



CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

Reviewed: September 2026

Next review: September 2028

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Policy owner	Headteacher / School Leadership Team
Approved by	Apex Trust
Review date	September 2026
Next review	September 2028
Applies to	Pupils, parents/carers, staff and other members of the school community

1. INTRODUCTION

Apex Primary School is committed to providing a safe, nurturing and supportive environment in which pupils can thrive academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually.

The school recognises that, from time to time, parents and carers may have concerns or complaints about an aspect of their child's education, welfare, behaviour or experience at school. We believe that concerns are best addressed promptly, respectfully and at the earliest appropriate stage.

This policy sets out the procedure for raising and resolving concerns and complaints. It aims to ensure that:

- concerns are listened to and taken seriously;
- complaints are dealt with fairly, sensitively and consistently;
- matters are resolved as quickly as reasonably practicable;
- all parties are treated with dignity and respect;
- appropriate confidentiality is maintained;
- the school learns from concerns and complaints where appropriate;
- the welfare and best interests of pupils remain central to the process.

This policy has been developed in line with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended, and other relevant requirements applicable to independent schools in England.

The school encourages parents to raise concerns at the earliest opportunity rather than allowing an issue to develop into a formal complaint.

2. OUR ISLAMIC ETHOS

Apex seeks to deal with concerns and complaints in accordance with the Islamic principles of sincerity (ikhlas), justice (adl), good manners (akhlaq), consultation (shura) and reconciliation (islah).

"Religion is sincere advice."

Sahih Muslim

The school therefore welcomes constructive feedback and recognises that appropriately raised concerns can help us to improve our provision.

"The believers are but brothers, so make islah (settlement) between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy."

Qur'an 49:10

All parties are expected to approach concerns and complaints with honesty, patience, courtesy and a genuine desire to reach a constructive resolution.

3. WHAT IS A CONCERN OR COMPLAINT?

A concern is an expression of worry, dissatisfaction or a request for clarification about an aspect of school life that may be capable of being resolved informally.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about an action, decision, provision or service that the complainant believes requires a formal response or resolution.

Wherever possible, the school encourages concerns to be raised informally in the first instance. Many matters can be resolved quickly through an appropriate conversation with the relevant member of staff.

4. MATTERS THAT MAY BE RAISED

- education and academic progress;
- teaching and learning;
- Islamic education and character development;
- behaviour and pastoral support;
- wellbeing;
- homework and learning support;
- communication between home and school;
- accidents or incidents involving their child;
- SEND provision or additional support;
- relationships with other pupils;
- other matters relating directly to their child's experience at school.

General school matters or concerns that do not relate specifically to an individual child's education or welfare should normally be raised with the School Manager or another appropriate member of the school's leadership team.

If a parent or carer is unsure who to contact, they should contact the School Manager, who will advise them on the appropriate route.

Parents and carers are also welcome to provide suggestions and constructive feedback about the further development of the school.

5. WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

Apex values positive and respectful partnerships with parents and carers.

- raise concerns through the appropriate channels;
- provide accurate information to the best of their knowledge;
- allow the school reasonable time to investigate matters;
- respect the confidentiality of meetings and information relating to other pupils or members of staff;
- communicate respectfully with staff;
- avoid discussing confidential school matters on social media or other public platforms;
- avoid approaching staff in person or through personal contact details to discuss school matters outside appropriate school communication channels.

The school will likewise ensure that concerns are handled professionally, fairly and respectfully.

6. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE – CODE OF CONDUCT

The school will respond to concerns and complaints:

- confidentially, on a need-to-know basis where appropriate;
- sensitively and respectfully;
- fairly and objectively;
- with the aim of resolving matters at the earliest appropriate stage;
- in accordance with this policy and other relevant school policies;
- within reasonable and clearly communicated timescales.

The school may decline to progress a complaint where it is:

- anonymous and there is insufficient information to investigate it;
- clearly malicious or knowingly based on information the complainant knows to be false;
- repetitious or substantially identical to a matter that has already been concluded;
- submitted while an existing complaint concerning substantially the same matter is still being investigated, unless significant new information is provided;
- abusive, threatening or intimidating towards staff or other members of the school community;
- pursued in a manner that unreasonably disrupts the operation of the school.

Where the school decides that a complaint falls within one of these categories, the complainant will normally be informed of the decision and the reasons for it.

This does not prevent the school from considering relevant safeguarding, child protection or other serious concerns that come to its attention.

7. COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF

Parents and carers should use the school's official communication channels when contacting staff about pupils or school matters.

Staff should not be contacted through personal telephone numbers, personal social media accounts or other private communication channels about school-related matters.

Parents are asked not to contact staff outside reasonable school communication times for the purpose of raising concerns or complaints. Urgent safeguarding matters should be raised through the school's designated safeguarding arrangements.

8. STAGE 1 – INFORMAL CONCERN

Most concerns should be resolved at this stage.

Concerns relating to an individual child may initially be raised with the relevant class teacher or member of staff through the school's designated parent communication system, the school office, the teacher's designated communication/contact period, or an appointment arranged with the relevant member of staff.

Urgent matters should be brought to the attention of the school office without delay.

General concerns should normally be directed to the School Manager, who will either respond directly or refer the matter to the most appropriate member of staff.

The school will endeavour to respond promptly to informal concerns. Where possible, an acknowledgement or initial response will normally be provided within 2 school days; where a meeting is required, this will normally be arranged within 10 school days. Where further investigation is required, the parent will be informed of the expected timescale.

Some matters may require additional time to investigate, particularly where specialist staff are involved, or information needs to be obtained from more than one person. The school will keep parents informed where there is likely to be a delay.

A concern may be recorded by the relevant member of staff. A member of the Senior Leadership Team may be informed and, where appropriate, the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher may attend any meeting.

9. STAGE 2 – FORMAL COMPLAINT

If a concern has not been resolved at Stage 1, or if the nature of the matter requires a formal investigation, the parent or carer may make a formal complaint.

The complaint should be made in writing to the Headteacher and should clearly set out:

- the nature of the complaint;
- relevant dates, where known;
- the people involved;
- steps already taken to try to resolve the matter;
- relevant evidence or information;
- the outcome the complainant is seeking, where appropriate.

The Headteacher will acknowledge receipt and determine the appropriate person to investigate the complaint. Wherever reasonably practicable, the investigator should not have been directly involved in the matter being complained about.

The school may request further information or clarification. Where appropriate, the parent or carer may be invited to a meeting, normally within 10 school days of receiving the formal complaint.

Following the investigation, the school will provide a written response setting out the outcome, reasons for the decision, any actions to be taken where appropriate, and details of how the complainant may progress to Stage 3.

Where appropriate, an action plan may be agreed, and a follow-up meeting may be arranged.

10. STAGE 3 – PANEL REVIEW

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following the Stage 2 response, they may request that the complaint is considered by a complaints panel.

The request should normally be made in writing within 10 school days of receiving the Stage 2 outcome and should explain why the complainant remains dissatisfied.

The panel will normally consist of three individuals who have not been directly involved in the matters complained about. Where reasonably practicable, at least one member will be independent of the day-to-day management and operation of the school. The proprietor/trustees will appoint the panel.

The panel will consider the complaint fairly and objectively and review the evidence and representations presented by the complainant and the school.

The complainant will be given a reasonable opportunity to make representations and may be accompanied by a representative, where appropriate. Any representative should be notified to the school in advance.

The panel may uphold the complaint in whole or in part, not uphold the complaint, or make recommendations for further action or improvement.

The panel will provide a written outcome. The school will aim to hold the Stage 3 panel hearing within 20 school days of the Stage 2 process being concluded, wherever reasonably practicable. The panel's decision represents the school's final internal stage of the complaints procedure.

11. RECORDING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The school will maintain appropriate written records of complaints, including the complaint, relevant correspondence, meeting records, evidence considered, actions taken and outcome. Formal complaints are recorded in the school's Complaints Log, which is held centrally by the Senior Leadership Team and reviewed by Trustees.

Records will indicate whether the complaint was resolved at Stage 1, Stage 2 or Stage 3.

All complaints will be handled confidentially, and information will be shared only with those who need it to investigate or manage the complaint, subject to safeguarding, legal and regulatory requirements.

The school will retain complaints records in accordance with its record-keeping and data protection requirements.

12. UNREASONABLE OR ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Apex has a duty of care towards pupils, parents and staff and will not tolerate harassment, threatening behaviour, intimidation, discrimination or abuse.

- threatening or intimidating behaviour;
- abusive, insulting or offensive behaviour;
- discriminatory behaviour;
- repeatedly disruptive behaviour;
- personally directed behaviour towards individual members of staff;
- behaviour intended to cause distress rather than resolve a legitimate concern.

