



Complaints Procedure

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

Governor's Committee: CCSW

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Next review date: Spring 2026

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Headteacher

The Limpsfield Grange Values

At Limpsfield Grange we believe in working together to make a difference.

We are a tolerant community; we accept value and understand others.

We care for all members of our community without judgement.

We are responsible for our own learning, behaviour and actions.

We accept that sometimes things go wrong. We work together to take responsibility for our mistakes and for putting things right.

We are a respectful community and we treat others as we would like to be treated, even if they have different views and opinions to our own.

We understand that good behaviour helps us to prepare for life beyond Limpsfield Grange.

We are positive and resilient. We celebrate difference in everything that we do.

We are all proud to be part of the Limpsfield Grange community.

September 2025

Limpsfield Grange School

Complaints Procedure 2025

Limpsfield Grange School aims to meet its statutory obligations when responding to complaints from parents and carers of students at the school, and others.

When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial;
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation;
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response;
- Respect complainants' desire for confidentiality;
- Treat complainants with respect and courtesy;
- Make sure that any decisions we make are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate, in line with the principles of administrative law.

We try to resolve concerns or complaints by informal means wherever possible. Where this is not possible, formal procedures will be followed.

Throughout the process, Limpsfield Grange School will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved, and make reasonable adjustments needed to accommodate individuals.

This document meets the requirements of section 29 of the Education Act 2002, which states that schools must have and make available a procedure to deal with all complaints relating to their school and to any community facilities or services that the school provides.

It is also based on guidance for schools on complaints procedures from the Department for Education (DfE).

Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Limpsfield Grange School 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. Limpsfield Grange 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, you will be referred to another member of staff. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, you will be referred to another staff member.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Limpsfield Grange 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 can be raised in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of the person with the concern, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so. Concerns should be raised with your child's Form Tutor or subject teacher in the first instance.

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 a later stage of the procedure.

Complaints against school staff, except the Headteacher, should be made in the first instance, to the Headteacher via email (head@limpsfield-grange.surrey.sch.uk).

Complaints that involve or are about the Headteacher should be addressed to Jackie Tanner the Chair of Governors, via the Clerk to Governors by email (clerk@limpsfield-grange.surrey.sch.uk).

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual Governor or the whole Governing Body should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body via email (clerk@limpsfield-grange.surrey.sch.uk).

If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint, using the Limpsfield Grange Complaint Form (Appendix B). 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 investigate anonymous complaints.

Timescale for making a complaint

Any complaint must be raised within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents.

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 the complaints procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Limpsfield Grange 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 the students placing Local Authority.
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.
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 (available on the school's website) can be made through the Limpsfield Grange 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 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 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 Grievance policy and 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 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 the school's 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 this happens, the school will inform the complainant of a proposed new timescale.

If a complainant commences legal action against Limpsfield Grange in relation to their complaint, the school will suspend the complaints procedure until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Limpsfield Grange wishes 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 about 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.

Formal complaints

Stage 1

Formal complaints must be made to the Headteacher (unless they are about the Headteacher), via email head@limpsfield-grange.surrey.sch.uk on the Limpsfield Grange complaint form (Appendix B).

The Headteacher will record the date the Limpsfield Grange complaint form is received and will acknowledge receipt of the Limpsfield Grange complaint form in writing (via email) within 5 school days. Within this response, the Headteacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see.

Note: The Headteacher 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 Headteacher (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 Headteacher will provide a formal written response within 15 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

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 Limpsfield Grange School will take to resolve the complaint.

The Headteacher will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they feel that Stage 1 was not adequately investigated.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, 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.

Complaints about the Headteacher or member of the Governing Body must be made to the Clerk, via email clerk@limpsfield-grange.surrey.sch.uk

If the complaint is:

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

Stage 1 will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the Governing Body. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

Stage 2 review

If the complainant feels that their complaint was not adequately investigated at Stage 1, they can escalate the complaint to a Stage 2 review. The Stage 2 review comprises of a meeting with members of the Governing Body's Complaints Committee, which will be formed of the first three, impartial, Governors available. This is the final stage of the Limpsfield Grange complaints procedure.

A request to escalate to a Stage 2 review must be made to the Clerk, by email clerk@limpsfield-grange.surrey.sch.uk within 10 school days of receipt of the Stage 1 response. The complainant must complete the Limpsfield Grange School request for a Stage 2 review of a complaint form. (Appendix C).

The Clerk will record the date the request for a Stage 2 review of a complaint form is received and acknowledge receipt in writing (via email) within 5 school days.

Requests for a Stage 2 review of a complaint received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply (for example a bereavement or a significant unexpected family incident.)

The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the Governor Complaints Committee meeting. The Clerk will aim to convene a meeting of the Governor Complaints Committee within 40 school days of receipt of request for a Stage 2 review of a complaint form. If this is not possible, the Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

The Governor 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 Limpsfield Grange School available, the Clerk 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 for the Stage 2 review.

The Governor's Complaints Committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting, or through considering the written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainants 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.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least 15 school days before the meeting, the Clerk will:

- Confirm and notify the complainant of the date and time 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.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 3 school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained without the written consent of all parties being recorded.

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. The committee will consider the complaint and all the written evidence presented. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations will not be permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it, and in these circumstances the Clerk will make the sole recording of the meeting. Prior knowledge and written consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will also be recorded in any minutes taken.

The committee can:

- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part.
- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

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 Limpsfield Grange's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and Limpsfield Grange School 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 Limpsfield Grange School.

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 review will be heard by a committee of independent Governors.

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 Limpsfield Grange School 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 that Limpsfield Grange 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 the Stage 2 review.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Limpsfield Grange. They will consider whether Limpsfield Grange 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.

Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

The complainant will:

- Explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- Co-operate with the school in seeking a resolution to the complaint
- Respond promptly to requests for information 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 provide a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:

- Sensitive and thorough dialogue with the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved
- Interviewing staff and other people relevant to the complaint
- Consideration of records and other relevant information
- Analysing information
- Liaising with the complainant and the Clerk as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right

Clerk to the Stage 2 review Governor Complaints Committee Meeting

The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the panel 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
- Collate any written material relevant to the complaint and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale
- Record the proceedings
- Notify all parties of the meeting's decision

Governor Complaints Committee Chair

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

- Both parties are asked (via the Clerk) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting
- The remit of the committee is explained to the complainant
- Written material is seen by everyone involved, 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 discussion in the meeting

- Both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, through written submissions ahead of the meeting
- 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 Clerk

Committee Members

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.
- The committee should respect the views of the child/young person (if submitted) and give them equal consideration to those of adults.
- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

Procedure for managing serial and unacceptable complaints

Limpsfield Grange is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. 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.

Limpsfield Grange defines unacceptable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of any complaint because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, including but not limited to, 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 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
- 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 staff or Governors
- Uses abusive, offensive defamatory or discriminatory language or violence
- Knowingly provides falsified or inaccurate information
- Publishes information about the complaint on social media or other public forums

Complainants should limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed.

Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will communicate any concerns with the complainant informally before determining that their behaviour is unacceptable.

If the behaviour continues, the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unacceptable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Limpsfield Grange causing a significant level of disruption, we may implement a communication plan. This will be reviewed after three 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 the Limpsfield Grange site.

Procedure for managing complaint campaigns

In the rare event that the school receives a large volume of complaints all based on the same subject, from complainants unconnected with the school, we will either send a template response to all complainants or publish a single response on the school's website.

Area Schools Support Service

The role of the Area Schools Support Service is to provide impartial advice and guidance to school staff, Governors and complainants at all stages of the complaints process.

The school may share data and seek advice from the Area Schools Support Service in the management of a concern or complaint in the interests of performing a task which is in the public interest.

West Surrey Area Schools Officers	Kate Charles – 07792 587096 – kate.charles@surreycc.gov.uk Cara Harding – 07968 834131 – cara.harding@surreycc.gov.uk
East Surrey Area Schools Officers	Ann Panton – 07976 924186 – ann.panton@surreycc.gov.uk Adelina (Addy) Mason - 07814 804432 – adelina.mason@surreycc.gov.uk
Team Email	school.relationships@surreycc.gov.uk

Related Policies

- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy including guidance on Anti Bullying
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Lettings Policy
- Lone Working Procedures
- Missing Student Policy and Procedure
- Online Safety & Digital Resilience Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Staff Behaviour Policy and Acceptable use of Technology Code of Conduct
- Student Health and Medication Administration Policy
- Whistle-Blowing Policy

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually in line with guidance received from Surrey County Council and from the Department of Education.

The Governing Body of Limpsfield Grange School adopted this policy on:

It will be reviewed on:

Signed

Dated

Appendix A – School contact details

<p>Limpsfield Grange School 89 Bluehouse Lane Oxted Surrey RH8 0RZ</p> <p>Tel: 01883 713 928</p> <p>secretary@limpsfield-grange.surrey.sch.uk</p>	<p><i>Mrs S Wild, Headteacher</i> head@limpsfield-grange.surrey.sch.uk</p> <p><i>Mrs J Tanner Chair of Governors</i> mrs.tanner@limpsfield-grange.surrey.sch.uk</p> <p><i>Clerk to the Governing Body</i> clerk@limpsfield-grange.surrey.sch.uk</p>
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Appendix B

Complaint Form – Stage 1

Please complete and return to Headteacher via email on head@limpsfield-grange.surrey.sch.uk who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Student's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the student (if relevant):
Email: Telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.
What would you like to happen?
Please list and attach any supporting documentation.
Signature: Date:

Appendix C

Request for a Stage 2 review of a complaint

Please complete and return to the Clerk clerk@limpsfield-grange.surrey.sch.uk

Your name:
Student's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the student (if relevant):
Email: Telephone number:
Please give details outlining how your complaint was inadequately investigated at Stage 1.
What would you like to happen?
Please list and attach any supporting documentation to support your view that your Stage 1 complaint was inadequately investigated.
Signature: Date: