



Thrupp Primary School

Complaints Policy

Approved by: Standards & Welfare	Date approved: March 2026
Last approved: June 2023 October 2025 (revised)	Review Due: June 2027

Thrupp Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, governors and volunteers to share this commitment.

At Thrupp Primary School, we make every effort to provide the best possible education and learning environment for the children in our school. We understand that changes or actions taken by staff or pupils, may not enable all feedback the school receives, to be positive. Where concerns or complaints are made, it is in everyone's interest that they are addressed and resolved at the earliest possible stage. When dealing with a concern or complaint, the school will act openly, fairly, without prejudice and in line with procedure. Many issues arising can be resolved informally as a concern, without moving to a formal stage of a complaint. Concerns and complaints are both taken seriously and dealt with professionally.

The difference between a concern or 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 can be defined as, 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints policy. We take concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. In the first instance we would like for you to raise the concern with your child's class teacher. If you would like to raise this with another member of staff, Rebekah Lewis is our KS1 lead and Ailsa Catt is our KS2 lead/ Deputy Headteacher. Mrs Mylechreest, as Headteacher, would also be available for you to raise any concern with her. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important. We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, we will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages within this complaints policy.

How to raise a concern or a complaint

If you have a concern about any aspect of school or your child's education or wellbeing, please raise this with your child's class teacher in person, by telephone or by emailing the school office. Ideally, they will be able to discuss and address your concern immediately or can arrange a meeting for you to discuss it in greater detail. All concerns raised will be handled confidentially and any notes kept will be kept in accordance with GDPR guidelines. It may be helpful in dealing with some concerns for parents to read other school policies, which are available on our website or you can ask for a paper copy from the office staff. Concerns can also be raised to the Head in person, via email or on the telephone. If the issue remains unresolved after this concerns process, the next step is to raise a formal complaint in writing. (See Stage 1 section)

Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 2 of the procedure.

Complaints against school staff (except the Head) should be made in the first instance to the Head via the school office. Please mark this as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors via the school office marked Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing body should be addressed to the Clerk of the Governing Board.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this policy. If you need help completing the form, please ask at the school office. In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete the form/process.

Social media

In order for concerns or complaints to be dealt with in an appropriate manner, we request that the complainants do not discuss their complaints publicly by any forms of social media. Complaints are dealt with confidentially in school for those directly resolved, and we expect complainants to observe confidentiality also.

Anonymous complaints

Thrupp Primary School will not normally investigate anonymous complaints, although the Head and Chair of Governors will be made aware of their existence and, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Time scales

A complaint must be raised within 3 months of the incident, or where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within 3 months of the last incident. Only in exceptional circumstances will school consider complaints made outside of this time scale.

Complaints made outside of term time

Any complaints made outside of term time will be considered to be received on the first day of term after the holiday period.

Scope of this complaints policy

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Thrupp Primary School, other than complaints dealt with under statutory procedures, including those listed in Appendix A.

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the Police, Local Authority or Safeguarding teams, 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 Thrupp 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.

Resolving complaints

At each stage of the procedure, Thrupp wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or partly upheld, or dismiss the complaint in whole or 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 as well as part of the school's good practice procedure of regular review
- an apology

Withdrawal of a complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we ask that this is confirmed in writing to the Chair of Governors and the Head.

Complaints Procedure

There are 2 stages to our formal complaints procedure:

Stage 1

- Formal complaints must be made to the Head (unless they are about the Head) via the school office. This should be done in writing, preferably using the complaint form, or in person.
- Complaints received out of school hours will be considered to be received on the next school day.
- The Headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and will respond to the complainant in writing within 10 full school days of having received the complaint.
- Within this initial response, the Head will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what the complainant would like to see. The Head can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this. The Head will also acknowledge receipt of the complaint and outline timeframes. If this information is in the complainant's original communication about the complaint, the Head will only acknowledge receipt and outline timeframes.
- The Head may delegate the investigation to the Deputy Head, but not the final decision.
- During the investigation, the investigator, will:
 - keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.
 - conduct a thorough investigation.
 - if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish.
- At the conclusion of the investigation, the Head will consider all the relevant evidence and provide a formal written response within 30 full school days of the date of the receipt of the complaint.
- If the Head is unable to meet this 30 full school day deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.
- The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide an explanation of the decision made and the reason/s for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Thrupp School will take to resolve the complaint.
- The Head will advise the complainant how to escalate their complaint to Stage 2 should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of stage 1.
- If the complaint is about the headteacher, the Chair or suitably trained member of the governing board will be appointed to run stage 1.
- Complaints about the Head are to be sent to the Chair of Governors.
- Complaints about a governor are to go to the Clerk of the governing board. If the complaint is about all or the majority of the governing board, an independent investigator will be appointed and write the written response.

