



# Managing Serial or Unreasonable Complaints Policy

Little Ealing Primary School

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## **Managing Serial or Unreasonable Complaints Policy**

### **Little Ealing**

Little Ealing Primary School is 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 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.

### **Unreasonable complaints**

A complaint may become unreasonable if the person:

- › Has made the same complaint before, and it has already been resolved by following the school's complaints policy.
- › Makes a complaint that is obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, defamatory or repetitive.
- › Insists on pursuing an unfounded complaint, or out of scope of the complaints policy, beyond all reason.
- › Pursues a valid complaint, but unreasonably, e.g. refuses to articulate the complaint, refuses to co-operate with the complaints policy, or insists that the complaint is dealt with in ways incompatible with the complaints policy and the timeframes it sets out.
- › 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
- › Seeks unrealistic outcomes or a solution that lacks any serious purpose or value.
- › refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- › 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
- › uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- › knowingly provides falsified information
- › publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

### **Steps we will take:**

We will take every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns and give them a clear statement of our position.

If the complainant continues to contact the school in a disruptive way, we may put communication strategies in place. Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors

will communicate any concerns with the complainant before considering one or more of the following actions

We may:

- › Give the complainant a single point of contact via an email address.
- › Limit the number of times the complainant can make contact, such as a fixed number per term.
- › Ask the complainant to engage a third party to act on their behalf, such as Citizens Advice
- › Put any other strategy in place as necessary.

### **Stopping responding**

We may stop responding to the complainant when all the following factors are met:

- › We believe we have taken all reasonable steps to help address their concerns.
- › We have provided a clear statement of our position
- › The complainant contacts us repeatedly, and we believe their intention is to cause disruption or inconvenience.

Where we stop responding, we will inform the individual that we intend to do so in person and in writing. We will also explain that we will still consider any new complaints they make.

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 our school site.

### **Duplicate complaints**

If we have resolved a complaint under the procedures outlined in the Complaints Policy and receive a duplicate complaint on the same subject from a partner, family member or other individual, we will assess whether there are aspects that we had not previously considered or any new information we need to take into account.

If there are new aspects, we will follow the complaints policy.

If we are satisfied that there are no new aspects, we will:

- › Tell the new complainant that we have already investigated and responded to this issue and that the process is complete

### **Complaint campaigns**

Where the school receives a large volume of complaints about the same topic or subject, especially if these come from complainants unconnected with the school, the school may respond to these complaints by:

- › Publishing a single response on the school website
- › Sending a template response to all of the complainants

If complainants are not satisfied with the school's response or wish to pursue the complaint further, the normal complaints policy will be followed.