

Ellwood Community Primary School

Believe, Achieve, Belong



Concerns and Complaints Procedure

Date reviewed: September 2026

Next renew date: September 2027

THIS POLICY IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SCHOOL'S SAFEGUARDING POLICIES
WHICH ARE AVAILABLE ON THE SCHOOL WEBSITE

Ellwood School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share the same commitment.

Aims

The school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any concern/complaint giving careful consideration to all concerns/complaints and dealing with them as swiftly as possible. The aim is to resolve any complaint through dialogue and mutual understanding and in all cases putting the interests of the child above all other issues. There will be sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed, and then resolved.

General Principles

The school staff expect an ethos where every child has a right to learn without disruption. Ellwood school believes that the school provides a good education, and that staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents. However, the school is obliged to have procedures in place in case there are concerns/complaints by parents/carers.

The Complaints Procedure General Principles:

This procedure is intended to allow parents, carers and other stakeholders to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school, or the services that it provides.

It seeks to clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff and governors in assessing, acknowledging and investigating concerns or complaints.

An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances. However, the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation. Any concerns/complaints received outside of term time will be considered to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period. If other bodies are investigating aspects of the concern/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.

Time Scales

To allow for a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. Any concerns/complaints must be made within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. Only in exceptional circumstances will complaints outside of this timeframe be considered.

Child Protection

Please note that all complaints against any member of staff with regards to child protection, will refer to the Child Protection Policy.

Special Circumstances

If the complaint suggests that a child has been at risk of significant harm through violence, emotional abuse, sexual interference or neglect, it may be referred without further notice to Children's Social Care. If Social Care decides to investigate a situation, this may postpone or supersede investigation by the Head Teacher or Governing Body.

Where a matter can be resolved through a legal appeal, it will not be considered as a formal complaint. The key areas are: admissions decisions; certain decisions relating to formal assessment of special educational needs; and decisions to permanently exclude a child. If a complainant commences legal action against Ellwood Community Primary Schools in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Complaints surrounding the handling of your personal data under the UK GDPR and DUAA 2025.

If your complaint surrounds the schools handling of your personal data, how a subject access request was handled, data security measures during a breach, or the collection, use, or retention of your personal data, then this will be handled by a senior member of staff at the school who will work closely with our DPO to investigate your concerns.

Process that the school will follow:

- The complaint will be acknowledged and clarified, assigned to a member of the Senior Leadership Team and you will receive our response within 30 days (once the complaint has been clarified).
- Please note that should the complaint not be clarified within 21 days then the school will consider the matter closed with no further action required.
- The school will work closely with our DPO to investigate the complaint, maintaining open communication with you, if required, throughout the process.
- Escalation - If you remain dissatisfied following the internal investigation then the school will provide you with the ICO contact details for you to submit a formal complaint

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A **concern** may be defined as a query or an 'expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'. This matter could be viewed as a concern if it is capable of being resolved locally and does not require a formal response. A concern can usually be dealt with informally via conversation.

A **complaint** may be defined as an 'expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken or a lack of action', after raising a concern. A formal complaint is a written statement which indicates that a parent or interested party is dissatisfied with the actions of the school regarding their concern. It has not been resolved. This may then require moving to the next stage of the process.

It is in everyone's interests that concerns are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Ellwood Community Primary School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

Process of raising a concern

If you are raising a concern please use the following steps.

- Talk to the Class Teacher.
- If you feel that the concern is still not resolved, please discuss with Mrs Woodhouse (senior leader).

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the Head Teacher will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the Head Teacher will refer you to another staff member. This will enable the school to consider the concern objectively and impartially.

Resolving concerns or complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Ellwood Community 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 re-occur
- 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 concern or complaint
- an apology

If after this discussion, you feel that the concern is still not resolved, please follow the steps below.

Complaints Procedure Stage One

Stage 1 - Complete the complaints form 1 (Appendix 1), and send to the office for the attention of the Head Teacher, who will investigate your complaint and give oral or written feedback. You should include details that might help the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents.

If your complaint is about the head teacher, in the first instance the complainant will need to write in confidence to the Chair of Governors, please go to form 2 (Appendix 2) of the procedure and address these to Reverend Ireland (Chair of the Governing Body - chair@ellwood.gloucs.sch.uk or through the school office).

If still not resolved:

If your concern is not dealt with informally (as outlined above), your complaint must be made in writing through the stage 2 process, marked as 'Private and Confidential' and passed via the school office.

Stage Two

If having been through stage 1 and a conclusion has not been reached, you may proceed to stage 2 of the process.

