



Complaints Procedure

Reviewed March 2026

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 complaint's procedure. Springwell Park takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Springwell Park will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaint's 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.

In the first instance, concerns should be raised with either the class teacher, pastoral team, school leader or headteacher. 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.

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.

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 [Springwell Park](#) other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admissions to schools Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs School re-organisation proposals 	<p>Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Sefton Local authority.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation Safeguarding concerns 	<p>Complaints about child protection matters and safeguarding concerns are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policies and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>Contact the schools Designated Safeguarding Lead</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclusion of children from school* 	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whistleblowing 	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>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.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff grievances 	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff conduct 	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>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.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities 	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.</p>

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Curriculum - content | Please contact the Department for Education at:
www.education.gov.uk/contactus |
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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.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Springwell Park 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 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.

Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – Informal resolution

Any matter of concern or complaint should be raised, and attempted to be resolved on an informal basis. Generally, it is expected that, where the matter relates to a pupil, it will have been raised with the pupil's class teacher and where applicable either the pastoral team or Key stage leader. Before a request is made to deal with it under the formal stages of this policy.

Stage 2 – Formal resolution with Headteacher

If a complaint cannot be resolved informally, the next step would be to make a formal complaint.

The school would expect a complaint to be made as soon as possible following the issue that has given rise to the complaint. This will normally be within 3 months of the incident. Complaints made outside of this time frame may not be considered unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Stage 2 complaints must be set out in writing using the form available at Appendix 1, within 10 days of raising it informally.

The headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within **five** school days.

An investigation will be carried out by the headteacher or a nominated individual identified by the Headteacher. The investigator will speak to others involved.

The investigator will put her/his findings in writing and will indicate what, if any, steps should be taken to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done within fifteen School

days of any meeting with the parent; if no meeting is arranged it will be within 25 School days of the written complaint being received.

If the Headteacher is unable to meet this 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 a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions the school will take to resolve the complaint.

Where the parent remains dissatisfied, he or she may request that the complaint be escalated to Stage 3.

Stage 3 – Formal resolution: Chair of Governors and another representative from the governing body

If a complaint cannot be resolved at Stage 2, the next step would be to escalate the complaint to the Chair of Governors and another representative from the governing body

Stage 3 complaints must be set out in writing, using the form available at Appendix 1, within 10 School days of the Stage 2 response and addressed to the Clerk to Governors.

The Clerk to Governors will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within five School days. Whenever reasonably possible, any meeting with the parent will take place within 15 School days of the written complaint being received.

Within this response, the Chair of Governors will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The Chair of Governors can consider whether a face-to-face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

The complaint should set out briefly the grounds of the complaint, stating what it is that the parent considers should have been done or where the school has not met reasonable expectations and confirming the outcome sought and why they are not satisfied with the outcome from Stage 2.

The Chair of Governors will put the Governors findings in writing and will indicate what, if any, steps should be taken to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done within 15 School days of any meeting with the parent; if no meeting is arranged it will be within 25 School days of the written complaint being received.

If the Chair of Governors is unable to meet this 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 a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions the school will take to resolve the complaint.

Any further attempt to re-open the matter will be considered as falling under the “Serial or persistent Complainants” policy.

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 [Springwell Park](#). They will consider whether [Springwell Park](#) 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, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

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

Appendix 1

Complaint Form – Stage 2

Please complete and return to the Headteacher at [Springwell Park](#) who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your details	
Name	
Email	
Address and phone number	
Name of pupil, year group and your relationship to them (if applicable)	
Complaint details	
Grounds of complaint	

<p>What steps have been taken to resolve the complaint informally?</p> <p>(Including details of who the matter was raised with, when and what solution was offered)</p>	
<p>Why have the steps taken so far failed to resolve the complaint?</p>	
<p>Outcome sought</p>	
<p>What action would you like taken to resolve the matter?</p>	