Stage 2

- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1 and wishes to take matters further, they can escalate their complaint to stage 2, the final stage of this procedure.
- A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the Clerk, within 5 school days of the school's response to Stage 1. If it is outside of this time frame, the appeal will not be considered.
- The Clerk to Governors will record the date the escalation request is received and will acknowledge receipt within 10 full school days of the school's response to stage 1.

- The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the stage 2 meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 20 school days of the receipt of the stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the Clerk will keep the complainant informed by letter which will contain the date that the Governor panel will meet.
- The Clerk will arrange a panel of 3 governors, who know nothing of the complaint, and send out invitations to this panel hearing. A chair of the meeting will be appointed.
- As well as the members of the governor appeal panel, the complainant, Headteacher and the subject of the complaint may be invited to the appeal hearing or may be asked to provide written representations.
- If invited, the subject of the complainant complaint can bring a companion to the hearing, but not legal representation or representatives from the media. If the complaint is about a member of staff, they may bring a Union representative if appropriate or a companion as a support. This person will be there as support and their opinions will not be sought by the panel.
- If the subject of the complaint is a governor, an independent panel can be arranged, although timescales may be affected.
- Any written evidence needs to be submitted to the panel 5 full school days before the appeal hearing so that it can be shared with the panel by the Clerk.
- Appeal hearings are confidential and held in private. No recording in whole or part is allowed. Minutes of the meeting will be taken and shared with all relevant parties.
- The panel will not review any new complaints or consider unrelated evidence to the initial complaint.
- The panel can uphold the complaint in whole or part and dismiss the complaint in whole or part.
- If the complaint is upheld in whole or part, the panel will decide on appropriate action to resolve the complaint and where appropriate, recommend changes to school systems and procedures to prevent a similar issue in the future.
- The Chair of the panel will send a written formal reply with the decision and reason for it, within two weeks of the stage 2 meeting. The letter will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if the complainant remains dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by Thrupp School.
- If the complaint is about the governing board or majority of the board, stage 2 will be heard by a selection of independent governors.

Please be aware that this is the final stage at which the school will consider this complaint. Any further communication received by school in relation to this complaint will not be responded to and school will follow the Vexatious Complaints Policy.

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after the completion of Stage 2. The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of the complaint or overturn decisions made by Thrupp Primary School. They will consider whether Thrupp Primary School has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus or by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:
 Department for Education
 Piccadilly Gate
 Store Street
 Manchester
 M1 2WD.

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Name of complainant:	Relationship to child:
Name of child:	Year group of child:
Address and contact details of complainant:	
Details of the complaint including whether you have spoken to anybody at school about it at a concern level:	
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?	
Signed:	Dated:
Date received by school:	

Appendix A

Exceptions	Who to contact
Admissions to schools Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs School re-organisation proposals	Gloucestershire County Council
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our Child Protection and Safeguarding policies and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
Exclusion of children from school	www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions
Whistleblowing	We have a whistleblowing procedure. 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 with their employer. www.education.gov.uk/contactus
Staff grievances	School's internal grievance policy
Staff conduct	School's internal discipline procedures
Services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers will have their own complaints procedure to follow; please contact them direct.
National Curriculum - content	www.education.gov.uk/contactus

Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant:

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint
- ask for assistance as needed
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint publicly, on social media and respect confidentiality.

Investigator:

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
 - sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved
 - interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint
 - consideration of records and other relevant information
 - analysing information
- liaising with the complainant and the Headteacher as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal
- be mindful of the timescales to respond
- prepare a comprehensive report for the headteacher or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

The headteacher or complaints committee will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

Head:

The Headteacher should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- liaise with staff members, headteacher, Chair of Governors, Clerk and LAs (if appropriate) to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure
- be aware of issues regarding:
 - sharing third party information
 - additional support. This may be needed by complainants when making a complaint including communication support or where the complainant is a child or young person
- keep records.

Clerk to the Governing Board:

The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the committee and should:

- ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

- set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties (if they are invited to attend) and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example; stage 1 paperwork, school and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale
- record the proceedings
- circulate the minutes of the meeting
- notify all parties of the committee's decision.

Panel Chair:

The panels chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint meeting, should ensure that:

- both parties are asked (via the Clerk) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting
- the meeting is conducted in a formal manner, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy
- complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person
- the remit of the committee is explained to the complainant
- written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR.
If a new issue arises it would be useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it; this may require a short adjournment of the meeting
- both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting or verbally in the meeting itself
- the issues are addressed
- key findings of fact are made
- the committee is open-minded and acts independently
- no member of the committee has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- the meeting is minuted
- they liaise with the Clerk (and complaints co-ordinator, if the school has one).

Panel member:

Committee members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so
No governor may sit on the committee if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- the aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant
We recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.
- many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting
Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child.
- extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child/young person and present during all or part of the meeting
Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated.
The committee should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.
If the child/young person is the complainant, the committee should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the child/young person's parent is the complainant, the committee should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the

child/young person needs to attend.

However, the parent should be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child/young person to attend a part of the meeting that the committee considers is not in the child/young person's best interests.

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.