



Complaints Policy and Procedure

Policy Review and Approval

Review interval:	3 years
Review term:	Summer Term 1
Reviewed by:	Executive Head Teacher
Approved by:	Full Governing Board
First approved:	July 2013
Last approved:	March 2026
Next review:	March 2029

A copy of this policy and other related policies can be obtained from the School Office.

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its statutory obligations when responding to complaints from parents of students at the school, and others.

When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- 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;
- respect complainants' desire for confidentiality;
- treat complainants with respect and courtesy;
- ensure that any decisions we make are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate, in line with the principles of administrative law;
- keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process; and
- consider how the complaint can feed into school evaluation processes.

We try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed. The school will aim to give the complainant the opportunity to complete the complaints procedure in full. To support this, we will ensure we publicise the existence of this policy and make it available on the school website. Throughout the process, we will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and make any reasonable adjustments needed to accommodate individuals. If at any point the behaviour of the complainant becomes serial, unreasonable, or vexatious we will refer to the process outlined in Appendix 1 of this policy.

This policy applies to all children at Gildredge House, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and fits in with the school's ethos and values as follows:

- Gildredge House is committed to providing quality learning within a safe, caring environment, achieved through a close partnership between Governors, staff, students, parents, and the wider community.
- We will provide an excellent overall service to our stakeholders.

2. Legislation and guidance

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 students at the school.

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).

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association. 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.

3. Definitions and scope

3.1 Definitions

The DfE guidance explains the difference between a concern and a complaint.

A **concern** is defined as ‘an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought’. The school will resolve concerns through day-to-day communication as far as possible.

A **complaint** is defined as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken or a lack of action’.

3.2 Complaints outside the scope

Some complaints will be outside the scope of this procedure as there are separate statutory procedures to deal with such issues. These include:

Complaints outside the scope	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory assessments of Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) 	Concerns about statutory assessments of SEND, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with East Sussex County Council.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation 	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclusion of children from school 	Further information about raising concerns about exclusions is available in the School discipline and exclusion guidance . Complaints about the application of the Behaviour for Learning and Exclusion Policy can be made through this complaints procedure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whistleblowing 	There is an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus . Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through this complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the Local Authority or the DfE (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff grievances 	These matters will be addressed under the school’s internal grievance procedures.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff conduct and/or competency complaints 	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school’s internal personnel procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any outcomes of the complaint or action taken in relation to a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.

Complaints outside the scope	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities. 	The complainants will be directed to follow the external provider's own complaints procedure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints about the curriculum 	Please contact the Department for Education at www.education.gov.uk/contactus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Withdrawal from the curriculum 	<p>Parents can withdraw their child from any aspect of Religious Education (RE), including the Daily Act of Collective Worship (DACW). They do not have to explain why.</p> <p>If a parent is not satisfied with the handling of a request to withdraw their child from RE or the DACW, they should follow this complaints procedure.</p> <p>The right of withdrawal does not apply to other areas of the curriculum where religious matters may be spontaneously raised by students or arise in other subjects such as History or Personal Development.</p> <p>Should parents wish to withdraw their child from sex and relationship education they should refer to the PSHEE and RSE Policy.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data protection 	Complaints about matters relating to data protection are handled under formal data protection complaints process and in accordance with relevant legislation.

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the Police, Local Authority (LA) safeguarding teams, or Tribunals, this may impact on our 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 a complainant commences legal action against Gildredge House in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend this complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

4. Communication

The table below sets out the types of complaint, who the complaint should be addressed to, and where it should be sent.

Nature of complaint:	Address to:	Send to:
General concern or query about your child	Your child's Class Teacher, Form Tutor, Phase Leader, or Head of Year	Email the Class Teacher, Form Tutor, Phase Leader, or Head of Year using EduLink

Nature of complaint:	Address to:	Send to:
General concern or informal complaint	Your child's Head of School, marked 'Private and Confidential'	Email the Head of Primary or Head of Secondary
Formal complaints (not about the Executive Head Teacher or a member of the Governing Board)	The Clerk to Governors, marked 'Private and Confidential'	Complete the Stage 1 Complaint Form in Appendix 2 and send to the Clerk to the Governing Board
Formal complaint about the Executive Head Teacher or a member of the Governing Board	The Clerk to Governors, marked 'Private and Confidential'	Complete the Stage 1 Complaint Form in Appendix 2 and send to the Clerk to the Governing Board
Formal complaint about the Chair of Governors	The Trustees, marked 'Private and Confidential'	Complete the Stage 1 Complaint Form in Appendix 2 and send to the Clerk to the Governing Board

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 The complainant

The complainant will receive 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;
- use AI with caution - AI does not always get it right when citing laws, and can make a complaint more complex than necessary;
- do not target staff - making it personal to individual school staff can take things too far, treat all those involved with respect and keep it to challenging school policy;
- communicate with one point of contact at the school regarding the complaint which may be the Investigating Officer or another appointed member of staff;
- have a good relationship with the school - this is important and it benefits all to move on after complaints are resolved;
- do not behave aggressively - abusive and aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated and can lead to consequences for the complainant;
- do not approach individual Governors about the complaint;
- do not build a crowd - other parents may share your views, but your complaint should be specific to the complainant and their child; and
- do not publish details about the complaint on social media - sharing your complaint on social media can be harmful to those involved and will not lead to a quicker resolution.

5.2 The investigator

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

- interview all relevant parties;
- consider records and any written evidence and keep these securely; and

- prepare a comprehensive report for the Executive Head Teacher or Governor Complaint Review Panel which includes the facts and potential solutions.

5.3 Clerk to the Governing Board (point of involvement)

The Clerk to the Governing Board will:

- receive the complaint and liaise with the school as to which stage the complaint should be dealt with;
- be the contact point for the complainant and the Governor Complaint Review Panel, including any questions about process and circulating the relevant papers and evidence before a Governor Complaint Review Panel meeting;
- arrange the Governor Complaint Review Panel meeting; and
- record and circulate the minutes and outcome of the meeting.

5.4 Committee Chair

The Committee Chair will:

- chair the Governor Complaint Review Panel meeting, ensuring that everyone is treated with respect throughout; and
- make sure all parties understand the purpose of the Governor Complaint Review Panel meeting and are allowed to present their case.

6. Principles for investigation

When investigating a complaint, we will try to clarify:

- what has happened;
- who was involved; and
- what the complainant feels would put things right.

6.1 Timescales

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.

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.

When complaints are made outside 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 time scales we have set out in this policy, we will:

- set new time limits with the complainant; and
- send the complainant details of the new deadline and explain the delay.

6.2 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 12) and make this available to Ofsted on request.

Parents can notify Ofsted if they believe that the school is not meeting Early Years Foundation Stage requirements, by calling 0300 123 4666, or by emailing enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk. An online contact form is also available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted#org-contacts>.

We will notify parents 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 of children who attend the school on a regular basis.

7. Stages of complaint (not complaints against the Executive Head Teacher/a Governor)

7.1 The complaints procedure

Please read in conjunction with Section 4 which sets out the types of complaint, who the complaint should be addressed to, and where it should be sent.

At each stage, clarification of exactly who will be involved, what will happen, and how long it will take, must be communicated. There may, on occasion, be the need for some flexibility, for example, there may be a need for further meetings between the complainant and the member of staff directly involved, or further investigations may be required by the school, or the Head of School, Executive Head Teacher, or Chair of Governors.

The complaint decision can:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint; and/or
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that similar problems do not recur.

Complaints will be considered and resolved as quickly as possible. Realistic time limits for each action within each stage are defined below. However, when further investigations are necessary, new time limits can be set and the complainant sent details of the new deadline and an explanation for the delay. Complainants cannot set their own, unrealistic timelines for actions within each stage or responses to communications.

A written record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing, along with what actions have been taken, regardless of the decision. Records of all complaints will be kept securely and handled in line with the school's data protection responsibilities. Complaint records will be retained in accordance with the school's Records Retention Schedule.

7.2 Informal complaints

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.

Informal complaints should be raised as soon as possible with the Head of School, either in person or by telephone, or by email.

The school will acknowledge informal complaints within two school days and investigate and provide a response within ten school days. The informal stage will involve a meeting between the complainant and the Head of School and/or the subject of the complaint, if appropriate.

7.3 Stage 1: Formal Stage

The formal stage involves the complainant putting the complaint in writing to the Clerk to Governors using the Stage 1 Complaint Form (see Appendix 2). If complainants need assistance raising a formal complaint, they can contact the School Office.

The complainant should provide details such as relevant dates, times, and the names of witnesses of events, alongside copies of any relevant documents. The complainant should also state what they feel would resolve the complaint and any actions already taken at the informal stage.

The school will acknowledge formal complaints will be sent within five school days.

A member of the Senior Leadership Team, which may be the Head of School or Executive Head Teacher, or another appropriate member of staff, will then conduct their investigation. If the formal complaint is about a member of the Senior Leadership Team, a Governor will conduct the investigation.

The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant within fifteen school days. If it is not possible to draw a conclusion due to the nature of the complaint within this time frame, the complainant will be notified before the fifteenth school day and given a revised conclusion date.

A formal Stage 1 complaint will only be accepted when the Stage 1 Complaint Form (see Appendix 2). has been completed by the complainant.

7.4 Stage 2: Review Panel

Complaints will be escalated to the review panel stage if the complainant is not satisfied with the school's response to the complaint at the formal stage of this process.

The review panel stage involves the complainant putting the complaint in writing to the Clerk to Governors using the Stage 2 Complaint Form (see Appendix 3) and should set out why they remain unhappy that the complaint has not been fully investigated and what they wish to see happen.

The Stage 2 Complaint Form should be received by the Clerk to Governors within ten school days of the decision at Stage 1. The complaint will be acknowledged within five school days.

A Governor Complaint Review Panel, of at least three people, will be convened within fifteen school days. No member of the panel will have been directly involved in any previous consideration of the complaint. One of the members of the panel will be independent of the management and running of the school.

The panel will have access to the existing record of the complaint's progress.

The complainant must have reasonable notice of the date of the Governor Complaint Review Panel meeting; however, the panel reserves the right to convene at their convenience rather than that of the complainant.

At the Governor Complaint Review Panel meeting, the complainant and representatives from the school, as appropriate, will be present. Each will have an opportunity to set out written or oral submissions prior to the meeting. The complainant must be allowed to attend the meeting and be accompanied if they wish.

At the Governor Complaint Review Panel 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 complainant and the school representative(s) will be given the chance to ask and reply to questions through the panel; these questions should be sent to the panel in advance. The panel members will also have the opportunity to ask questions. Once the complainant and

school representative(s) have presented their cases, they will be asked to leave, and the evidence will then be considered.

The panel will put together its findings and recommendations from the case. The panel will also provide, on request, copies of the minutes of the hearing and the findings and recommendations to the complainant and, where relevant, the individual who is the subject of the complaint, and make a copy available for inspection by the Executive Head Teacher.

When the complainant is also a staff member, any paperwork provided by the school to the complainant may be removed or redacted, if it is felt that such information may allow the complainant to identify other individuals.

The school will inform those involved of the decision in writing within five school days.

8. Complaints against the Executive Head Teacher, a Governor, or the Governing Board

8.1 Informal complaints

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.

Informal complaints made against the Executive Head Teacher or any member of the Governing Board should be directed to the Clerk to the Governing Board in the first instance.

The school will acknowledge informal complaints made against the Executive Head Teacher or any member of the Governing Board within five school days. A suitably skilled and impartial Governor will investigate and provide a response within fifteen school days.

8.2 Stage 1: Formal Stage

The formal stage involves the complainant putting the complaint in writing to the Clerk to Governors using the Stage 1 Complaint Form (see Appendix 2). If complainants need assistance raising a formal complaint, they can contact the School Office.

The complainant should provide details such as relevant dates, times, and the names of witnesses of events, alongside copies of any relevant documents. The complainant should also state what they feel would resolve the complaint and any actions already taken at the informal stage.

The school will acknowledge formal complaints will be sent within five school days.

If the formal complaint is about the Executive Head Teacher, a Governor will conduct the investigation. If the formal complaint is about a Governor, the Vice-chair or Chair of Governors will conduct the investigation. If the formal complaint is about the Vice-chair, the Chair of Governors will conduct the investigation.

If the formal complaint is jointly about the Vice-chair and/or Chair of Governors, the entire or the majority of the Governing Board, an independent investigator will conduct the investigation. The independent investigator will be appointed by the Governing Board and will provide a formal response at the end of their investigation.

The written conclusion of the investigation will be sent to the complainant within fifteen school days. If it is not possible to draw a conclusion due to the nature of the complaint within this time frame, the complainant will be notified before the fifteenth school day and given a revised conclusion date.

A formal Stage 1 complaint will only be accepted when the Stage 1 Complaint Form (see Appendix 2). has been completed by the complainant.

8.3 Stage 2: Review Panel

Complaints will be escalated to the review panel stage if the complainant is not satisfied with the school's response to the complaint at the formal stage of this process.

The review panel stage involves the complainant putting the complaint in writing to the Clerk to Governors using the Stage 2 Complaint Form (see Appendix 3) and should set out why they remain unhappy that the complaint has not been fully investigated and what they wish to see happen.

The Stage 2 Complaint Form should be received by the Clerk to Governors within ten school days of the decision at Stage 1. The complaint will be acknowledged within five school days.

A Governor Complaint Review Panel, of at least three people, will be convened within fifteen school days. No member of the panel will have been directly involved in any previous consideration of the complaint. One of the members of the panel will be independent of the management and running of the school.

If the complaint is jointly about the Vice-chair and Chair of Governors, the entire or the majority of the Governing Board, a committee of independent Governors will hear the complaint. They will be sourced from local schools or the Local Authority. The panel will have access to the existing record of the complaint's progress.

Please see Section 7.4 for further details of the Governor Complaint Review Panel process.

The school will inform those involved of the decision in writing within five school days.

9. Referring complaints on completion of the school's procedure

If a complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the school's complaints procedure, they can refer their complaint to the DfE. The DfE will check whether the complaint has been dealt with properly by the school. The DfE will not overturn a school's decision about a complaint. However, it will look into:

- whether there was undue delay, or the school did not comply with its own complaints procedure;
- whether the school was in breach of its funding agreement with the Secretary of State; and
- whether the school has failed to comply with any other legal obligation.

If the school did not deal with the complaint properly, it will be asked to re-investigate the complaint. If the school's complaints procedure is found to not meet regulations, the school will be asked to correct its procedure accordingly.

For more information or to refer a complaint, see the following webpage: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>

We will include this information in the outcome letter to complainants.

10. Unreasonably persistent complaints

Please also see the Serial, unreasonable, and vexatious complaints procedure in Appendix 1.

Most complaints raised will be valid, and therefore we will treat them seriously. However, a complaint may become unreasonable if the person:

- has made the same complaint before, and it has already been resolved by following this Complaints Policy and Procedure;
- makes a complaint that is obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, defamatory or repetitive;
- knowingly provides false information;
- insists on pursuing a complaint that is unfounded, or out of scope of the complaints procedure;
- pursues a valid complaint, but in an unreasonable manner e.g. refuses to articulate the complaint, refuses to co-operate with this complaints procedure, or insists that the complaint is dealt with in ways that are incompatible with this procedure and the time frames it sets out;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation is progressed;
- makes a complaint designed to cause disruption, annoyance, or makes excessive demands on school time; and/or
- seeks unrealistic outcomes, or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value.

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 above) wherever possible.

If the complainant continues to contact the school in a disruptive way, we may implement communication strategies (see Appendix 1).

11. Learning lessons

The Governing Board will review any underlying issues raised by complaints with the Executive Head Teacher, 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.

12. Monitoring arrangements

The Governing Board will monitor the effectiveness of the Complaints Policy and Procedure in ensuring that complaints are handled properly. The Governing Board will track the number and nature of complaints, and review underlying issues as stated in Section 11.

The complaints records are logged and managed by the Clerk to the Governors.

This policy will be reviewed by the Executive Head Teacher every three years. At each review, the policy will be approved by the Full Governing Board.

13. Links with other policies

Policies and documents dealing with other forms of complaints include:

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour for Learning and Exclusions Policies
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- SEND Policy
- SEND Information Report
- Staff Discipline and Conduct Policy
- Staff Grievance and Workplace Conflict Policy
- Privacy Notices
- Data Protection Complaints Process

Appendix 1: Serial, unreasonable, and vexatious complaints procedure

1. Introduction

Gildredge House is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive, or threatening.

2. Definition

Gildredge House defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance;
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure;
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice;
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on;
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed);
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with;
- uses threats to intimidate;
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence;
- knowingly provides falsified information; and/or
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Please note: the above list is not intended to be exhaustive and is for guidance purposes only. It is at the discretion of the school what is deemed to be unreasonable.

3. Contact whilst a complaint is being investigated

Complainants should limit the number of communications with the school that relates to their complaint, while the 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.

4. Steps taken before marking a complaint as ‘unreasonable’

Gildredge House and the Trust take all complaints seriously and follow the Complaints Policy and Procedure in order to seek an agreed and amicable resolution and reconciliation. All complaints will be considered as reasonable in the first instance and nothing in this policy prevents a parent raising a genuine new concern or complaint.

