



Concerns and Complaints Procedures 2025-26

Table of Contents

Who Can Make a Complaint?.....	1
The Difference Between a Concern and A Complaint.....	2
How To Raise A Concern Or Make A Complaint	2
Anonymous Complaints	2
Time Scales	3
Complaints Received Outside of Term Time	3
Scope of this Complaints Procedure	3
Resolving Complaints.....	4
Withdrawal of a Complaint.....	4
Informal Stage: Dealing with Complaints at School level	4
Stage 1.....	5
Presence Of Children at Formal & Informal Meetings Concerning Complaints	6
Stage 2.....	6
Next Steps	8
Roles and Responsibilities	9
Complainant	9
Investigator	9
School Business Manager	9
Committee Chair.....	10
Committee Member	10
Appendix 1: Complaint Form	11
Appendix 2: Procedure for Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints	12
Appendix 3: Parent Guide to School Complaints.....	14

Who Can Make a Complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the schools. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Honeywell Infant and Junior Schools about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this Complaints Procedure.

The Difference Between a Concern and 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 may 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 procedure. Honeywell Infant and Junior Schools takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the School Business Manager or Head Teachers, will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the School Business Manager will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. 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, Head Teachers will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this Complaints Procedure.

How To Raise A Concern Or Make A Complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf on a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

If you need help or support to make a complaint, you can access:

- Independent advice and support from your Local Authority's Information, Advice and Support (IAS) service - you can find your local IAS service on the Kids website (www.kids.org.uk/iass)
- Support from a friend, family member, or advocate to help you raise your concern
- Translation or interpretation services if English is not your first language

Please let us know if you need any support to access our Complaints Procedure.

Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher or Head Teacher. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint. 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 Teachers) should be made in the first instance, to either Fiona Arnold Head Teacher – Honeywell Infant School, or Jo Clarke (Head Teacher – Honeywell Junior School) via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the Head Teacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors, via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole Governing Body should be addressed to the School Business Manager via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you. In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

Anonymous Complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Head Teachers or Chair of Governors, if it raises serious concerns, particularly regarding safeguarding or the welfare of pupils. The decision to investigate will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Time Scales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

Complaints Received Outside of Term Time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Honeywell Infant and Junior Schools, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who To Contact
- Admissions to schools - Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs - School re-organisation proposals	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with thrivewandsworth@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy 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). Chantgel.langenhoven@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk mash@wandsworth.gov.uk
Exclusion of children from school*	Further information about raising concerns 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 school's complaints procedure.</i>
Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. 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 direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus. 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.
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
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 staff member 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	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.

may use school premises or facilities	
National Curriculum - content	You cannot complain about the content of the national curriculum. However, you can complain about how your school delivers the curriculum. Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the 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.

If a complainant commences legal action against Honeywell Infant and Junior 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.

Resolving Complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Honeywell Infant and Junior Schools want 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 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
- an apology.

Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

Informal Stage: Dealing with Complaints at School level

A degree of discretion must always be allowed in dealing with complaints. It may not be appropriate in all situations to advise all complainants to put their concerns in writing. In some cases this would over formalise the situation which would have the effect of pushing people into defensive and possibly entrenched positions from which it would be difficult to achieve a resolution.

The school's structure for responding to complaints. Since contact is likely to be more immediate in the primary school sector it is suggested that the class teacher or head teachers should attempt to resolve the matter. Teachers to whom the complaint has been referred by the head teachers would have a duty to inform the head teachers if they believe an issue is not resolved after discussion and careful explanation to the parent. In some circumstances the head teacher may decide it is appropriate to deal with the matter personally. In the case of non-teaching staff the head teacher should determine to whom complainants should be referred.

Use of Mediation

We may offer mediation at appropriate stages of the complaints process:

- During the informal stage, to facilitate discussion and resolution
- Following a formal investigation, to help rebuild relationships between parties

Mediation will not be used as a substitute for a formal investigation. If either party believes mediation will not be helpful, we will proceed to the next stage of the procedure. Where possible, we will seek support from our Local Authority or other trained mediators if none of our staff have mediation training.

