves the right to take legal action against complainants who engage in harassment, defamation, or threatening behaviour toward staff members. In such cases, the complaints procedure may be suspended pending resolution of legal matters.

The Headteacher may determine a complaint to be unreasonable if the complainant's actions fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Refusing to articulate their complaint, or specify the grounds of the complaint, or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, even with assistance from the school
- Refusing to cooperate with the complaints investigation process
- Refusing to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- Insisting on the complaint being dealt with in a way that does not comply with the complaints procedure
- Introducing trivial or irrelevant information not pertinent to the issue
- Asking a significant number of unimportant questions unrelated to the matter which they want responses to outside of the allotted complaint timescale, and seeks an unrealistic outcome
- Unjustified or slanderous complaints regarding staff
- Making specific demands regarding which staff can and can not be in contact with a child
- Altering the nature or scope of the complaint during the process
- Repeating the same complaint despite previous investigation outcomes reflecting it was not upheld
- Refusing to accept the findings of the investigation where the process has been fully implemented
- Making excessive demands on the school via frequent communication
- Publishing defamatory, false, or malicious information about the school or its staff on social media, review sites or other public platforms, or encouraging others to do so.

If a complainant is deemed to be acting unreasonably, they will be notified in writing of this decision,

the reasons for it, and the implications for how their complaint will be handled. They may appeal this designation to the Chair of Governors within 5 working days.

In the case that the reasons for the complaint are deemed not only unreasonable but not in line with lawful legislation, the complainant will receive a detailed response setting out the school's stance from a legal point of view. Should the legality of the unreasonable complaint in this case be refuted, the complainant will need to consider seeking their own legal advice or moving straight to external appeals (details as below).

Malicious Complaints

Where a complaint is found to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school will consider whether any action should be taken under the school's behaviour policy (if the complaint was made by a pupil) or whether the matter should be referred to the police for potential prosecution.

Stopping responding

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

- They believe we have taken all reasonable steps to help address their concerns
- They have provided a clear statement of our position and their options
- The complainant contacts the school repeatedly, and the school believes their intention is to cause disruption or inconvenience
- The complaint is found not to be in line with lawful legislation following legal investigation and advice from the school's legal team.

Where the school stops responding, they will inform the individual that they intend to do so. The School will also explain that they will still consider any new complaints made.

Recording Complaints

A written record of all complaints will be kept in the Complaints File for at least three years, including whether each complaint was resolved at Stage 2 or proceeded to a Stage 3 panel hearing.

The proprietor and Chair of Governors will review this record of formal complaints at least annually. In addition, a separate log of all informal complaints will be kept on site. This will be reviewed periodically by the Head and SLT to identify patterns and trends.

Parents 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 of the school by paragraph 25(k) of the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2010 where disclosure is required in the course of the School's inspection, or where any other legal obligation prevails.

Record Keeping

- A written record of all complaints, including those resolved at the informal stage, will be maintained by the school. This record will include the nature of the complaint, the steps taken to resolve it, and the outcome.
- All documentation will be kept confidential except where disclosure is required by law or as part of an inspection by regulatory bodies.

Data Protection Notice

Personal data collected during the complaints process will be processed in accordance with the school's privacy notice and data protection obligations. Complainants have certain rights regarding their personal data under data protection legislation."

Monitoring and Review

The governing body will review the implementation and effectiveness of this policy annually to ensure that it is in line with current regulations and best practice. Any necessary amendments will be made following the review.

External Appeals

If a complainant remains dissatisfied after exhausting the school's complaints procedure, they have the right to contact external bodies such as:

- Department for Education (DfE) in the case that you believe the school is not meeting the Independent School Standards.
- Local Education Authority, for immediate concerns about safeguarding and potential harm to a child, you should contact the local authority children's services or the police first.

Contact Information

- **School Office:** office@growschool.co.uk
- **Headteacher Email:** head@growschool.co.uk
- **Chair of Governors Contact:** alicelee@wildslodgeschool.co.uk

*Policy reviewed by governing body November 2023 and updated on 05/09/24 and 03/10/25
Next review due October 2026*