

Cadmus Family of Schools

Alumwell Infant School



Learn, Grow and Achieve

Complaints Policy and Procedures

2026 - 2027

Person/s responsible for this policy & it's implementation:	Alumwell Infants School Cadmus Family of Schools
Review Frequency:	Annually
Date approved / Signed by Governing Board:	16 th September 2026
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1. Statement of Purpose

Alumwell Infant School is committed to working in partnership with parents, carers and the wider community.

We welcome concerns, comments and complaints as an opportunity to improve our provision and strengthen relationships with families.

We aim to:

- listen and respond to concerns promptly;
- resolve concerns informally wherever possible;
- investigate complaints fairly, consistently and objectively;
- ensure all complainants are treated with dignity and respect;
- learn from complaints to improve services;
- maintain positive relationships with children, parents and the wider community.

2. What is a Concern?

A concern is an expression of worry or doubt where reassurance or clarification is sought.

Examples include:

- playground issues;
- communication concerns;
- misunderstandings;
- minor curriculum queries;
- concerns about routines or procedures.

Most concerns can be resolved through discussion with the relevant member of staff.

3. What is a Complaint?

A complaint is:

"An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken or a lack of action by the school."

A complaint may relate to:

- educational provision;
- communication;
- administration;
- school procedures;
- conduct of staff;
- application of school policies.

4. Scope of this Policy

This procedure applies to complaints from:

- parents;
- carers;
- family members;
- members of the public;
- Community users.

5. Matters outside this Procedure

Separate procedures exist for:

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Complaints concerning child protection issues, allegations against staff or safeguarding concerns will be managed under:

- Child Protection Policy
- Allegations Against Staff Procedures
- Walsall Safeguarding Partnership procedures

Admissions - School admissions appeals and decisions.

Exclusions - Pupil suspensions and permanent exclusions.

SEND - Statutory assessments and Education Health Care Plans.

Staff Grievances - Internal staff complaints and employment matters.

Whistleblowing - Concerns raised by employees regarding malpractice.

Data Protection - Subject Access Requests, Data Protection and Freedom of Information matters.

National Curriculum - Content of the National Curriculum.

Where another procedure applies, complainants will be advised accordingly.

6. Guiding Principles

The school will ensure complaints are:

- handled fairly;
- dealt with confidentially where appropriate;
- responded to proportionately;
- investigated objectively;
- resolved without unnecessary delay.

All parties will be treated with courtesy and respect.

7. Accessibility

The school will make reasonable adjustments so that this procedure is accessible to all.

Support may include:

- translated documents;
- interpreters;
- large print versions;
- assistance completing forms;
- alternative communication methods.

8. Timescales

Whenever possible:

Action	Timescale
Acknowledge formal complaint	Within 5 school days
Commence investigation	As soon as practicable
Formal response	Within 20 school days
Request panel hearing	Within 10 school days
Panel hearing arranged	Within 20 school days
Panel decision issued	Within 5 school days

If these timescales cannot be met, the complainant will be informed and provided with a revised timescale.

STAGE 1

Informal Resolution

Most concerns can be resolved quickly through discussion.

Parents should initially contact:

- the class teacher;
- relevant member of staff; or
- a senior leader where appropriate.

The aim is to resolve concerns before they become formal complaints.

The school expects concerns to be raised as soon as possible following the issue arising.

Normally matters raised more than three months after the event may not be investigated unless exceptional circumstances exist.

STAGE 2

Formal Complaint Investigation If the matter remains unresolved, a formal complaint should be submitted in writing to: Head Teacher,

or the Cadmus Governing Board (CGB), if the complaint concerns the Head Teacher, Federation-employed staff, or the Federation itself. The complaint should include:

- details of the concern;
- dates and times where relevant;
- names of individuals involved;
- action/s already taken;
- outcome sought.

The complaint will be acknowledged within five school days. The Headteacher will manage complaint handling at the school level, ensuring processes are fair, evidence-based, and completed within expected timelines

The investigator may:

- meet with the complainant;
- interview witnesses;
- review records;
- gather relevant evidence.

Following investigation, a written response will be issued.

The response will include:

- findings;
- any actions taken;
- whether the complaint is upheld, partly upheld or not upheld;
- details of how to request Stage 3.

