



PRIORY SCHOOL
EDGBASTON

COMPLAINTS POLICY

(STATUTORY)

Trustee Committee:	Risk & Compliance Committee	
Date Approved:	September 2026	
Next of Review:	September 2029	
Member of Staff Responsible:	Headteacher - Barry Doherty	
Trustee Overseer:	Chair of the Governing Council - Stuart Brereton,	
Intended Audience:	Parents, Pupils and Visitors	
Relevance:	Whole School	Yes (including EYFS)
Access:	Website	Yes
	Internal	Yes
	Restricted	No

Reviewed by L.Flood September 2026

Our Mission Statement

Priory School is a thriving, co-educational independent school founded upon a rich Catholic heritage which welcomes those from all faiths and none.

In partnership with parents and guardians we provide a nurturing, family-based ethos, alongside high-standards of teaching and learning, enabling all pupils to achieve their potential.

We embrace diversity and interfaith understanding alongside awareness of environmental and global issues, in response to the needs of our time.

Generic Policy Statement:

The Governors and staff at Priory School are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors, regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional or cultural needs.

The Governors, staff and pupils are committed to the safeguarding and welfare of pupils and staff.

To meet the needs of our school community, all our policies, including this policy, can be made available on different formats such as different font sizes or styles, colour, or alternate languages.

The Governing Council understands it has responsibility for ensuring the effective oversight of this policy and will assess, evaluate and review as necessary.

COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Introduction

Priory School encourages open, early communication. Most concerns can be resolved quickly through discussion with the appropriate member of staff. This policy sets out:

1. how parents, pupils or visitors can raise **concerns, informal complaints** or **formal complaints**;
2. the school's commitment to **early resolution, proportionate action** and **clear communication**;
3. the required three-stage procedure, including the Panel stage;
4. the compliance requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Nothing in this policy prevents urgent safeguarding matters from being raised directly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

2. Definitions

Concern

A worry, query or expression of dissatisfaction normally raised verbally to a member of staff closest to the issue (e.g. tutor, class teacher). Concerns are addressed informally and quickly.

Informal Complaint

A concern that remains unresolved or is more serious in nature, but which the parent still wishes to manage without initiating the formal process. Informal complaints are handled by senior or middle leaders.

Formal Complaint

A written complaint submitted using the Formal Complaint Form (Annex 1). Formal complaints are investigated by the Headteacher (or by the Chair of Governors if the complaint concerns the Headteacher) and may progress to a Complaints Panel.

3. Raising a Concern or Complaint

Concerns or complaints may be made in person, by telephone or in writing.

If a telephone complaint is intended to be formal, it must be followed by a written submission using the Formal Complaint Form.

Where to submit complaints

- **Concerning staff other than the Headteacher:**
Write to the **Headteacher**, via the School Office (marked *Private & Confidential*).
- **Concerning the Headteacher:**
Write to the **Chair of the Governing Council**, via the School Office (marked *Private & Confidential*).
- **Concerning the Chair, an individual governor or the Governing Council collectively:**
Write to the **Clerk to the Governing Council**, via the School Office (marked *Private & Confidential*).

A third party may submit a complaint on behalf of a complainant where consent is provided.

3A. Data Protection Complaints

Complaints relating to the processing of personal data

Where a complaint relates to the School's collection, use, storage, sharing, retention or handling of personal data, the complaint may be referred directly to the School's Data Protection Officer (DPO).

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Data protection complaints may be submitted:

- in writing;
- by email; or
- by using the School's complaints procedures and complaint forms.

The School's existing complaints process will be used to manage data protection complaints wherever appropriate. However, the School will ensure that all complaints concerning personal data are handled in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Named recipient

The School's designated recipient for data protection complaints is:

Data Protection Officer (DPO)

Mr Nedal Al Chamaa (n.alchamaa@priorschool.net)

Where a complaint is received by Reception, the School Office, or any other member of staff and appears to concern personal data, confidentiality, subject access requests, records, CCTV, photographs, biometric data, data sharing or any other data protection matter, it must be forwarded to the DPO without delay.

