



HOPEBRIGHT
S C H O O L

Complaints Policy And Procedure

Reviewed: September 2026

Review Date: September 2027

Complaints Policy And Procedure

Regulatory Compliance Statement

This policy has been written to comply with Part 7 of Schedule 1 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as updated in current DfE guidance) and reflects expectations under Ofsted inspection frameworks for independent schools. It applies to complaints made by parents of current pupils and is published on the school website and made available on request.

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Raising concerns and resolving complaints

From time to time, parents or those with parental responsibility for current pupils may become aware of matters which cause concern. In line with the Independent School Standards, Hopebright School maintains a written complaints procedure for parents of registered pupils. The school may, at its discretion, also consider complaints from others connected to the school. To support the prompt and fair resolution of these concerns, Hopebright School has adopted this Complaints Policy and Procedure.

This procedure is intended to ensure that complaints are:

- Resolved wherever possible through informal discussion
- Easy to access, use and understand
- Non-adversarial and fair
- Handled confidentially
- Addressed promptly and efficiently
- Fully investigated with all relevant issues considered
- Used to inform future practice and prevent recurrence

Complaints made outside of term time will be considered as received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Some complaints may need to be dealt with under separate statutory procedures (see Appendix A).

A complaint may be withdrawn at any stage. Written confirmation of withdrawal will be requested.

A written record of all complaints will be maintained, including whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a panel hearing, together with any action taken by the school regardless of outcome. A written record of formal complaints made during the preceding school year will be available to parents on request, as required by the Independent School Standards.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

The complaint is discussed with the appropriate senior leader. The initial communication may be by letter, telephone, email, or in person by appointment and does not need to be submitted via a form. This should usually be raised within **3 months** of the incident or event, although exceptional circumstances will be considered. A designated member of staff will respond and advise the complainant of the outcome within 10 school working days. If the matter is not resolved, the complainant may progress to Stage 2. Requests to move to Stage 2 must be made within 15 school working days.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

The complaint is heard by the Headteacher.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after Stage 1, they should put their complaint in writing to the Headteacher.

The complaint should include:

- Details of the complaint
- Reasons for dissatisfaction with Stage 1 outcome
- Any supporting evidence
- The resolution sought

The Headteacher will acknowledge the complaint within 5 school working days.

A full response will be provided within 20 school working days, setting out:

- Actions taken to investigate
- Findings
- Any actions to resolve the complaint

The Headteacher may choose to communicate findings in person before confirming in writing.

Complaints concerning the Headteacher or Proprietor/Governing Body

Where the complaint concerns the Headteacher, it should be addressed in writing to the Chair of Governors / Proprietor at:

Hopebright School

Ground Floor Rear of 155 Deane Road, Bolton, BL3 5AH

governance@hopebrightschool.co.uk

An appropriate governor or independent investigator will be appointed.

Where the complaint concerns the Proprietor, Chair of Governors, or Governing Body, the complaint should be submitted to the Clerk to the Governing Body. If the complaint is being handled by the Chair of Governors, this may bypass Stage 2 and move directly to Stage 3. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may request progression to Stage 3 within **15 school working days**.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing (Final Stage)

This is the final stage of the school's internal complaints process.

The complaint will be heard by a panel appointed by the Chair of Governors.

The panel will:

- Be appointed by or on behalf of the Proprietor
- Acknowledge receipt within **10 school working days**
- Consist of at least **three people not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint**
- Include at least **one panel member independent of the management and running of the school**
- Exclude anyone previously involved in the complaint

The panel will review:

- The complaint
- The actions taken at Stages 1 and 2
- Supporting evidence

A clerk will record the meeting and retain records.

Meetings may be held virtually where agreed by all parties.

The complainant may attend and be accompanied by a friend, relative or supporter if they wish, in accordance with the Independent School Standards.

Possible outcomes

The panel may:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- Decide on appropriate remedial action
- Recommend changes to school systems or procedures

The panel's findings and recommendations will be issued in writing.

The complainant will be informed that, if dissatisfied with the handling of the complaint, they may raise concerns with the Department for Education (DfE) regarding the school's compliance with the Independent School Standards. Ofsted may also consider concerns where these indicate wider systemic failings, safeguarding concerns, or regulatory non-compliance.

A copy of findings will be:

1. Provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about
2. Available for inspection by the proprietor and Headteacher on the school premises

Findings and Recommendations

Where appropriate, the panel may offer:

- An explanation
- An acknowledgement that matters could have been handled differently
- Assurance that the issue will not recur
- Details of actions taken or planned
- A review of relevant policies
- An apology
- Mediation

Variations to the Complaints Procedure

In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to vary this procedure.

Any variation must be agreed by the Headteacher, Proprietor, or Chair of Governors.

The complainant will be informed in writing of:

- The reason for the variation
- The alternative process

A record will be kept of any variations.

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will not usually be investigated. However, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors may decide to investigate where exceptional circumstances apply.

Serial, Persistent or Vexatious Complaints

Where a complainant continues to pursue a matter that has been fully addressed through all stages of the procedure, the school may inform them in writing that the process has been exhausted and the matter is closed. Hopebright School reserves the right to manage serial or unreasonable complaints in line with its separate policy on unreasonable complaints.

Audio and Video Recording

Audio or video recording of meetings by any party is not permitted unless agreed in advance by all parties. Recordings obtained without consent will not be accepted as part of the complaints process.

Record Keeping and Confidentiality

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State, Ofsted, or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access to them, or where disclosure is otherwise required by law.

Stage 2 Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Headteacher

Your name:

Pupil's name (if relevant):

Relationship to pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone number:

Email:

Preferred method of contact:

Details of complaint

[Insert details]

Action already taken to resolve the complaint

[Insert details]

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem?

[Insert details]

Are you attaching any paperwork?

[Insert details]

I consent to this information being shared with relevant parties, including those who are the subject of the complaint.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Stage 3 Complaint Form

Please complete and send to the Chair of Governors

Your name:

Name of person complaint relates to:

Date(s) complaint dealt with at Stage 2:

Pupil's name (if relevant):

Relationship to pupil:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone number:

Email:

Preferred method of contact:

Why are you dissatisfied with the Stage 2 outcome?

[Insert details]

Additional information or paperwork

[Insert details]

I consent to this information being shared with relevant parties, including those who are the subject of the complaint.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix A – Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about the provision of education and related services by Hopebright School, except complaints covered by separate statutory procedures, including:

Exception	Who to contact
Admissions	Local Authority
SEN statutory assessments	Local Authority
Child Protection	School Safeguarding Lead / LADO / MASH
Exclusions	Follow statutory exclusion process
Whistleblowing	Follow school whistleblowing policy
Staff grievances	Internal grievance procedure
Staff conduct	Internal disciplinary procedure
Third-party providers	Provider directly

If another agency (for example police, safeguarding teams, tribunals or courts) is investigating any part of the complaint, the school may pause this procedure until those investigations are complete.

Where legal proceedings have commenced, the school may suspend the complaints procedure until those proceedings conclude.