Ladygrove Primary School and Nursery

Persistent and Vexatious Complaints Policy

Written April 2026

Due for review March 2028

AIMS OF THE POLICY

The School acknowledges that concerns and complaints are a normal part of school life and that the majority are resolved quickly, sensitively and to the satisfaction of all parties through the School's Complaints Procedure.

However, there may be occasions when complainants behave in an unreasonable manner when raising and/or pursuing concerns. In these circumstances, the School may take action in accordance with this policy.

The aims of this policy are to:

• uphold the standards of courtesy and reasonableness that should characterise all communication between the School and those who wish to raise concerns or pursue complaints

• support the wellbeing of pupils, staff, governors, parents/carers and others with a legitimate interest in the work of the School

• deal fairly, honestly and proportionately with persistent or vexatious complaints

• protect staff and the wider school community from harassment, including online abuse

• ensure that actions are consistent with guidance from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY

In implementing this policy, the School will act in accordance with its duties under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

The School will seek to ensure that the rights of all parties are respected and that reasonable adjustments are considered where a complainant has a disability or identified mental health need.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents/carers and members of the public who raise concerns or complaints, whether informally or formally, can expect the School to:

a) deal with concerns in line with the School's Complaints Procedure

b) behave in a professional manner and respond with courtesy and respect

c) be available for consultation within reasonable time limits, bearing in mind the needs of pupils and the nature of the complaint

d) act impartially and proportionately

e) attempt to resolve problems using reasonable means

f) keep complainants informed of progress towards a resolution

EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS/CARERS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

a) treat all school staff with courtesy and respect

b) respect the wellbeing and safety of pupils and staff

c) avoid aggression, verbal abuse, threatening behaviour or online abuse

d) recognise the time constraints under which school staff work and allow reasonable time for responses, including not contacting staff during evenings, weekends or school holidays

e) understand that resolving concerns can sometimes take time

f) refrain from sharing complaints on social media platforms and follow the School's Complaints Procedure and Social Media Code of Conduct

Nothing in this policy prevents parents/carers from raising urgent safeguarding concerns, which will always be acted upon immediately.

WHAT IS A PERSISTENT OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINT?

The definitions used in this policy are informed by guidance issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) on the management of unreasonable complainant behaviour.

Persistent or vexatious complaints

A persistent or vexatious complainant is a parent/carer or member of the public who raises concerns or complaints, either formally or informally, in a manner that is unreasonable and, due to the frequency or nature of contact, hinders the School's ability to investigate fairly.

This behaviour may be characterised by:

a) obsessive, repetitive or persistent actions

b) excessive or inappropriate email, telephone or written contact

c) pursuit of complaints that lack substance or sufficient grounds

d) insistence on unrealistic, unreasonable or unlawful outcomes

e) repeated pursuit of issues where outcomes cannot be changed

f) continuing to pursue complaints after they have been fully investigated and upheld

Harassment

Harassment is the malicious or unreasonable pursuit of the actions above in a way that:

a) targets one or more members of staff over time

b) causes ongoing distress or anxiety

c) has an adverse effect on the wider school community

d) is perceived as intimidating, oppressive or threatening

The cumulative effect of persistent behaviour may amount to harassment even where individual incidents may appear minor in isolation.

SCHOOL ACTIONS IN CASES OF PERSISTENT OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

6.1 Initial response

In the first instance, the School will inform the complainant that their behaviour is becoming unreasonable or unacceptable and that continued behaviour may result in actions being taken under this policy.

6.2 Further action

Any action taken under this policy is intended to manage behaviour and communication, not to prevent access to the School's Complaints Procedure.

If behaviour does not improve, the School may take one or more of the following actions, depending on the circumstances:

a) inform the complainant in writing that their behaviour is now considered unreasonable and falls within this policy

b) require that meetings are conducted with a second member of staff present and that notes are taken

c) limit communication so that, except in emergencies, contact is by email only

d) restrict access to the school site or take action in line with the School's Barring Policy where aggression or abuse has occurred

The decision to apply this policy will normally be taken by the Headteacher, in consultation with the Chair of Governors where appropriate.

6.3 Legitimate complaints

Legitimate new complaints, unless linked to previously resolved matters, will still be considered even where this policy has been applied.

6.4 Review of behaviour

If a complainant's behaviour improves and later resumes within a reasonable period, the School may reapply this policy at an appropriate level.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if required.

Policy- Document Status			
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