Complete the Complaint form stage 2 (Appendix 2). If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. The form can either be handed in at the school office, addressed to the Chair of Governors, or emailed to the chair@ellwood.gloucs.sch.uk.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to Mrs Lewis (the Clerk to the Governing Body).

The Chair will acknowledge receipt of the form within 5 days.

The Chair will consider your written complaint form, and the school's response which may involve conversations with staff or gathering further information. You will be informed of the outcome of this in writing within 10 school days of acknowledging receipt of the complaint form.

If your complaint is still not resolved after receiving a response from the Chair of Governors:

Stage 3 This will be reviewed by a committee of independent governors.

Within 5 school days of receiving the stage 2 response from the Chair of Governors, you can write to the Clerk of the Governing board, via the school office, or email clerk@ellwood.gloucs.sch.uk.

Use the Complaints Review Request form (Appendix 3) for your complaint to be considered by a Complaint Appeals Panel.

The clerk will acknowledge your letter/email and ask the Governing Body to arrange a Complaint Appeals Panel Meeting within 20 school days of acknowledging receipt of your request. Copies of written reports and correspondence may be requested and be considered by the panel. The Chair of Governors will be informed of the receipt of your letter/email.

The Remit of the Complaints Appeal Panel

The panel 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.
- Recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur.
- The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and Ellwood Community Primary School with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 5 school days.
- If the complainant is still not satisfied with the procedure followed, the Chair of the Panel will provide information on how to contact the Department for Education.

There are several points which any Governor sitting on a complaints panel needs to remember:

It is important that the appeal meeting is independent and impartial and that it is seen to be so. No Governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it. In deciding the make-up of the panel, Governors need to try and ensure that it is a cross-section of the categories of Governor and sensitive to the issues of race, gender and religious affiliation. Governors from other schools can be asked.

The aim of the meeting, which needs to be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. However, it has to be recognised the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that his or her complaint has been taken seriously.

Extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child. Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings will ensure that the child does not feel intimidated. The panel needs to be aware of the views of the child and give them equal consideration to those of adults. · All Governors sitting on the panel need to be aware of and adhere to the complaints procedure

The Role of the Clerk

- Set the date, time and venue of the meeting and that the venue and proceedings are accessible.
- Collate any written material and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing.
- Record in writing the proceedings.
- Notify all parties of the panel's decision.

- The Clerk will email the Complainant, Chair of Governors and Headteacher within 5 school days of the Panel meeting, informing them of the Panel's decision and reasons for making that decision.

The Role of the Chair of the Panel

The Chair of the Panel has a key role, ensuring that:

- The remit of the panel is explained
- The issues are addressed.
- Key findings of fact are made.
- The panel is open minded and acting independently.
- No member of the panel has a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure;
- Written material is seen by all parties.

At least 10 school days before the meeting, the Clerk will:

- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least 5 school days before the meeting. The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.
- Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 5 school days before the date of the meeting.

Panel members may submit any questions to the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors, regarding the outcome of the stage 2 process, in preparation for the meeting.

The Clerk to the Governors will be present to minute the Complaints Panel meeting.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate. For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation. The school expects to be notified of who is attending the meeting. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

This is the end of the school's internal complaints procedure.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

If the complaint is; jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or the entire governing body or the majority of the governing body then an independent review panel will be formed.

Note: If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the Local Authority (LA) safeguarding teams, tribunals or the police, this may impact on our ability to adhere to 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 Ellwood Community Primary School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Stage 4

If you believe the school did not handle your concern/complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, you can contact the Department for Education after you have completed Stage 3.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by the federated schools. They will consider whether the schools have adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint. For the Secretary of State to intervene following a complaint, he needs to be sure that either:

- The school has acted or is proposing to act unreasonably in the exercise or performance of its functions imposed by or under the Education Act 1996;

- The school has failed to discharge any duty imposed by or for the purposes of the Education Act 1996.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at:

www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD.

Scope of the complaints procedure

This procedure covers all services provided by Ellwood Community Primary School, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures including those listed below:

Exceptions	Who to contact
Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs	Complaints relating to a SEND concern that remains unresolved, should be made to SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disability Information and Support Service) 0800 158 3603. This is a free service which supports the parents of children with SEND. https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/special-educational-needs-and-disability-send/
Admissions to schools / school reorganisation proposals	In Year: Inyear.admissions@gloucestershire.gov.uk 01452 426015 Appeals: School.appeals@gloucestershire.gov.uk Admissions: : https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-admissions/ School.admissions@gloucestershire.gov.uk
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns about an individual e.g staff member causing harm, you may wish to contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding. <u>The Role of the LADO & The Allegations Management Process Gloucestershire County Council</u> Allegations management contact information: Email: amadmin@gloucestershire.gov.uk Phone: 01452 426994 If you have a concern about a child, please contact the Children and Families Services Helpdesk on 01452 426565 (during office hours). If you prefer you can send an email to childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk The Children and Families Services helpdesk is open between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday. To report a concern outside of these hours, please contact the Emergency Duty Team on 01452 614194.

	This is an answering machine and you will need to leave a message and your telephone number. Someone will then call you back. Please remember that this number is only for situations that cannot wait until the next working day. EDT is not intended to provide the same level of service that is available during normal office hours. If you are concerned about the immediate safety of a child, please contact the Police on 101 at any time or 999 in an emergency.
Exclusion of children from school	Further information about raising a concern about exclusion can be found at; www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions <i>*Complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the schools complaints procedure</i>
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedure.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a member of staff as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use the school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
National Curriculum - content	Please contact the Department for Education: Contact the Department for Education - Contact type - GOV.UK
Whistleblowing	The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters directly with their employer. Referrals can be made at: Contact the Department for Education - Contact type - GOV.UK Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint. Gloucestershire County Council has a whistleblowing policy, which enables employees, partners and suppliers to express any concerns they have about illegal or illegitimate practices involving the council.

While it is primarily designed for use by people who work for the council, you can raise your concerns in confidence by:

- completing the online Whistleblowing form which is available from <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/complaints-and-feedback/whistleblowing/>

The council has a [whistleblowing policy](#) which enables employees, partners and suppliers to express any concerns they have about illegal or illegitimate practices involving the council.

While it is primarily designed for use by people who work for the council, you can raise your concerns in confidence by:

- Completing the online [whistleblowing allegation form](#)
- Writing (in an envelope marked 'confidential') to:

Director of Policy, Performance & Governance
Gloucestershire County Council,
Shire Hall,
Gloucester, GL1 2TZ

Calling the whistleblowing phone line in confidence on 01452 427052

We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.

Monitoring and review

The Governors monitor the Complaints Procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Head Teacher logs all formal complaints received by the school and records how they were resolved. Governors take into account any local or national decisions that affect the complaints process, and make any modifications necessary to this policy. This policy is available on the school website or a copy can be obtained from the school office.

Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body and Head Teacher will review this policy annually.

Review: September 2026

By: Mrs Milford/Rev. Ireland

Due to be Reviewed: September 2027

Signed: Mrs Milford/Rev. Ireland

COMPLAINTS FORM - Stage 1

Please complete and return to the Head Teacher, who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address: Daytime telephone number: Evening telephone number:
Give details of your concern and if you have any supporting documentation, please include.
Which members of staff have you communicated with about this.
What was the outcome of that communication?
Signature: Date:

OFFICIAL USE
Date acknowledgement sent:
By whom:
Complaint referred to:
Date:

COMPLAINTS FORM - Stage 2

Please complete and return to the Chair of Governors (if the complaint is about the Head Teacher) or if your complaint is unresolved by the school staff/Head Teacher at stage 1 and you feel your complaint remains unresolved, who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address: Daytime telephone number: Evening telephone number:
Give details of your concern and if you have any supporting documentation, please include.
Which members of staff have you communicated with about this.

What was the outcome of that communication?
What do you feel is unresolved?
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage? What outcome are you hoping for?
Signature:
Date:

OFFICIAL USE
Date acknowledgement sent:
By whom:
Complaint referred to:
Date:

Appendix 3



Complaints Review Request Form – Stage 3 (review by complaint review panel)

If you have tried unsuccessfully to resolve your complaint at stage 1 and 2, and are not happy with the complaint process or procedure being followed correctly and wish to take the matter further, please complete this form and send it to the school, addressed confidentially to the Clerk of the Governing board or email clerk@ellwood.gloucs.sch.uk

Name:	Address:
Pupil's name:	
Pupil's date of birth:	
Daytime telephone number:	
Evening Telephone number:	
Email:	Postcode:

I submitted a formal complaint to the school on Date: ____/____/____ .

My complaint was submitted to:

Name: _____ and I received a response from

Name: _____ on Date: ____/____/____ .

What part of the process were you not satisfied with?

I have attached copies of my formal complaint and of the responses from the school. Yes/No	
What was the result of the response?	
I am dissatisfied with the way in which the procedure was carried out because: You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.	
What are you hoping to achieve from the stage 3 process?	
Signed:	Date:

OFFICIAL USE
Date acknowledgement sent:
By whom:
Date meeting arranged:
Date notified of meeting:
Paper work sent out:
Date meeting took place:
Decision from meeting sent out: