

Hook-with-Warsash Church of England Academy

Complaints Procedure (including Complaints Form)



Signed:

Chair of Governors _____

Headteacher _____

Reviewed: November 2025

Date to be Reviewed: October 2026

Statutory review period: Annual

Resources Committee
“Let Your Light Shine”

To provide an inspirational environment based on Christian values where individuals can excel and flourish academically, socially and emotionally, preparing them for life’s journey.

INTRODUCTION

If you wish to examine any documents held by the school, under the terms of the Education Acts, please simply contact the school office who will arrange for you to meet with the Headteacher or the Deputy Headteacher.

Similarly, if you wish to discuss a problem or make a complaint, please do not hesitate to contact us. We will always listen.

If a complaint is received via the telephone, the first point of call is the School Office. The Admin Staff take details of the complaint; child's name; class; your name and contact details with times to call back and some idea of the issue. These details will enable us to more accurately direct the call. The Admin Staff will then forward these details to a relevant member of staff. The member of staff will either be the Class Teacher; the Assistant Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher or the Headteacher. Depending on the nature of the complaint, and the availability of teaching staff, whose first commitment is to pupils in the classroom and additional commitments both during and after the normal school day, a member of staff may come back to the complainant to (i) discuss the matter further or (ii) let you know the outcome. This may not be necessary or possible on the same day.

Written complaints to the Headteacher will be acknowledged by the Admin Officer and an appropriate appointment will be made with the Headteacher.

A complaints form (appendix) will be completed on receipt of a formal complaint.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Complaints fall into two categories. Those concerning statutory provision, and those related to the delivery of education and everyday occurrences within the school. The procedures are the same in both cases if not satisfied with the outcome, the Complainant has the right of appeal to the Department for Education.
2. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, by a parent or person with a legitimate interest in the school, but not employed to work at the school, about school policies or procedures, the conduct, actions or omissions of members of staff employed at the school, governors in the execution of their duties and the standards of teaching and learning.
3. Initially most complaints will be verbal. There is not a requirement for the complainant to put their complaint in writing at the informal stages.
4. It is very important that all complaints are dealt with as swiftly as possible. Failure to address complaints promptly frequently results in greater dissatisfaction.

INFORMAL STAGES

For complaints about issues arising in school:

1. The class teacher will satisfactorily address the vast majority of parental concerns. Arrangements for managing complaints are explained in the introduction.
2. If the Complainant is still not satisfied he or she should take the complaint to the Headteacher.

For complaints against the Headteacher, or any member of the governing body:

1. The complainant should contact the clerk to the governing board in the first instance.
2. If the complaint is about the headteacher or one member of the governing board (including the chair or vice-chair), a suitably skilled and impartial governor will carry out steps to address the complaint.

FORMAL STAGE ONE

If the complaint is about an issue arising in school:

1. If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the response from the Headteacher, he or she should be advised of their right to write to the Chair-of the Governing Body setting out their complaint.
2. The Chair of the Governing Body will acknowledge the complaint within five working days and meet, as soon as possible, with the Complainant and then the Headteacher. Having considered the complaint, the Chair will either write to the Complainant with his or her findings or meet with the Complainant and the Headteacher in an attempt to resolve the matter.
3. Should either the Complainant or the Headteacher be dissatisfied with the outcome of the Governors' investigation, they may ask for the matter to be referred to a panel of the Governing Body by writing to the Clerk of the Governing Body setting out the reasons for the referral and providing the other party with a copy.

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 formal stage 1. They will be appointed by the governing board or diocese (as appropriate) and will write a formal response at the end of their investigation.

FORMAL STAGE TWO – GOVERNING BODY PANEL HEARING

If the complaint is about an issue arising in school:

1. The Governing Body appoints a panel when required which will comprise of two Governors, who have not previously been involved in the matter, and one independent member.
2. The Clerk will arrange a suitable date and time for the hearing.
3. Both the Complainant and the Headteacher will provide the Clerk with any documentation to be used at the hearing, and the names of any witnesses to be called, at least five days before the hearing takes place.
4. The Clerk will distribute all documentation to both parties and to the members of the panel at least three days before the hearing.
5. The Complainant and the Headteacher will be advised by the Clerk that they may be accompanied by a friend or representative at the hearing.
6. The procedure to be followed at the hearing is as follows:
 - The panel will have agreed a Chair-for the meeting and made arrangements for a note taker to be present.
 - The Complainant and the Headteacher, together with a member of staff with detailed knowledge of the case, enter the hearing.
 - The Chair explains the purpose of the meeting and introduces those present.
 - The person calling the hearing presents his or her case calling on witnesses, if any, to support their case.
 - The panel and the Respondent have an opportunity to question witnesses, if any, to support their case.

- The Respondent presents his or her case calling on witnesses, if any.
 - The Respondent and witnesses can be questioned by the panel and the other party.
 - Both parties sum up their cases.
 - Both parties withdraw.
 - The panel consider the case and write to both parties within seven days to advise them of its findings.
7. The panel does not have any disciplinary powers. Should it reach a conclusion that there is a possibility that an employee may have behaved unprofessionally the matter should be referred to the Headteacher or the Chair of the Governing Body.
8. The Complainant has the right of appeal to the Department for Education (DfE) and will be advised of the process.

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 or diocese and will carry out the steps at formal stage 2.

VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

In rare circumstances a complainant might, having exhausted the complaints procedure, persist with the complaint.

Complaints become vexatious when they are:

- repeatedly and obsessively pursued; or
- unreasonable or seeking unrealistic outcomes; or
- reasonable but pursued in an unreasonable manner.

If a conclusion has been reached about a complaint but the complainant continues to pursue it, the school may wish to consider writing to say that, if correspondence continues, it will be read and filed but will receive no acknowledgement.

ABUSIVE COMPLAINTS

Verbal aggression can be as intimidating as physical aggression. All parties have a right to be treated courteously and with respect. If a member of staff feels threatened, he or she should report his or her fears to the Headteacher who will consider:

- writing to the complainant requesting that the behaviour cease
- setting restrictions for further contact with staff
- reporting the incident to the police.

If a telephone caller becomes aggressive or offensive, the person taking the call should explain that he or she will end the call if the behaviour persists. If there is a need to hang up, this action should be recorded as should any further incidents. All telephone calls are recorded and in the instance of an aggressive or offensive call, the Academy will download the call and retain it as evidence.

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Date for Review: October 2026

Resources Committee

Hook-with-Warsash Church of England Academy

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Warsash
Southampton
Hampshire
SO319GF
Tel: (01489) 572393
Headteacher: Sara Willoughby, B.Ed.

Complaints Form

When we receive a complaint, we aim to acknowledge its receipt within 5 working days and send a full or interim response within 10 working days.

Name of parent/carer:

Pupil's name:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone (day):

Telephone (evening):

What is your concern and how has it affected you?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please list this below:

**Have you discussed this matter with a member of staff before filling in this form?
If so, who did you speak to and what was the response?**

What would you like to happen as a result of making this complaint?

Signature:

Date:

Official use only

Initial response and acknowledgement:

By whom:

Date:

Complaints reference number:

Action taken:

Date:

General Data Protection Act 2018 - We will only process your personal data to respond to your complaint. In general, this data will be used for administrative and statistical purposes. Data will be held securely for a maximum of six years. It will then be destroyed