Acknowledgement and Investigation

The School will:

- acknowledge a data protection complaint promptly and in any event within 30 calendar days;
- investigate the complaint without undue delay;
- keep the complainant informed where additional time is required;
- communicate the outcome of the investigation promptly; and
- advise the complainant of any further rights of redress, including the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office.

Where a complaint contains both educational and data protection elements, the School may investigate the issues together where appropriate whilst ensuring compliance with both the Complaints Policy and data protection legislation.

Record Keeping

A record of all data protection complaints, investigations, correspondence, actions taken and outcomes will be maintained by the DPO in accordance with the School's Data Protection Policy, Record Retention Schedule and applicable legal requirements.

Information relating to data protection complaints will be shared only with those individuals who need access to the information in order to investigate and resolve the complaint.

Accessibility

We will make reasonable adjustments to support anyone who may need assistance in raising or progressing a complaint (e.g., alternative languages, formats, or facilitated meetings).

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4. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated; however, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors may decide an investigation is warranted depending on the nature and seriousness of the issues raised.

5. Timeframes

Complaints should be raised within **three months** of the incident. Complaints outside this window may be considered where there are exceptional circumstances.

6. Term-time and Holiday Periods

Complaints received during school holidays will be treated as received on the **first working day** of the next term (not including INSET days).

7. De-escalation and Principles

Priory School aims to resolve concerns at the earliest stage. Our approach is:

- accessible and well-publicised
- simple to understand and non-adversarial
- impartial, fair and timely
- respectful of confidentiality
- clear in communication and outcomes
- responsive to learning and improvement

Resolution may include:

- an explanation or clarification
- an apology
- acknowledgement that procedures could have been better
- actions to prevent recurrence
- a review of policy or practice

Mediation may be offered at any stage, provided both parties agree.

8. Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

Most matters are resolved at this stage.

Initial contact

Parents should normally contact the staff member most closely connected with the issue:

- **EYFS (Poppets):** Miss Serah Mockbil
- **Prep School:** Mr Griffin or Mrs Uppal
- **Senior School:**
 - KS3 – Mr Ahmed
 - KS4 – Miss Tanveer
 - KS5 – Mr Flood

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The School will endeavour to provide an **acknowledgement within two working school days (not including INSET days)** during term time. The School will endeavour to resolve complaints and/or provide a written outcome within 28 days (including Early Years Foundation Stage).

If the concern remains unresolved, it becomes an Informal Complaint and may be escalated to the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team as appropriate.

9. Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

If informal routes do not resolve the issue, parents should submit a **Formal Complaint Form (Annex 1)**.

Forms should be sent to the **Headteacher** (unless the complaint is about the Headteacher). Support in completing the form can be requested through the School Office.

Process

- The School will endeavour to acknowledge the request within **2 school days**.
- The Headteacher will evaluate the complaint and decide next steps.
- A meeting or call will normally take place within **10 school days** unless the complainant is notified otherwise.
- Further investigation may occur if required.
- A written outcome will be provided, normally within **15 school days** of receipt of the complaint (longer if further investigation is essential).

The outcome letter will:

- summarise the complaint
- explain actions taken
- set out the decision and reasoning
- detail any actions arising for the school

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may progress to **Stage 3**.

10. Stage 3 – Complaint Panel Hearing

If dissatisfied with the Stage 2 outcome, the complainant may write to the **Chair of the Governing Council** requesting progression to Stage 3. A second form is not required.

Panel Composition

The Panel will consist of **three persons**:

- none directly involved in the matter, and
- at least one person who is **independent** of the management and operation of the school.

Process

- The School will endeavour to acknowledge the Stage 3 request within **2 school days**.
- A hearing will normally take place within **10 school days**.
- All parties will receive relevant documents no later than **2 days before** the hearing unless the complainant is notified otherwise.
- The complainant may be accompanied by a friend or relative (not normally a legal representative).
- After the hearing, the Panel will reach a decision within **10 school days** unless the complainant is notified otherwise.
- A written outcome will be sent within **5 school days** of the decision unless the complainant is notified otherwise.

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Records and Access

Panel findings are shared with:

- the complainant
- the Headteacher
- the Governing Council
- any staff member complained about

Records of complaints are kept confidential except where disclosure is required by the Secretary of State, an inspection body under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, a court, regulatory authority, or as otherwise required by law. Complaints records, including those relating to data protection matters, will be retained and managed in accordance with the School's Data Protection Policy, Records Retention Schedule and applicable data protection legislation. The Data Protection Officer shall maintain oversight of complaints involving personal data.

11. Unreasonable Complainants

Receipt of an unreasonable complaint is very rare. However, the following is in place when *necessary to protect staff and other families*.

While we aim to work positively with all complainants, Priory School will not tolerate abusive, threatening or vexatious behaviour. The school may:

- set communication limits
- implement a communication plan
- issue a warning
- in extreme circumstances, involve the police or restrict access to site

Examples of unreasonable conduct may include:

- refusal to reasonably co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- repeatedly raising similar complaints that have already been investigated/ addressed
- seeking unrealistic outcomes
- making excessive demands on school time, for example by frequent, lengthy, complicated and/or stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint.
- Acting maliciously, libellously/slandersously, aggressively, using threats, intimidation or violence, using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language
- Raising allegations knowing them to be false and/or using falsified information
- publishing details of information or breaching reasonable confidentiality requirements for example such as in social media websites or the press.

However, we would hope that this provision is rare and only used when necessary to protect staff and other families.

12. Complaints and School Fees

The raising of a concern, informal complaint, allegation (including safeguarding allegations), or the invocation of the School's complaints procedure shall not:

- suspend or defer the obligation to pay Fees when due;
- entitle Parents to withhold Fees in whole or in part; or
- give rise to any automatic refund or waiver of Fees.

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Furthermore, fees shall remain payable in full while any complaint, investigation or review is ongoing.

Where a Parent raises complaints or allegations in a manner which the School reasonably considers to be vexatious, abusive, or designed to exert improper pressure in relation to Fees, this may be treated as unreasonable parental conduct for the purposes of Section G.65 of the Terms & Conditions.

For the avoidance of doubt, Section I.86 (Refund/Waiver) of the Terms & Conditions provides that: 'Fees will not be refunded or waived for any cause other than exceptionally and at the sole discretion of the Head.' Accordingly, the submission of a complaint or allegation – including those relating to educational provision or safeguarding – does not suspend, delay, reduce, or nullify the obligation to pay Fees in full and when due."

Nothing in this Policy is intended to deter or restrict Parents from raising genuine concerns, good-faith complaints, or safeguarding disclosures. The School will always treat such matters very seriously and in accordance with its statutory and regulatory obligations. The clarification above simply reflects that complaints and safeguarding disclosures are procedurally and legally distinct from fee-related matters, and are therefore managed separately to avoid any inappropriate conflation of the two.

13. Monitoring and Review

Current post holders are listed on the school website

The Headteacher reviews this policy regularly, and the Governing Council oversees its effectiveness. This policy is reviewed formally every **three years** or sooner if guidance changes.

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Annex 1 – Formal Complaint Form

Please complete and return this form to the school office in an envelope marked for the attention of the Headteacher, the Chair of Governing Council or Clerk to the Governors. The Headteacher, the Chair of Governing Council or Clerk to the Governors will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

This form may be provided electronically or on paper.

Complaints will still be accepted if all required information is provided in writing.

Complainant's full name:	
Name/s of child or children involved in this complaint:	
Relationship of the complainant to any child or children involved in this complaint:	
Address and Postcode:	
Email address	
Daytime telephone number:	
Evening telephone number:	

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Please give details of your complaint:

What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? (Who did you speak to and what was the response?)

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

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Are you attaching any paperwork or evidence? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Date Complaint Received:

Date acknowledgement sent:

By Whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

Outcome: