



Coldfall Primary and Nursery School

Complaints Policy

Date approved by Governing Board: 24 September 2026

Next planned review: September 2028

Contents

- 1 This Policy is set out in six sections as follows:
- 1.1 Section A: Introduction.
- 1.2 Section B: Raising a concern.
- 1.3 Section C: Making a complaint.
- 1.4 Section D: The complaints procedure.
- 1.5 Section E: Particular circumstances limiting complaints.
- 1.6 Section F: Governors' mediation.

Section A: Introduction

- 2 Coldfall Primary and Nursery School ('the School') welcomes feedback both positive and negative from all stakeholders and recognises that any dissatisfaction ought to be addressed promptly and reasonably.
- 3 This Policy covers all concerns or complaints about any provision of educational or community facilities and services by the School, other than those matters that are dealt with under other mandatory statutory procedures, including all matters listed in Appendix 1 to this Policy.
- 4 This Policy is primarily aimed at parents of children who are registered with the School, but it is not limited to them. Any member of the public or interested party who is directly impacted may raise a concern or make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that the School provides.
- 5 It is in everyone's interests that any dissatisfaction is resolved at the earliest opportunity. Many issues may be resolved without following any of the formal stages set out in this Policy.
- 6 This Policy therefore differentiates between dissatisfaction expressed, usually informally as a "concern" and dissatisfaction raised as a formal complaint against the School. Raising a matter informally as a concern in accordance with Section B of this Policy is not a pre-condition to initiating the Complaints Procedure in Sections C and D or the option for Governors' Mediation in Section F.
- 7 Whether an issue is raised as an informal concern or as a formal complaint, the School, and where appropriate the Governing Board, will use their best endeavours to resolve the complaint in a reasonable way.
- 8 In this Policy:
 - 8.1 "the Complainant" means the person who submits a complaint to the School.
 - 8.2 "School Day" means a day on which the School is open and children are attending in their classes for the purposes of education.

- 8.3 “Investigator” mean the individual(s) with responsibility pursuant to paragraph 29 in this Policy for completing the Stage 1 investigation and producing the written response in accordance with paragraphs 30 - 31 in this Policy.
- 8.4 “in writing” and “written” mean any form of written communication including manuscript notes, letters and email but excluding texts, WhatsApp, social media and similar.
- 8.5 “parent(s)” means adults with parental responsibility for a child on the School’s roll.
- 8.6 “complaints procedure” means the process outlined in Sections C and D in this Policy.

Section B: Raising concerns

- 9 A concern may be defined as ‘*an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought*’.
- 10 A concern can be raised in person, in writing or by telephone and by a third party as long as they have appropriate consent and authority to do so.
- 11 Concerns should first be raised with either the class teacher or the relevant Year Team Leader as appropriate.
- 12 If the concern is unrelated to teaching or if the individual has legitimate and reasonable grounds for preferring to discuss the concern with someone other than the class teacher or the relevant Year Team Leader, the concern should be addressed to the School’s Complaints Coordinator (who can be contacted by email at office@coldfall.haringey.sch.uk). The School’s Complaints Coordinator will refer the concern to another staff member. This member of staff may be more senior but does not need to be: the ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.
- 13 The School takes all concerns seriously and will make every effort to reasonably resolve the concern as quickly as possible. The School will respond to the concern in writing, via a meeting or in a telephone call as appears most suitable to the issues raised. When responding to a concern, the School may if appropriate offer one or more of the following:
- 13.1 An explanation.
- 13.2 An acknowledgement that the situation could have been handled differently or better.
- 13.3 An assurance that the School will try to ensure that the events giving rise to the concern will not recur.
- 13.4 An explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to try to ensure that the events giving rise to the concern will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any relevant changes will be implemented.
- 13.5 An undertaking to review School policies in light of the complaint.
- 13.6 An apology.

- 14 If the individual raising the concern is dissatisfied with the School's response and wishes to pursue the matter further, a formal complaint may be made pursuant to Sections C and D of this Policy. Alternatively, reference may be made to the Governors' Mediation process in Section F.

Section C: Initiating a complaint

General

- 15 A complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. Complaints may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of the Complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent and authority to do so.
- 16 Ideally, complaints should be made in writing so that there is certainty over the nature of the complaint being made.
- 17 For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at Appendix 2 to this policy. If help is required to complete the form, the Complainant may request assistance from the School office or from any third party organisations, for example, Citizens Advice.
- 18 In accordance with equality law, the School will consider making reasonable adjustments, if required, to enable Complainants to access and comply with this Policy: for example by providing information in alternative formats, assisting Complainants in raising a formal complaint and/or holding meetings in accessible locations.
- 19 If reasonable and appropriate, the School may process complaints made verbally but in order to avoid any delay in processing the complaint, in such cases the School will request that the Complainant provide as much information as possible and make it clear that the issue raised is a formal complaint. In the case of complaints made verbally, the School will ordinarily provide the Complainant with a written summary of the complaint and ask the Complainant to confirm same.

Submitting the complaint

- 20 Complaints should be submitted to the School's Complaints Coordinator either by e-mail at office@coldfall.haringey.sch.uk, by hand or by post addressed to the School's Complaints Coordinator, care of the School office, except in the following circumstances:
- 20.1 Complaints against School staff (except the Head Teacher) should be made in the first instance to the Head Teacher via the School office (or by e-mail to office@coldfall.haringey.sch.uk) and should be marked, "Complaint - private and confidential – for the attention of the Head Teacher".
- 20.2 Complaints that involve or are about the Head Teacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors via the School office (or by e-mail office@coldfall.haringey.sch.uk) and should be marked, "Complaint - private and confidential – for the attention of the Chair of the Governing Board".
- 20.3 Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual Governor or the entire Governing Board should be addressed to the clerk to the governing board via the School office, (or by e-mail office@coldfall.haringey.sch.uk) and should be marked, "Complaint – private and confidential – for the attention of the clerk to the Governing Board".

- 20.4 All complaints must be described as such, reference "Stage 1" and express a clear intention to proceed to Stage 1.
- 21 If a complaint is not marked in line with paragraph 20 above, the School's Complaints Coordinator will review the substance of the complaint and forward it to the appropriate recipient.
- 22 Complainants should not approach School Governors in person to make complaints. School Governors have no power to act on an individual basis and disclosure of the nature of a complaint to a School Governor may disqualify that Governor from any further participation in the Stages outlined in Sections C and D of this Policy.

Timescales

- 23 Complainants must submit the complaint to the School within thirty (30) School Days of the incident giving rise to the complaint, or, where the complaint arises out of a series of directly connected incidents, within thirty (30) School Days of the most recent of these incidents.
- 24 If a complaint is received by the School on a day that is not a School Day, it will be treated as having been received on the first School Day immediately following.
- 25 Where a complaint has been submitted in accordance with this Section C, then the Complaints Procedure in Section D will apply unless the Complainant opts for Governors' mediation pursuant to Section F.
- 26 If a Complainant wants to withdraw the complaint in whole or in part at any time, this should be confirmed in writing to the School and/or the Governors if appropriate.

Section D: The complaints procedure

- 27 The School's procedure for dealing with complaints is divided into Stages 1 and 2 as follows.

Stage 1

- 28 When the School receives a complaint submitted in accordance with Section C, the School's Complaints Coordinator will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the Complainant in writing (either by letter or email) within (five) 5 School Days. Within this acknowledgement if appropriate, the School's Complaints Coordinator may:
- 28.1 Advise the Complainant as to which recipient the complaint will be addressed in line with paragraph 20 above; and/or,
- 28.2 Seek to clarify the nature of the complaint and invite the Complainant to indicate what remains unresolved and what outcome(s) the Complainant would like to see; and/or,
- 28.3 Propose a face to face meeting as the most appropriate means of achieving any necessary clarification of the complaint; and/or,
- 28.4 Draw attention to the option for Governors' mediation pursuant to Section F of this Policy.
- 29 As soon as is practicable and no later than ten (10) School Days after the complaint is received by the School in accordance with Section C of this Policy, the School will commence an

investigation into the complaint. The investigation will ordinarily be undertaken by the Head Teacher except where:

- 29.1 If the complaint concerns the Head Teacher or a member of the Governing Board (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), one or more suitably skilled Governors will be appointed to complete the investigation and prepare the written response in accordance with paragraphs 30 – 31 below.
- 29.2 If the complaint is concerns the Chair, the Vice chair, the entire Governing Board, or the majority of the Governing Board, an independent investigator appointed by the Governing Board will complete the investigation and prepare the written response in accordance with paragraphs 30 – 31 below.
- 29.3 If appropriate, the Head Teacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the School's senior leadership team but not any decisions to be taken as part of the written response, which will remain the Head Teacher's responsibility.
- 30 During the investigation, the Investigator will:
 - 30.1 If necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
 - 30.2 Keep a written summary record of any meetings/interviews in relation to the investigation.
 - 30.3 If necessary or appropriate, invite further comments from the Complainant or School staff.
- 31 At the conclusion of the investigation, the Investigator will provide a formal written response to the Complainant within fifteen (15) School Days of the date that the School received the complaint in accordance with Section C of this Policy. If the Investigator is unable to meet this deadline, the Investigator will advise the Complainant of a revised deadline.
- 32 The written response should:
 - 32.1 Summarise any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a reasoned explanation of the decision(s) made in relation to the complaint.
 - 32.2 Where appropriate, the written response will include details of actions the School will take to resolve the complaint including any of the actions listed in paragraph 13 of this Policy, if applicable
 - 32.3 Advise the Complainant of how to escalate the complaint to Stage 2 should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.
- 33 All communications emanating from the School and/or the Investigator in connection with Stage 1 should be marked, "Complaint – Stage 1".

Stage 1 Time limits

- 34 If a complaint is received more than thirty (30) School Days after the incident giving rise to the complaint, or, where the complaint arises out of a series of directly connected incidents, the complaint is received more than thirty (30) School Days after the most recent of these incidents, then:
 - 34.1 This Policy will not be engaged and the School will be under no obligation to process the complaint as a Stage 1 complaint in accordance with this Policy.

34.2 The complaint may nonetheless be processed as a Stage 1 complaint in accordance with this Policy if the Investigator is satisfied that:

34.2.1 Exceptional circumstances prevented the submission of the complaint at any earlier time; or,

34.2.2 The complaint raises issues of general importance to the School that merit review via Stage 1.

Stage 2

35 If the Complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, the Complainant can escalate the complaint to Stage 2, whereby the complaint is considered by a Complaints Panel of School Governors ('the Panel').

36 A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the School's Complaints Coordinator via the School office, within ten (10) School Days of the Complainant's receipt of the Stage 1 written response. The request must reference "Stage 2" and express a clear intention to proceed to Stage 2.

37 The School's Complaints Coordinator will record the date the Stage 2 request is received and acknowledge receipt of the Stage 2 request to the Complainant in writing (either by letter or email) within three (3) School Days.

38 All communications emanating from the School, and/or the Governors in connection with Stage 2 will be marked "Complaint – Stage 2".

Stage 2 Time limits

39 Notwithstanding any acknowledgement issued by the School's Complaints Coordinator, if the Stage 2 request is received more than ten (10) School Days after the Complainant's receipt of the Stage 1 written response, then:

39.1 This Policy will not be engaged and the School Governors will be under no obligation to process the complaint as a Stage 2 complaint in accordance with this Policy.

39.2 The complaint may nonetheless be processed as a Stage 2 complaint in accordance with this Policy if the Chair of the Governing Board is satisfied that:

39.2.1 Exceptional circumstances prevented the submission of the Stage 2 complaint at any earlier time; or,

39.2.2 The complaint raises issues of general importance to the School that merit review via Stage 2.

The Panel

40 The Panel will be formed of three impartial Governors from the School's Governing Board. If there are fewer than three impartial Governors available, the Panel may include substitute governors sourced via another local school or through the local authority's governor services team.

41 The names of the Governors forming the Panel will be notified to the Complainant and the School as soon as their appointments are confirmed. The Panel will decide amongst themselves who will

act as the Chair of the Panel. The Chair of the Panel will ordinarily act as the principal conduit for exchanges between the Panel, the Complainant and the School.

- 42 Unless there are any reasonable grounds for doubt, (such grounds to be notified promptly to the School by the Complainant or the School), the impartiality of the Governors on the Panel will be assumed if the Governors have no prior knowledge of the substance of the complaint and no pre-existing relationship of any kind with the Complainant and the Complainant's immediate family.

Written representations in place of a Panel meeting

- 43 Following an initial review of the complaint, the Panel may elect to complete the Stage 2 process without a Panel hearing on the basis of the paperwork only, to include any further written representations provided by the Complainant and the School.
- 44 Any such election must be communicated promptly to the Complainant and the School and must include:
- 44.1 An explanation of the Panel's rationale in electing to consider the complaint on the basis of the paperwork only; and,
- 44.2 An invitation to both the Complainant and the School to make submissions in favour of a Panel meeting, if preferred.
- 45 The Panel should be sensitive to the Complainant's needs and may at any time reverse its election and make arrangements for a Panel hearing in accordance with paragraphs 47 – 70 in this Policy. However the Panel is under no obligation to do so, irrespective of any submissions made by the Complainant or the School.
- 46 Where the Panel elects to complete the Stage 2 process without a Panel hearing but on the basis of the paperwork only, the Panel's decision in writing, with reasons, must be circulated to the Complainant and the School within twenty-five (25) School Days of the date of the School's receipt of the Stage 2 request. This period may be extended in the Panel's discretion if the Panel is for *bona fide* reasons unable to meet this deadline, but the Panel should use best endeavours to ensure that publication of their decision is not unnecessarily delayed.

The Stage 2 Panel meeting

- 47 If a Panel meeting is required, the procedure will be as follows:

Fixing the meeting

- 48 The Panel will make arrangements to appoint an independent clerk to the Panel ('the Clerk'). The Clerk is independent of the School and the Panel and will have no involvement in the Panel's decision making in connection with the complaint. The name of the Clerk will be notified to the Complainant and the School as soon as his/her appointment is confirmed. Thereafter all communications made in connection with the Stage 2 complaint should be copied to the Clerk, the Panel, the Complainant and the School.
- 49 The Panel will write to the Complainant and the School to inform them of the proposed date for the Panel meeting, which should be within (twenty) 20 School Days of receipt by the School of the Stage 2 request.

- 50 If the first proposed date for the Panel meeting is inconvenient for the Complainant, alternative dates, including dates falling outside of the twenty (20) School Day period, should be considered and agreed between the Complainant, the School and the Panel.
- 51 The Panel may proceed to consider the complaint on the basis of written representations only, in line with paragraphs 43 - 46 in this Policy if:
- 51.1 The Complainant and/or the School rejects all proposed dates for the meeting;
- 51.2 The Complainant and/or the School fails to engage with the Panel in connection with attempting to fix a date for the meeting; or,
- 51.3 The Panel concludes that it is not going to be possible to fix a mutually convenient hearing within a reasonably expedient period.
- 52 If a Panel meeting takes place, then the venue for the meeting will usually be a convenient and accessible location on the School's premises, unless the Panel reasonably considers that an alternative venue would be more appropriate.
- 53 At least (seven) 7 School Days before the date fixed for the Panel meeting, the Panel will confirm and notify the Complainant of the date, time and venue for the meeting. (Ordinarily a full day will be allowed for the meeting although the Panel are not bound to use the full day.)
- 54 Any written material to be considered by the Panel at the meeting must have been circulated to the Panel, the Complainant and the School at least five (5) School Days before the date of the meeting:
- 54.1 The Panel will be under no obligation to consider any written material that has not been shared between all participants at least five (5) School Days before the date of the meeting.
- 54.2 The Panel may in its discretion consider any material that has been provided less than five (5) School Days before the date of the meeting but is not obliged to do so.

Attendees

- 55 At the meeting:
- 55.1 The Complainant may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or a friend.
- 55.2 Both the Complainant and the School are at liberty to appoint a professional adviser to represent them in the complaints procedure including at the Panel meeting.
- 56 The Complainant and the School will each be responsible for notifying any witnesses upon whom they propose to rely of the time and place of the meeting and for making arrangements for the witnesses' attendance at the meeting. Neither the Clerk nor the Panel has any powers to compel attendance by witnesses.
- 57 At least three (3) School Days before the meeting, the Complainant and the School should provide to the Panel, to the Clerk and to each other details of the individuals who it is proposed will be attending the meeting in person to include:
- 57.1 The names of their proposed representatives at the Panel meeting (i.e. the people who are expected to do most of the speaking on the Complainant/School's behalf).

- 57.2 The names of the individuals who will be attending the meeting as witnesses, if any.
- 57.3 The names of any other attendees, to include any professional advisers.
- 58 If the information provided to the Panel pursuant to paragraph 57 in this Policy suggests that the proposed venue for the meeting may be inappropriate, the venue may be changed in the Panel's discretion.

Procedure for the Panel meeting

- 59 The Panel meeting will be private and confidential. Electronic recordings of the meetings and any connected discussions are prohibited unless the Complainant's own disability or special needs require it, such requirements to be advised to the Panel at least five (5) School Days in advance of the meeting. The prior consent of all attendees must be confirmed before the recording of any discussions takes place. Such consent will be noted in any minutes taken.
- 60 The Panel may request that any portable electronic devices of any kind be removed from the meeting room.
- 61 Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend the meeting.
- 62 When conducting the meeting the Panel will follow the guidance set out in the Best Practice Guidance for School Complaints Procedures 2019 (as updated). See:
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-complaints-procedures/best-practice-advice-for-school-complaints-procedures-2019>)
- 63 The Panel is otherwise free to adopt a procedure for the meeting that is reasonable and accords with the principles of natural justice.
- 64 Ideally, Panel meetings should resemble an informal but structured and calm discussion. In particular:
- 64.1 The Complainant will be given an opportunity to explain the complaint by reference to documents and witnesses if appropriate and the School will be entitled to respond.
- 64.2 The Panel will be entitled to ask questions of the Complainant, the School and any witnesses who attend the meeting.
- 64.3 The Panel will not normally accept as evidence recordings of conversations or video evidence of any kind.
- 64.4 The Panel is not obliged to consider any new complaints or evidence unrelated to the complaint that is being considered.
- 64.5 As per paragraph 54 in this Policy, the Panel is not obliged to consider any material provided outside of the time limits set out above or any material that has not been circulated to the Panel, the Complainant and the School.
- 64.6 Witnesses will not be put on oath but will be reminded to tell the truth and to answer any questions to the best of their ability.
- 64.7 Attendees will be addressed as "Ms", "Mr" etc.

64.8 Offensive and aggressive language or behaviour will not be tolerated. If after due warning such language or behaviour is continued, the Panel may in its discretion bring the meeting to an end and:

64.8.1 Proceed to issue its decision on the basis of the submissions made up to that point; and/or

64.8.2 Suspend or terminate the complaints procedure.

The Panel's decision

65 Once both the Complainant and the School have been allowed sufficient time to set out their positions the Panel will bring the meeting to a close. The Panel will then consider the submissions and evidence presented and will come to a decision in respect of the complaint. At the end of the meeting, the Panel should:

65.1 Verbally advise the Complainant and the School of its decision. In this event a written explanation of the decision, with reasons, must be circulated to the Complainant and the School within five (5) School Days of the date of the meeting; or,

65.2 Indicate to the Complainant and the School that its decision in writing with reasons, will be circulated within five (5) School Days of the date of the meeting.

66 The periods in paragraphs 65.1 and 65.2 in this Policy may be extended in the Panel's discretion if the Panel is for *bona fide* reasons unable to meet these deadline but Panels should use best endeavours to ensure that publication of their decision is not unnecessarily delayed.

67 In its decision, the Panel can:

67.1 Uphold the complaint in whole or in part;

67.2 Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

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

68.1 Advise on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;

68.2 Where appropriate, recommend changes to the School's systems or procedures with the aim of preventing similar issues occurring in the future.

69 When communicating the decision to the Complainant, the Panel must explain that if dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, the Complainant may refer the matter to the Department for Education ('the DfE').

70 The Clerk will prepare a non-verbatim minute of the Panel meeting that will summarise the main points discussed. The minute will be circulated to the Complainant and the School within a reasonable time after the meeting.

Post Stage 2

71 If the Complainant believes the School and/or the Panel did not handle the complaint in accordance with this Policy or otherwise acted unlawfully or unreasonably in connection with the complaint, the Complainant can contact the DfE after the Stage 2 decision has been issued.

- 72 The Complainant can refer the complaint to the DfE 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

- 73 If the complaint is referred to the DfE, then ordinarily:

- 73.1 The DfE will consider only whether the School has adhered to this Policy, any education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.
- 73.2 The DfE will not normally re-investigate the substance of complaints or overturn any Stage 2 decisions: in this respect the DfE will not exercise any appellate capacity in relation to the Panel's Stage 2 decision.

Section E: Particular circumstances limiting complaints

- 74 The following provisions apply to Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints and the relevant powers are equally exercisable by the Investigator or the Panel as appropriate.

Anonymous complaints

- 75 Neither the Investigator nor the Panel are under any obligation to consider complaints:
- 75.1 Made anonymously.
- 75.2 Made in circumstances where the identity of the Complainant is open to doubt.
- 75.3 Made in circumstances where there are reasonable grounds for believing that the complaint is being advanced on behalf of an unidentified third party.
- 76 In each case the Head Teacher and/or Chair of the Governing Board will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation and respond as is appropriate.

Parallel investigations

- 77 If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority safeguarding teams or other tribunals, this may impact on the School's ability to follow this Policy and may result in the complaints procedure being suspended at the discretion of the Investigator/the Panel. If so, the Investigator/the Panel will promptly notify the Complainant as appropriate. Any ongoing complaint procedure under this Policy will remain suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations, unless the Investigator/the Panel and the Complainant both agree that the procedure can be re-commenced.

Legal proceedings

- 78 If at any time a Complainant commences legal action against the School in relation to any matter arising out of or in connection with the complaint, the Investigator/the Panel may in its

discretion elect to suspend the complaints procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded and will promptly notify the Complainant of any such election. Any ongoing complaint procedure under this Policy will remain suspended until legal proceedings (including appeals) have been completed unless the Investigator/the Panel and the Complainant both agree that the procedure can be re-commenced.

Duplicate complaints

- 79 If, at any stage during a complaints procedure under this Policy, the School receives a duplicate or substantially similar complaint from someone other than the Complainant ('the Duplicate Complainant'), the Investigator/the Panel may respond to the Duplicate Complainant that where it is already considering the complaint, the duplicate or substantially similar complaint will not be proceeded with.
- 80 In these circumstances:
- 80.1 The Investigator/the Panel may, without the Complainant's consent, release the written response and/or Panel decision to the Duplicate Complainant, subject to any reasonable redaction to preserve anonymity.
- 80.2 Vis-à-vis any Panel decision, the Duplicate Complainant will have the same rights as the Complainant pursuant to paragraphs 71 - 73 of this Policy.

Complaint campaigns

- 81 If the School receives what it reasonably considers to be a large volume of complaints, all based on the same subject and/or apparently from Complainants not connected to the School, then the School will treat these complaints as being part of a complaints campaign and may respond in one of the following two ways, depending upon the nature and scale of the complaint:
- 81.1 Send the same response to all Complainants; or
- 81.2 Publish a single response on the School's website.
- 82 In this event, the Investigator/the Panel will be under no obligation to process a complaint forming part of a complaints campaign pursuant to this Policy.

Serial complaints and unreasonable behaviour

- 83 The School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly, impartially and promptly and will not normally limit the contact Complainants have with the School.
- 84 Nevertheless, the School does not expect its staff nor the Governors to be required to tolerate unacceptable behaviour, in writing or verbally, and will take necessary action to protect staff and Governors from abusive, offensive or threatening behaviour including when such behaviour occurs in connection with a complaint.
- 85 The School characterises unreasonable behaviour as language, acts and omissions which hinder the efficient consideration of complaints, including but not limited to situations in which the Complainant:
- 85.1 Refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of the complaint or the outcomes sought, despite offers of assistance;

- 85.2 Refuses to cooperate with the complaints procedure;
- 85.3 Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure;
- 85.4 Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways that are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice;
- 85.5 Introduces trivial or irrelevant information;
- 85.6 Raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered immediately or to their own unilateral timescales;
- 85.7 Makes unjustified complaints about staff or Governors who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced;
- 85.8 Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds;
- 85.9 Repeatedly makes the same complaint;
- 85.10 Refuses without good cause to accept the findings made in the written response, in the Panel's decision or by the DfE;
- 85.11 Seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- 85.12 Uses abusive, offensive, or discriminatory language or violence;
- 85.13 Knowingly provides false information and/or;
- 85.14 Publishes unacceptable information on social media, in the press or other public forums of any kind.
- 86 If after due warning the unreasonable behaviour continues then the Investigator/the Panel may in its discretion by notice to the Complainant:
 - 86.1 Specify particular methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan; and/or,
 - 86.2 Suspend or terminate the complaints procedure.
- 87 In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence or threats of violence, the School will immediately inform police and communicate its response in writing to the Complainant, which may include barring an individual from the School premises.

Persistent Correspondence

- 88 If Complainants frequently contact the School, causing a significant level of disruption but refuse to engage with the complaints procedure, the School can:
 - 88.1 Restrict the Complainant to a single point of contact via an email address; and/or
 - 88.2 Limit the number of times the Complainant can make contact.
- 89 This restriction will be limited to the Complainant's communications in connection with the complaint. For all other issues the Complainant may contact the School as normal.

Use of AI

- 90 The use of AI tools to assist with the wording, structure or clarity of a complaint is acceptable. The Complainant and the School will in all cases be personally responsible for the content and accuracy of any written submission made in their name and should have read and verified same before circulation.
- 91 Nonetheless, if the Investigator/the Panel considers that written submissions produced by AI (or otherwise) are excessive in volume, repetitious or irrelevant, such as to prejudice the effective operation of this Policy then:
- 91.1 The Investigator/the Panel may require the Complainant or the School as appropriate to submit a precis of the complaint without the use of AI.
- 91.2 If after due warning the Complainant or the School declines to do so, the Investigator/the Panel may by notice suspend or terminate the complaints procedure.

Exceptional circumstances

- 92 If it appears that the complaints procedure will require the expenditure of disproportionate volumes of time, resources and money but is otherwise unlikely to generate any substantive benefits for the Complainant or the School, the Investigator/the Panel may bring the Stage 1/Stage 2 procedure to an end without issuing a written response/decision.
- 93 This power will only be exercisable by the Investigator/the Panel in exceptional circumstances, to include but not be limited to the following scenarios:
- 93.1 Where the complaint concerns a child who has been permanently removed from the School roll.
- 93.2 Where it is clear that reconciliation between the School and the Complainant is going to be impossible to achieve.

General reservation

- 94 The School and/or the Governing Board will generally reserve its right to take reasonable preventative action up to and including suspending the complaints procedure by written notice to the Complainant if it appears that the provisions of this Policy are being abused or are being used for an improper purpose.

Section F: Governors' mediation

- 95 The School's Governing Board is independent from the School's Senior Leadership Team and is able to offer an alternative forum to parents for raising issues that might found a concern or a complaint.
- 96 The primary aim of Governors' mediation will be to consider and hopefully resolve to the parent's satisfaction an issue that might otherwise be raised as a concern or as a Stage 1/Stage 2 complaint.

Request for Governors' mediation

- 97 Governors' mediation may be requested by a parent at any time via notification to the School office (or by e-mail to office@coldfall.haringey.sch.uk) marked "Request for Governors' mediation – private and confidential – for the attention of the clerk to the Governing Board".
- 98 Upon receipt of a request, the clerk to the Governing Board will liaise with the Chair and aim to confirm to the parent within five (5) School Days the name(s) of the governor(s) available to participate in the mediation.
- 99 Any Governors acting as the Investigator in an ongoing Stage 1 investigation or forming part of a Panel in an ongoing Stage 2 procedure will not be permitted to participate in Governors' mediation unless the Complainant consents in writing.

The procedure

- 100 Governors' mediation will be largely informal but the procedure should encompass:
- 100.1 A meeting, either in person or on line, to take place within fifteen (15) School Days of the request, between the Governor(s) and the parent at which the issue can be fully ventilated. At the meeting the Governor(s)' primary obligation will be to listen.
- 100.2 If not otherwise discussed at the meeting, within ten (10) School Days thereafter, the Governor(s) should verbally advise the parent of a recommended way forward.
- 100.3 The option for a further meeting with the parent to review any recommendation.
- 100.4 An indication from the parent that the recommendation has/has not dealt with the issue satisfactorily.
- 101 In the event a request for Governors' mediation is submitted during an ongoing Stage 1 or Stage 2 procedure then the time periods in this Policy (including those set out in paragraphs 23, 34, 46, 49 and 65 above) will be suspended from the date that Governors' mediation is requested until the date of the parent's notification pursuant to paragraph 100.4.

Appendix 1

Matters excepted from the scope of this Policy.

Exceptions	Who to contact
• Admissions • Statutory assessments of special educational needs • School re-organisation proposals	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of special educational needs or school reorganisation proposals should be raised with LB Haringey.
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection 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).
Exclusion of children from school	Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions .
Whistleblowing	The School has 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 whistle-blowers 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 the School should complain through the School's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the local authority or the DfE (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 may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
National curriculum – content	Please contact the DfE at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus

Appendix 2: Template complaint form

The complaint form can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.cognitoforms.com/ColdfallPrimarySchool/ComplaintForm>

Please fill in the online form or print out and complete same and return it to the School office marked, "For the attention of the School's Complaint Coordinator".