Complaints Policy 2025-2026

Designation	Name	Date	Signature
Chair of Governors	Adam Coates		
Headteacher	Jemma Southgate		

Governor Committee Responsible: Personnel Committee

Staff Lead: Headteacher

Status:

Review Cycle: annually

Last Review: October 2026

Next Review Date: October 2027

General Principles:

1. This procedure is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school, or the services that it provides. A concern or unresolved problem becomes a complaint only when someone asserts that a school has acted wrongly in some significant decision, action or failure to take action. A complaint can be brought by a parent of a registered child at the school, a person who has been provided with a service or a facility at the school or any third party who may have cause to complain about the school.

2. Where a matter can be resolved through a legal appeal it will not be considered as a formal complaint. The key areas are admissions decisions, certain decisions relating to statutory assessment of special educational needs and decisions to permanently exclude a child. In addition, school reorganisation proposals, child protection investigations, whistleblowing, staff grievance & disciplinary issues and complaints provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities fall outside the scope of this procedure. In the majority of cases, these issues are covered by separate policies.

3. An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure, unless there are exceptional circumstances. You may want a preliminary discussion about an issue to help decide whether you wish to take it further.

4. The vast majority of complaints and concerns can be resolved informally. Even when a complaint has been made it can be resolved or withdrawn at any stage. To allow for a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, the school will not consider any complaint that was raised more than three months after the event (in exceptional circumstances, if a complaint is made after this time, the school may agree to investigate further).

5. We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period. If a complaint is in regards to a matter that relates to a safeguarding concern then the complaints procedure will be halted pending investigations by the Local Authority / Social Services.

Raising a concern or complaint

Informal Complaints

6. It is normally appropriate to communicate directly with the member of staff concerned. This may be by letter, by telephone or in person by appointment. Many concerns can be resolved by simple clarification or the provision of information and it is anticipated that most complaints will be resolved by this informal stage. In the case of serious concerns, it may be appropriate to address them directly to the Headteacher (or to the Chair of the Governing Body [chair@dinglewell-inf.gloucs.sch.uk], if the complaint is about the Headteacher).

7. If you are uncertain about whom to contact, please seek advice from the school office or the Clerk to the Governing Body [Miss Steph Horrill via the school office or at clerk@dinglewell-inf.gloucs.sch.uk]. The Clerk acts as the ‘Complaints Coordinator’ for the school.

Formal Complaints

8. If your concern is not resolved at the informal stage you must put the complaint in writing and pass it to the Headteacher, (or to the Clerk to the Governing Body, for the attention of the Chair, if the complaint is about the Headteacher) who will be responsible for ensuring that it is investigated appropriately. A complaint form is provided to help you.

9. You should include details that might help the investigation, such as names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events, and copies of relevant documents.
It is very important that you include a clear statement about what you hope might reasonably contribute to a resolution of the problem at this stage. Without this, it is much more difficult to proceed.

10. Please pass the written form, in a sealed envelope to the Headteacher or to the Clerk to the Governing Body, as appropriate. The Headteacher (or Chair) may invite you to a meeting to discuss your complaint and to seek a resolution. If you accept that invitation, a friend may accompany you if you wish to help you in explaining the nature of your complaint.

11. It is possible that your complaint will be resolved through a meeting with the Headteacher. If not, arrangements will be made for the matter to be referred to the Chair of Governors. In any case, you should learn in writing, usually within 15 days of the school receiving your formal complaint, of how the school intends to proceed. However, it is recognised that where the case is complex, it may prove difficult to meet this timetable. In such cases, the Headteacher will write to you giving a revised target date.

12. The Chair of Governors may invite you to a further meeting to discuss your complaint and to seek a resolution. Again, if you accept that invitation, a friend may accompany you to help you explain the nature of your complaint. In any case, you should learn in writing, usually within 5 working days of the Chair of Governors receiving your formal complaint, of the outcome.

13. If you are not satisfied with the way in which the process has been followed, you can request that the governing body reviews the process followed by the school in handling the complaint. You must make this request in writing to the Clerk to the Governing Body, within 10 school days of receiving notice of the outcome, and include a statement specifying any perceived failures to follow the procedure. The procedure described below will be followed. A review request form is provided for your convenience.

Review Process

14. A panel of three members of the governing body will conduct any review of the process followed by the school. This will usually take place within 10 school days of receipt of your request. The panel will not include the Headteacher but he/she will be invited to prepare a written report for the panel in response to the complaint. The panel will not include the Chair of the Governing Body if he/she has had any previous involvement in the complaint. The Governors on the review panel will normally consider written submissions, but will sympathetically consider any reasonable requests to make oral representations.

15. The panel will first receive written evidence from the complainant of perceived failures to follow the procedure. The panel will then invite representatives of the school (usually the

Headteacher or the Chair of the Governing Body panel that has considered the matter), as appropriate, to make a response to the complaint.

16. The panel may also have access to the records kept of the process followed. The Clerk to the Governors will be present at the review and record the proceedings. You, and the school representatives, will be informed in writing of the outcome, usually within 5 school days of the panel meeting. The matter will then be closed as far as the school is concerned.

17. If you are unhappy with the way in which a school has dealt with the complaint, then you may be able to approach the Secretary of State, Department for Education (DfE) to intervene. The Secretary of State has a duty to consider all complaints raised but will only intervene where the Governing Body has acted unlawfully or unreasonably and where it is expedient or practical to do so. Once the process is complete and the school considers the matter closed, the Department for Education has a specific contact for complaints (the School Complaints Unit).

Serial and Persistent Complainants

Please see the following recommendations from DfE Best Practice Guidance:

If a complainant tries to re-open the same issue, you can inform them that the procedure has been completed and that the matter is now closed.

If the complainant contacts you again on the same issue, the correspondence may then be viewed as 'serial' or 'persistent' and you may choose not to respond.

School Complaints Unit

18. The School Complaint's Unit (SCU) considers complaints relating to Local Authority maintained schools on behalf of the Secretary of State. More information regarding what and how they will consider complaints is set out in the DfE's Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures - go to:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-complaints-procedures

More information can be obtained from the SCU by calling the national Helpline on 0370-000-2288 or going online at www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

Annex A - Dinglewell Infant School Complaint Form

Annex B - Dinglewell Infant School Complaint Review Request Form

ANNEX A to
DIS Complaints Policy
Dated Oct 2024

Dinglewell Infant School Complaint Form

Please complete this form and return it to Headteacher (or Clerk to the Governing Body), who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name:
Your Address:
Daytime telephone number:
Evening telephone number:
Relationship with school e.g. parent of a child on the school's roll
Child's name (if relevant to your complaint):
Please give concise details of your complaint (including dates, names of witnesses etc), to allow the matter to be fully investigated. You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.
Number of additional pages attached:
What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? (i.e. whom have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?)

What do you hope might reasonably contribute to a resolution of the problem at this stage?	
Signature:	Date:

School use: Received by:	**Date:**
Acknowledgement sent by:	Date:
Complaint referred to:	
Name:	Date:
Name:	Date:
Name:	Date:

Dinglewell Infant School Complaint Review Request Form

Please complete this form and return it to Headteacher (or Clerk to the Governing Body), who will acknowledge its receipt and inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

Your name:
Your Address:
Daytime telephone number:
Evening telephone number:
I submitted a formal complaint to the school on Date: My complaint was submitted to Name: I received a response from Name: on Date: I have attached copies of my formal complaint and of the responses from the school. I am dissatisfied with the way in which the procedure was carried out because: You may continue on separate paper, or attach additional documents, if you wish.

Number of additional pages attached:
What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your complaint? (i.e. whom have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?)
What do you hope might reasonably contribute to a resolution of the problem at this stage?

Signature:	Date:

School use: Received by:	**Date:**
Acknowledgement sent by:	Date:
Complaint referred to:	
Name:	Date:
Name:	Date:
Name:	Date: