Complaints Policy & Procedure

Budehaven Community School

Status:	
Recommended	
Statutory	**Yes**
Adopted	**Summer 2026**
Next review	**Summer 2027**
Committee	**SISC**

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1. Overview

Budehaven Community School is committed to resolving concerns and complaints quickly, fairly and transparently.

Most concerns can be resolved informally; however, where this is not possible, the school provides a structured complaints procedure consisting of three stages:

- Stage 1: Informal resolution
- Stage 2: Formal complaint
- Stage 3: Panel hearing

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2. Definition of Concern vs Complaint

- Concern: An expression of worry or doubt for which reassurance is sought
- Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction about actions taken or not taken. The school will always aim to resolve matters at the earliest possible stage.

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3. **Who can make a Complaint?**

This procedure applies primarily to:

- Parents and carers
- Pupils (with appropriate support)
- Other complainants will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4. **How to Raise a Concern or Complaint**

Concerns or complaints must be submitted using the complaints form (see appendix 2). If raised in a different format we will ask the complainant to complete the form.

Complaints should normally be directed to:

- Headteacher (for most complaints) using head@budehaven.cornwall.sch.uk.
- Chair of Governors (if complaint relates to the Headteacher) using chairofgovernors@budehaven.cornwall.sch.uk.
- Clerk to the Governing Board (if complaint relates to a governor or the governing board) using Clerk2Governors@budehaven.cornwall.sch.uk.

Support will be provided where necessary, including adjustments to ensure accessibility.

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5. **Timescales**

- Complaints must be raised within 3 months of the alleged incident
- Term-time rules apply (holiday complaints count from first school day back)

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6. **Scope of the Procedure**

This procedure covers most school-related concerns including Data protection Complaints (Appendix 3), but excludes:

- Admissions
- SEN statutory processes
- Child protection matters
- Staff grievances or disciplinary matters
- Exclusions (separate statutory routes)

These are addressed under separate statutory frameworks.

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7. **Complaints Procedure**

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- Raised directly with the relevant member of staff or Headteacher
- Most concerns resolved through discussion
- Acknowledged within 3 school days/72 hours, within the working week.
- investigate and provide a response within 21 school days

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

If unresolved at Stage 1:

Process

- Complaint submitted in writing, using the complaints form (Appendix 2).
- Acknowledged within 3 school days/72 hours, within the working week.
- Investigation led by Headteacher (or delegated senior member of staff).
- The Investigation Officer will call a meeting to clarify concerns, and seek a resolution
- The written conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant within fifteen school days from the initial contact meeting

Outcome

- Written response within fifteen school days
- Includes:
    - Findings
    - Decision
    - Actions taken
    - Next steps

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If dissatisfaction remains:

Process

- Request made to the Clerk to Governors within 10 school days of Stage 2 outcome and must include why the previous stage of the procedure has not addressed their complaint sufficiently, and what they feel would resolve the complaint
- The Clerk will acknowledge receipt within 3 school days/72 hours, within the working week.
- Panel of at least three members of the Governing Body
- Hearing held within 15 school days wherever possible

Outcomes

- Complaint upheld (in full/part) or dismissed
- May include recommendations for school improvement

This is the final stage of the school process.

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8. **Next Steps**

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may refer the matter to Ofsted or the Department for Education, which will review whether the school followed correct procedure.

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9. **Managing Complaints Effectively**

- Budehaven Community School will not tolerate abusive, threatening or unreasonable behaviour
- The school may implement:
    - A single point of contact
    - Restrictions on communication
    - Bans from the premises where appropriate
- Serial or vexatious complaints may be addressed in line with policy

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10. **Record Keeping**

The school will:

- Record all complaints and outcomes
- Maintain confidentiality in line with GDPR
- Retain records securely

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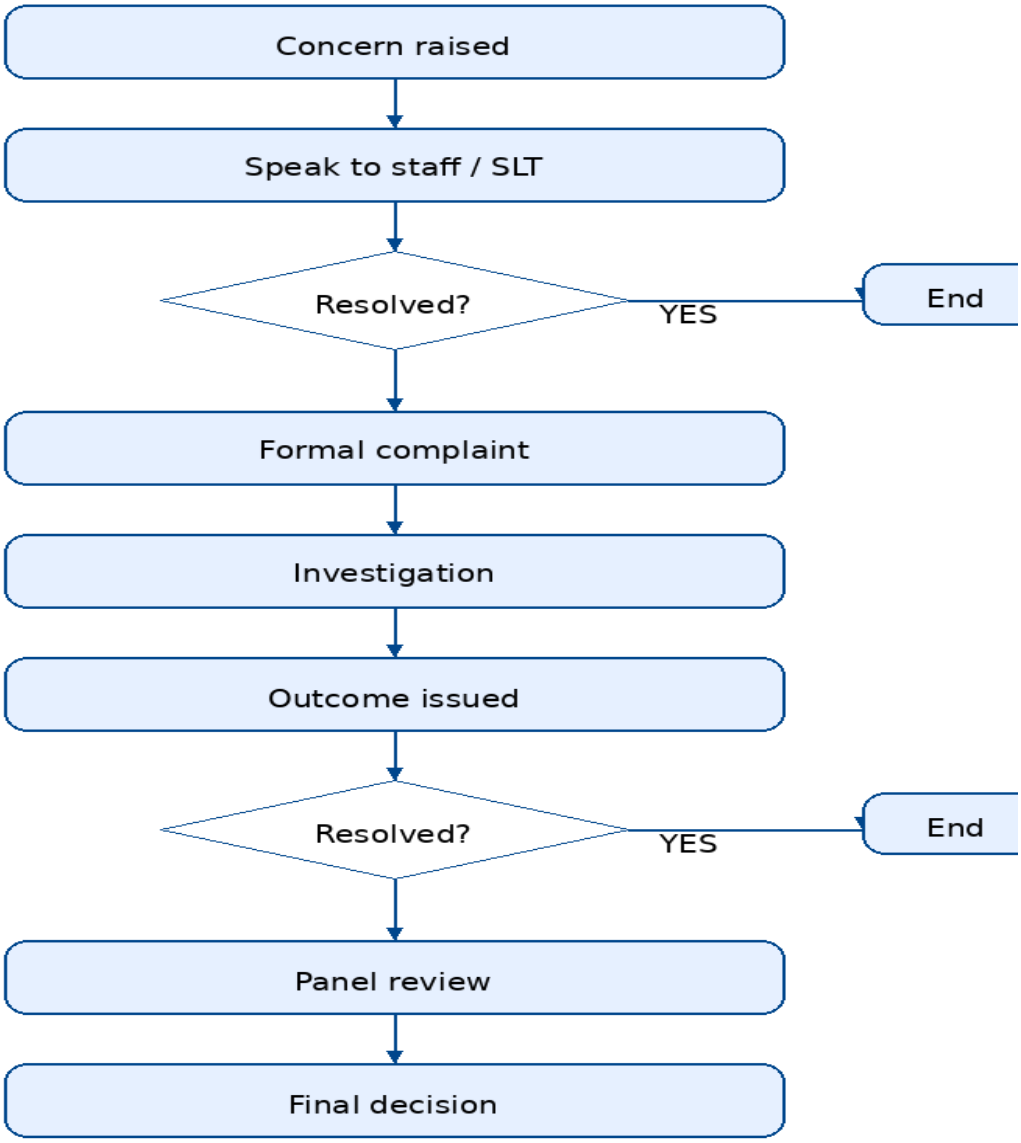
11. **This policy does <u>not</u> cover complaints procedures relating to**:

- Admissions
- Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN)
- Safeguarding matters
- Suspension and permanent exclusion
- Whistle-blowing
- Staff grievances
- Staff discipline

Please see our separate policies for procedures relating to these types of complaint.

Complaints about services provided by other providers who use school premises or facilities should be directed to the provider concerned.

Appendix 1 – complaints flow chart



Appendix 2: Complaint Form

Please complete and return to Headteacher, Valley Road, Budehaven Community School, Bude, EX23 8DQ or email the form to Head@budehaven.cornwall.sch.uk

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address: **Postcode:** **Day time telephone number:** **Evening telephone number:**
Please give details of your complaint.

what action. If any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint?
Have you spoken to any member of staff regarding your complaint and what was their response
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.
Signature: **Date:**
Official use
Date acknowledgement sent:
By who:
Complaint referred to:
Date:

Appendix 3: Data protection Complaints

We take concerns about how personal data is handled seriously. If you believe that your personal data has been processed inappropriately, you have a statutory right to raise a complaint under Section 164A of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Complaints relating to personal data handling will be managed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and the Data Protection Complaints process set out below.

Raising a concern

In the first instance, please contact us directly using the details below so that we can investigate your concern: enquiries@budehaven.cornwall.sch.uk

Please provide as much detail as possible about your concern to help us respond effectively.

How we will handle your complaint

- We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 30 days
- We will investigate your concerns fairly and impartially
- We will respond to you without undue delay, setting out our findings and any actions taken

Where appropriate, we may contact you to request further information or clarification.

We will keep a record of data protection complaints for audit and monitoring purposes. We will also use them to inform improvements to our data protection practices and procedures.

Escalation. If you are not satisfied with our response, you have the right to escalate your complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) at https://ico.org.uk or by calling 0303 123 1113.

Appendix 4. Complaints against the Headteacher, a governor or the governing board

Stage 1: informal

Complaints made:

a. against the headteacher should be made to the Chair of G
b. against any member of the governing board should be directed to the clerk to the governing board in the first instance.

If the complaint is about the headteacher or 1 member of the governing board (including the chair or vice-chair), a suitably skilled and impartial governor will carry out the steps at stage one.

Stage 2: formal

If the complaint is:

- Jointly about the chair and vice-chair or
- The entire governing board or
- The majority of the governing board

An independent investigator will carry out the steps in stage 2 (set out in section 6 above). They will be appointed by the governing board, and will write a formal response at the end of their investigation.

Stage 3: review panel

If the complaint is:

- Jointly about the chair and vice-chair or
- The entire governing board or
- The majority of the governing board

A committee of independent governors will hear the complaint. They will be sourced from local schools, or the local authority and will carry out the steps at stage 3.

Appendix 5: **PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED AT FORMAL HEARINGS**

- The complainant (and/or his/her representative) will present his/her case.
- The Panel of Governors will have the opportunity to ask questions of the complainant (and/or his/her representatives).
- The Investigational Officer will put forward his/her case in the presence of the complainant (and/or his/her representative).
- The complainant (and/or his/her representative) and the Review Panel of Governors will have the opportunity to ask questions of the Investigational Officer.
- The complainant (and/or his/her representative) will be given the opportunity to sum up the case.
- The Investigational Officer will be given the opportunity to sum up the case.
- The Investigational Officer and the complainant (and/or his/her representative) will withdraw.
- The Governor Panel will deliberate in private, only recalling the Investigational Officer and the complainant to clear points of uncertainty on evidence already given. If recall is necessary, both parties are to return.
- The Governor Panel will inform both parties of the decision within 5 school days of the meeting