STAGE 3

Complaints Panel Hearing If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may request a Complaints Panel Hearing. Requests must be received within 10 school days of the Stage 2 response. Where appropriate, the Local Governing Committee (LGC) will hear complaints relating to the school or school-employed staff. The Cadmus Governing Board (CGB) acts as the body responsible for hearing complaints about the Federation, Federation-employed staff, and any Head Teacher-level leaders, including appeals. The panel will normally consist of three impartial governors with no prior involvement. The panel will:

- review all documentation;
- hear representations from both parties;

- determine whether the complaint is upheld, partly upheld or not upheld.

The panel may recommend:

- further investigation;
- mediation;
- changes to procedures;
- staff training;
- other appropriate actions.

A written decision will be issued within five school days of the hearing.

The decision of the panel is final.

9. Complaints About the Head Teacher

Complaints about the Head Teacher or Federation-level staff should be submitted directly to the Cadmus Governing Board (CGB). The CGB may:

- investigate personally;
- appoint an appropriate investigator;
- refer the matter to a governor panel.

10. Complaints about Governors

Complaints concerning individual governors or the Local Governing Board / Cadmus Governing Board should be submitted to the Clerk to Cadmus Governors.

Governors with no prior involvement will consider the complaint.

11. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated.

The Head Teacher or Chair of the Local Governing Board may decide to investigate where:

- safeguarding concerns exist;
- there are serious allegations;
- the matter impacts pupil welfare;
- significant public interest exists.

12. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Generated Complaints

The school recognises that complainants may choose to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools when preparing correspondence.

The school will:

- consider all complaints fairly regardless of how they are drafted;

- focus on the substance of concerns raised;
- investigate the underlying issues rather than the writing style used.

Where a submission appears to have been generated wholly or partly using AI, the school may:

- request clarification;
- seek confirmation that the complainant understands and supports the content submitted;
- request supporting evidence;
- ask for issues to be summarised where correspondence is excessively lengthy or repetitive.

The school is not required to respond individually to every statement, legal assertion or allegation where these are repetitive, irrelevant, unsupported or outside the scope of this procedure.

Where complaints contain misinformation, fabricated content, inaccurate legal claims or material generated without factual basis, the school will investigate only those matters for which sufficient information and evidence are available.

Use of AI will not disadvantage a complainant, but neither will it increase the scope of investigation beyond what is reasonable and proportionate.

This approach supports transparency, fairness and effective use of school resources.

13. Social Media

The school encourages concerns to be raised directly through this procedure.

Complaints pursued solely through:

- Facebook;
- X/Twitter;
- WhatsApp groups;
- community forums;
- petitions;
- public websites

may be redirected to this formal process.

Staff should not be subjected to online abuse, harassment or intimidation.

Any safeguarding concerns identified through social media will be addressed immediately through safeguarding procedures.

14. Serial, Persistent and Unreasonable Complaints

The school is committed to dealing with complaints fairly and impartially.

However, the school will not tolerate behaviour that:

- is abusive;
- threatening;
- discriminatory;
- harassing;
- excessively repetitive;
- places unreasonable demands on school resources.

Examples include:

- repeated complaints about the same issue after completion of the procedure;
- excessive correspondence;
- personal attacks on staff;
- publication of inaccurate information about school staff.

In such circumstances the school may:

- limit communication to one point of contact;
- restrict communication to written correspondence;
- decline to consider repeated complaints raising substantially the same issues.

The school's Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints Policy should be applied where appropriate.

15. Records

The school will maintain records of:

- complaints received;
- investigations undertaken;
- decisions reached;
- actions taken.

Records will be retained in accordance with data protection legislation and the school's records retention policy.

16. Monitoring and Review

The Governing Board will monitor:

- number of complaints;
- trends and themes;
- lessons learned;
- actions taken to improve provision.

The Chief Operations Officer (COO) will monitor school-level compliance, quality-assure complaint handling, and report federation-wide themes, risks, and mitigation

strategies to the CGB. Complaints information will be anonymised when reported to governors

17. Further Escalation

Once all stages of this procedure have been exhausted, complainants may refer concerns about the administration of the complaints process to the Department for Education.

The Department for Education does not normally re-investigate complaints but may consider whether the school has followed its published complaints procedure appropriately.