Where such behaviour occurs, the school may take reasonable and proportionate steps to protect staff and other members of the school community, including restricting communication to designated channels or requiring future meetings to take place with more than one member of staff present. The school will continue to consider any legitimate concern or safeguarding matter contained within the communication.

13. SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

A complaint relating to the safety or welfare of a child will be considered in accordance with the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Where a concern indicates that a child may be at risk of harm, the matter may need to be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or other appropriate authority rather than being dealt with solely through this complaints procedure. The school will not delay safeguarding action to complete the complaints process.

14. COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE HEADTEACHER OR PROPRIETOR

Where a complaint concerns the Headteacher, the complaint should be directed to the appropriate proprietor/trustee or person designated by the school's governance arrangements.

Where a complaint concerns the proprietor or a trustee, appropriate arrangements will be made for the complaint to be considered by an individual or panel who has not been directly involved in the matter.

15. COMPLAINTS ABOUT A PUPIL'S EDUCATION, WELFARE OR BEHAVIOUR

Parents are encouraged to raise concerns about their own child's education, welfare or behaviour through the appropriate school channels.

Information relating to another pupil will normally remain confidential. The school may therefore be unable to provide parents with details of action taken in relation to another pupil or member of staff.

16. EXTERNAL REVIEW

Where the complainant remains dissatisfied after the school's internal complaints procedure has been exhausted, they may have access to external routes depending on the nature of the complaint and the applicable statutory or regulatory framework.

The school will provide information about any appropriate external route where this applies. Nothing within this policy prevents a parent or carer from making a referral to an appropriate external authority where there is a statutory basis for doing so, particularly in relation to safeguarding or regulatory matters.

17. LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

Apex recognises that complaints can provide valuable information about how the school can improve.

- recurring themes;
- areas of concern;
- opportunities for staff development;
- improvements to policies or procedures;
- actions that may improve the experience of pupils and parents.

Complaints will be reviewed in a manner that protects the confidentiality of individuals involved.

18. ISLAMIC ETIQUETTE AND RECONCILIATION

Apex asks all members of the school community to maintain appropriate Islamic manners when dealing with disagreement.

"The believer does not insult, curse, use obscene language, or speak indecently."

Reported by al-Tirmidhi

"If any of you becomes angry, let him keep silent."

Reported by Imam Ahmad

The school encourages all parties to pause, listen carefully, avoid assumptions, and seek islah — reconciliation and resolution — wherever possible.

Our shared objective should always be the welfare and best interests of the child and the continued development of a positive partnership between home and school.

19. SUMMARY OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

STAGE 1	INFORMAL CONCERN	Raise the concern with the relevant member of staff or School Manager.
----------------	-------------------------	--

STAGE 2	FORMAL COMPLAINT	Submit the complaint in writing to the Headteacher for investigation and written outcome.
STAGE 3	PANEL REVIEW	Request a review by an appropriate complaints panel for the school's final internal outcome.

20. ANNUAL COMPLAINTS RECORD

The number of formal complaints received each academic year is recorded in the school's Complaints Log and reported to Trustees annually. A summary is published on the school website in accordance with the Independent School Standards.

Number of formal complaints received during 2025/26 - 0

PARENT / CARER FORMAL COMPLAINT FORM

Please use this form where a concern has not been resolved through the informal stage.

Parent/Carer name	
Child's name and year group	
Contact details	
Date of complaint	
Summary of complaint	
What steps have already been taken?	
What outcome are you seeking?	
Supporting documents/evidence attached?	

Declaration: I confirm that the information provided above is accurate to the best of my knowledge and that I am raising this complaint in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy.

Signature	Date

COMPLAINTS HANDLING QUICK GUIDE

For staff

- Listen calmly and allow the parent/carer to explain the concern without unnecessary interruption.
- Thank the parent/carer for raising the matter.
- Clarify the facts and distinguish between information, allegation and opinion.
- Do not discuss confidential information about another pupil or member of staff.
- Record significant concerns and agreed actions.
- Escalate safeguarding concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Where the concern cannot be resolved informally, explain the Stage 2 process.
- Keep the Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team informed where appropriate.
- Maintain professional and respectful communication throughout.

Key response times

- Stage 1: initial response normally within 2 school days; meeting normally within 10 school days where required.
- Stage 2: formal complaint acknowledged and investigated; meeting normally within 10 school days where appropriate.
- Stage 3: panel hearing aimed for within 20 school days after Stage 2 is concluded.

Timescales may need to be adjusted where a complaint is complex, involves multiple people, falls during a school holiday, or requires external information. The complainant should be informed of any significant delay.