Stage 1

Formal complaints must be made to the Head Teachers (unless they are about the Head Teachers), via the school office. This may be done in person, in writing (preferably on the Complaint Form), or by telephone. The School business Manager will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 3 school days ("First Communication").

Within a further 5 school days, the Head Teacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see ("Second Communication"). The Head Teacher can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

Note: The head teacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but not the decision to be taken.

During the investigation, the Head Teacher (or investigator) will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the Head Teacher will provide a formal written response within 20 school days of the date of the Second Communication. If more time is required to investigate or to arrange a suitable time for discussion, you will be updated prior to the initial deadline for providing a formal written response and will be informed of the likely timescale within a further [5] school days.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Honeywell Infant and Junior Schools will take to resolve the complaint.

This response may be that:-

- (i) the matter about which the complainant had raised concerns had originally been dealt with quite properly and appropriately by staff within the context of established school policies and procedures;
or
- (ii) their complaint has been found by the head teacher to be valid and that the head teacher: within their responsibility for the overall internal management of the school, will take steps to resolve the complaint within their management remit;
or
the head teacher will refer the matter to the Governing Body if the nature of the complaint merits that course of action.

The Head Teacher will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

If the complaint is about the Head Teacher, or a member of the Governing Body (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 1. This governor may also be supported by a second, impartial, governor if needed.

Complaints about a member of the Governing Body must be made to the School Business Manager, via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire Governing Body or
- the majority of the Governing Body

Occasionally it may be necessary for Stage 1 to be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the Governing Body, for example in the case of a conflict of interest. If this is the case, you will be notified about

this decision within 5 school days of the First Communication. If the investigation is undertaken by an independent person, that person has to be found first and it then has to be confirmed with both sides what information is needed and what the complainant and the school are happy to share, which can take some time. You will be updated within a further 10 school days of the next steps. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response. They will notify you at the start of their investigation about the likely timescales.

Presence Of Children at Formal & Informal Meetings Concerning Complaints

It is unlikely that the resolution of a complaint within this policy will be assisted by the presence of pupils at any meeting between the Head Teacher, other staff and the complainant. A meeting which required the presence of a pupil would only be one at which confidential matters or issues relating to named members of staff were not discussed.

Head Teachers are advised to consult parents or carers if their child is required to clarify facts concerning a complaint. They should ensure that pupils do not participate in discussion where they might witness confrontation between adults.

Stage 2

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 2 – a meeting with members of the Governing Body's Complaints Committee, which will be formed of the first three, impartial, governors available. You have the right to attend the panel hearing and you can bring someone with you for support if you want to. You may bring someone with you for support. This could be a friend, family member, or advocate. We ask that legal representatives are not brought to the hearing, as this is not a legal proceeding. The complainant will have the opportunity to present their complaint and ask questions. The school will also have the opportunity to respond. This is the final stage of the Complaints Procedure. Occasionally it may be necessary for Stage 2 to be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the Governing Body, for example in the case of a conflict of interest or if a panel of impartial governors cannot be found, either within Honeywell Schools Federation or in the wider Wandsworth LA. If this is the case, you will be notified about this decision within 5 school days of receipt of your Request to Escalate.

If the investigation is undertaken by an independent person, that person has to be found first and it then has to be confirmed with both sides what information is needed and what the complainant and the school are happy to share, which can take some time. You will be updated within a further 10 school days of the next steps. The following provisions relating to Stage 2 procedure may be amended by the independent investigator in which case the complainant and the schools will be kept regularly informed.

A request to escalate to Stage 2 ("Request to Escalate") must be made to the School Business Manager, via the school office, within 10 school days of receipt of the Stage 1 response. The School Business Manager will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 3 school days.

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply. The School Business Manager will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 20 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 request. It can be difficult to find 3 mutually convenient dates for 3 governors and the complainant. If this is not possible within the timeframe, the School Business Manager will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

The School Business Manager will also provide a deadline for the complainant to respond to the offer of 3 proposed dates. If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the School

Business Manager will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

The Complaints Committee will consist of at least three governors with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Committee. If there are fewer than three governors from Honeywell Infant and Junior Schools available, the School Business Manager will source any additional, independent governors through another local school or through their LA's Governor Services team, in order to make up the committee. Alternatively, an entirely independent committee may be convened to hear the complaint at Stage 2, or an independent investigator if a committee of governors cannot be found.

The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs. 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.

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.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 5 school days before the date of the meeting (where possible). 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.

Then, at least 5 school days before the meeting, the School Business Manager 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 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.

The meeting will be held in private. 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.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part (agree with it)
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part. (disagree with it)

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The panel can make recommendations to the schools about actions to take. However, the panel cannot order the school to take specific actions such as:

- Paying compensation
- Forcing a member of staff to apologise

- Requiring specific disciplinary action against staff

The Governing Body will consider the panel's recommendations and decide what action, if any, to take. The complainant will be notified of the outcome in writing within 10 school days of the hearing. The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and Honeywell Infant and Junior Schools with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 10 school days.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by Honeywell Infant and Junior Schools.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the Governing Body

Stage 2 will be heard by a committee of independent governors or an independent investigator if a committee cannot be convened by the schools or the local authority. The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Honeywell Infant and Junior Schools will take to resolve the complaint. The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.

Next Steps

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 2.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Honeywell Infant and Junior Schools. They will consider whether Honeywell Infant and Junior Schools has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

If you have completed all stages of our complaints procedure and remain dissatisfied, you may refer your complaint to the Department for Education (DfE).

What the DfE will do:

- Check whether Honeywell Infant and Junior Schools has followed the law and our own complaints policy correctly
- Check whether our complaints procedure meets legal requirements

What the DfE will NOT do:

- Re-investigate your complaint
- Overturn the school's decision
- Order the school to take specific action

The DfE can only get involved if:

- The school does not have a complaints procedure
- The school does not follow its complaints procedure
- The school's complaints procedure does not meet legal requirements

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.

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 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 complaints co-ordinator 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 head teacher or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

The head teacher 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.

Complaints Co-ordinator

(this could be the **Head Teacher** / designated complaints governor or other staff member providing administrative support e.g. School Business Manager)

The Complaints Co-Ordinator Should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- liaise with staff members, head teacher, Chair of Governors, School Business Manager 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 interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person
- keep records.

School Business Manager

The School Business Manager 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.

Committee Chair

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

- both parties are asked (via the School Business Manager) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting
 - the meeting is conducted in an informal 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 School Business Manager (and complaints co-ordinator, if the school has one).

Committee 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.

Appendix 1: Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the School Business Manager 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: Postcode: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

Appendix 2: Procedure for Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints

NOTE: This procedure is adaptable to manage unreasonable or persistent contact not directly associated with, or resulting from, formal complaints

Honeywell Infant and Junior Schools are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school.

However, we will not investigate complaints that we judge to be:

- Persistent or unreasonable
- Frivolous
- Vexatious (not made in good faith and intended to cause disruption or annoyance)

Before deciding that a complaint is unreasonable or vexatious, we will consider whether the complainant:

- Has made the same complaint before and it has already been resolved
- Is making excessive demands on staff time

- Is being abusive or threatening
- Is refusing to accept the outcome of the complaints process

If we decide not to investigate a complaint for these reasons, we will write to the complainant explaining our decision.

We also do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

Honeywell Infant and Junior Schools defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the schools that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached. Whenever possible, the Head Teachers or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an '*unreasonable*' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the Head Teachers will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Honeywell Infant and Junior Schools causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from Honeywell Infant and Junior Schools.

Appendix 3: Parent Guide to School Complaints

In February 2026 the DfE have released new complaints guidance. This is a parent-facing guide that explains the complaints process to parents and carers, rather than operational guidance for schools. However, there are some elements from this guide that we have reflected in our schools' complaints policy to ensure alignment. Please follow the link: [Parent Guide to School Complaints.pdf](#)