Whenever possible, the Executive Head Teacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an ‘unreasonable’ marking.

If the unreasonable behaviour continues, the Executive Head Teacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Gildredge House causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a Communication Plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the Police and communicate our concerns and actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from Gildredge House.

In the case of a serious incident or if an individual continues to make or pursue unreasonable complaints, Gildredge House and the Trust may impose any or all of the following actions:

- provide the complainant with a single point of contact via an email address;
- limit or restrict communication directly or indirectly to students or staff;
- 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](#);
- set alternative arrangements for parent consultations;
- bar the individual from the school premises, grounds and/or events;
- put any other strategy in place as necessary.

However, before any decision is made, the individual will always have the right to express their views on any such proposal.

If an individual continues to make or pursue unreasonable complaints, Gildredge House and the Trust reserves the right to seek further legal advice and take such steps as are appropriate in all the circumstances, including, for example, seeking court orders to limit the individual’s contact with or presence in or near to the school premises, any students, staff, parents/carers, or other third parties as set out in the court order.

5. Serial or persistent complaints

If the complainant contacts the school again regarding the same issue, the correspondence may then be viewed as ‘serial’ or ‘persistent’. We may stop responding to the complainant when the following conditions are met:

- we believe we have taken all reasonable steps to address the complainant’s concerns;
- the complainant has been given a clear statement of our position and their options;
- the complainant contacts the school repeatedly, making substantially the same points each time, and we believe their intention is to cause disruption or inconvenience.

The case to stop responding is stronger if:

- The complainant's communications are often or always abusive or aggressive.
- The complainant makes insulting personal comments about, or threats towards, staff.
- We have reason to believe the individual is contacting the school with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience.

When 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, provided the concerns raised are materially different to those raised previously and/or are unconnected to the previous concern.

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 had not 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 a duplicate complaint is raised which, in the view of the school, warrants further consideration, the procedure outlined in Sections 7.2 or 7.3 (as appropriate) will be repeated.

7. Complaint campaigns

Where the school receives a large volume of complaints about the same topic or subject, especially if these come from complainants unconnected with the school, the school may respond to these complaints by:

- publishing a single response on the school website; and/or
- sending a template response to all the complainants.

If complainants are not satisfied with the school's response, or wish to pursue the complaint further, the normal procedures will apply.

8. Anonymous complaints

Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated. However, the Executive Head Teacher or, if appropriate, the Chair of Governors will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Appendix 2: Stage 1 Formal Complaint Form

Please complete this form in full and return it to the Clerk to the Governing Board on clerk@gildredgehouse.org.uk

Your complaint will be acknowledged and next steps explained within five school days. When complaints are made outside of term time, we will consider them to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Student's full name:	Year Group/Class:
Your full name and relationship to the student named above:	
Contact address:	Telephone number:
Email address:	

Please provide specific details to outline the issue(s) of your initial concern, which was investigated at the informal stage of this complaints procedure:

Please give details of what actions were taken (by yourself and the school) at the informal stage of this complaints procedure to try and resolve your concerns. (Who did you speak to and what was their response?)

Please provide specific details of why you continue to be dissatisfied with the actions taken by the school to address the issues you raised.

Please outline why you feel your concerns should now be considered at Stage 1 of this complaints procedure:

What further actions do you feel may resolve the problem?

Are you attaching any additional evidence which will support the consideration of the complaint moving to Stage 1? If yes, please provide details and link these to the appropriate issue(s) within your complaint.

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 3: Stage 2 Review Panel Complaint Form

Please complete this form in full and return it to the Clerk to the Governing Board on clerk@gildredgehouse.org.uk within 10 school days of the decision at Stage 1.

Your complaint will be acknowledged and next steps explained within five school days. When complaints are made outside of term time, we will consider them to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Student's full name:	Year Group/Class:
Your full name and relationship to the student named above:	
Contact address:	Telephone number:
Email address:	

Please give details of what actions were taken (by yourself and the school) at the informal stage **and** Stage 1 of this complaints procedure to try and resolve your complaint? (Who did you speak to and what was their response?)

Please provide specific details of why you continue to be dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and why you now feel your complaint should be considered at Stage 2.

What further actions do you feel may resolve the problem?

Are you attaching any additional evidence which will support the consideration of the complaint moving to stage 2? If yes, please provide details and link these to the appropriate issue(s) within your complaint.

Signature:

Date: