



Shine as Lights in the World  
Philippians 2.15

## **Wychwood CE Primary School – Complaints Policy (Updated for GDPR Alignment – April 2026)**

### **1. Introduction**

Wychwood CE Primary School is committed to handling all complaints fairly, transparently and in accordance with the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 and the school's General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Policy (March 2026).

This policy explains how complaints are managed, how complaint-related personal data is processed, and the roles and responsibilities involved.

### **2. Who can make a complaint?**

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Wychwood CE Primary School about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

### **3. The difference between a concern and a complaint**

A concern may be defined as 'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'.

A complaint may be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

### **4. How to make a complaint**

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

## **5. Informal Resolution**

Where concerns arise, parents and carers are encouraged to raise them initially with their child's class teacher. This informal approach is often the quickest route to resolution.

Concerns may also be raised via: [parents@wychwood-pri.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:parents@wychwood-pri.oxon.sch.uk).

## **6. Formal Complaints**

If a concern cannot be resolved informally, it should be submitted to the Headteacher in writing.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is available on our website [here](#). If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may escalate the complaint to the Chair of Governors via: [governors@wychwood-pri.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:governors@wychwood-pri.oxon.sch.uk)

## **7. Anonymous complaints**

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

## **8. Time scales**

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of

these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

### **9. Complaints received outside of term time**

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

### **10. Resolving complaints**

At each stage in the procedure, Wychwood CE Primary School wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.

### **11. Withdrawal of a Complaint**

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

### **12. Complaints Procedure Stages**

Stage 1: Initial informal discussion with teacher.

Stage 2: Written complaint to Headteacher.

Stage 3: Escalation to Chair of Governors.

Stage 4: Governor Complaints Panel Hearing.

### **13. Time scales from Stage 3:**

**Within 5 working days** the Chair of Governors will acknowledge your email and , where necessary, clarify the nature of your complaint.

**Within 5 working days of receiving any clarification**, the Chair of Governors will decide whether mediation should be offered to help you and the Headteacher explore possible resolution.

If mediation is agreed, the Chair of Governors will endeavour to set up the meeting **within 10 working days**. If that timescale is not possible you will be told the reason.

If mediation is not deemed appropriate or if it is not successful, the Chair of Governors or Clerk will set up a panel of governors to meet within **15 working days** to consider your complaint. The clerk will provide details of the hearing and will request any further information you may wish to provide.

### **14. Stage 4 – Complaints Panel Hearing**

The complaints panel will consist of three governors who (as far as possible) will have no prior knowledge of the events being complained about. The panel will be supported by a clerk who will take notes during the hearing and will stay with the panel while they make their decision in case governors need to be reminded about responses to a particular question. The panel will hear the complaint impartially and make their decision without fear or favour.

Five working days before the hearing the clerk will send to you, the complainant, the headteacher and the three panel members, copies of all papers submitted by both sides so that there is sufficient time to read the evidence before the hearing.

At the hearing,

1. You and the Headteacher will be invited into the room where the panel is being held at the same time.
2. After introductions, you, the Complainant will be invited to explain your complaint.

3. The Headteacher may question you.
4. The panel will question you.
5. The Headteacher will be invited to explain the school's actions.
6. You, the Complainant may question the Headteacher.
7. The panel will question the Headteacher.
8. The panel may ask questions at any point.
9. You, the Complainant will then be invited to sum up your complaint.
10. The Headteacher will then be invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
11. The Chair will explain that you and the Headteacher will hear from the panel within five working days.
12. Both you and the Headteacher will leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
13. The Clerk will remain with the panel.

## **15. Data Protection and Complaints**

In line with the school's GDPR and Data Protection Policy (March 2026), any personal data collected during a complaint will be processed lawfully, fairly and transparently.

### **15.1 Lawful Basis for Processing Complaint Information**

Personal data processed for the management of complaints is handled under the lawful basis of:

- Public task – managing and responding to complaints as part of the school's statutory duties.
- Legal obligation – where record-keeping or reporting requirements apply.
- Recognised Legitimate Interests (RLI) – where applicable under the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.

### **15.2 Data Minimisation and Retention**

Only information relevant to the complaint will be collected.

Records will be stored securely and retained according to the school's Retention Schedule and Record of Processing Activities (ROPA).

### **15.3 Sharing Complaint Information**

Complaint-related information may be shared with:

- Staff involved in investigating the complaint.
- Governors serving on the complaints panel.
- External bodies where legally required (e.g. safeguarding, law enforcement).

The school will not share personal data without a lawful basis.

### **15.4 Rights of Individuals**

Individuals involved in a complaint retain GDPR rights including:

- Right of access (Subject Access Request)
- Right to rectification
- Right to restriction or objection

SARs relating to complaint data will be processed in accordance with statutory timescales.

### **15.5 Role of the Data Protection Officer (DPO)**

The DPO (Julie Hemming, School Business Manager – office.3257@wychwood-pri.oxon.sch.uk) oversees complaint-related data processing and ensures compliance.

## **16. Complaints About Data Protection Handling**

Concerns specifically relating to the handling of personal data must be submitted to the DPO in the first instance.

If unresolved, complaints may be escalated to:

- The Headteacher
- The Chair of Governors

Individuals also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) at any stage.

## **17. Next Steps**

For most complaints, **you cannot** take your complaint to the local authority. The local authority cannot investigate school matters on a parent's behalf, nor can it review how the school has dealt with your complaint.

However, if you feel that the school has acted unreasonably or not followed the correct procedures, you can write to the Secretary of State for Education, <http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus/df>

## **18. Review Cycle**

This policy will be reviewed biennially or earlier where legislation or guidance changes.

Date written/reviewed: April 2026

Date for next review: April 2028

Reviewed by: FPP Committee