



## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

### Complaints Procedure Tylers Green Middle School



This policy was adopted on: Autumn 2025

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## 1. Introduction and Scope.

The Governing Board of Tylers Green Middle School (TGMS) has adopted this procedure to deal with complaints from parents or carers of children at the school as well as members of the public.

A complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone and by completing the form (Appendix 2) attached. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

The school will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether such a complaint warrants an investigation.

We follow the Department of Education guidance, which explains the difference between a concern and a complaint:

- A **concern** is defined as “an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought”. The school will resolve concerns through day-to-day communication as far as possible.
- A **complaint** is defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken or a lack of action”.

Complaints may be made in person, in writing, by telephone, or in alternative formats on request. TGMS will consider reasonable adjustments, such as translation, large print, or assisted submission, to ensure the procedure is accessible to all parents, carers, and members of the community.

We see the process for dealing with concerns as a vital step before any complaints arise and we will ensure that concerns are taken seriously. Please see section 3 below.

This procedure does **not** cover complaints relating to:

- School admissions or school re-organisation proposals.

- Statutory assessments of special educational needs (SEN).
- Safeguarding matters.
- Exclusion.
- Whistle-blowing.
- National curriculum.
- Collective Worship.
- Complaints about services from providers using the school premises.

Where complaints relate to safeguarding or child protection matters, they will be managed under the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy in line with statutory guidance. Complaints that involve whistleblowing should be raised under the TGMS Whistleblowing Policy. Staff and volunteers are reminded that they are protected when raising concerns in good faith.

Please see the attached Appendix 3 for more information about the specific procedures which relate to complaints about these issues.

## **2. Aims and Objectives**

Our aim is to ensure that we deal with concerns promptly and appropriately so that matters do not develop into complaints.

However, if you do have a complaint, we will make every effort to deal with the issue quickly and to resolve the problem to your satisfaction. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure.

When responding to complainants, 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.
- Ensure that any decisions we make are lawful, rational, reasonable, fair and proportionate, in line with the principles of administrative law.
- Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process.
- Consider how the complaint can feed into school improvement evaluation processes.

TGMS encourages concerns to be raised and resolved informally wherever possible. In addition to the stages set out in this procedure, the school may offer facilitated conversations or mediation between parties to prevent escalation and to support constructive relationships. Mediation will only be used with the agreement of all parties.

Mediation may be useful in resolving a concern or complaint and may be offered at any point during the complaints procedure. Mediation will only be entered into with the agreement of all parties.

### **3. Raising Concerns**

If you have any concerns about the school or the education we are providing at any time, please discuss the matter with your child's class teacher at the earliest opportunity. If this does not allay your concern then please contact a member of the leadership team or the Headteacher. If you are unclear on who to talk to then please contact our School Office (email: [office@tylersgreenmiddle.co.uk](mailto:office@tylersgreenmiddle.co.uk). Phone: 01494 812465).

If your concern is about something that the Headteacher or the leadership team has initiated, we would still ask that you discuss this in the first instance with them.

The school considers any concerns seriously and most problems can be resolved following discussion and a shared understanding of the issues.

It is not appropriate to publicise any concerns you may have through social media (e.g. on social networking sites) at any stage as this will compromise the confidentiality of any child or children involved and the staff of the school. Please speak, or write, to someone at the school at your earliest convenience, rather than using any other means.

Concerns should **not** be raised with individual governors. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it will prevent them from investigating something that may become a complaint in the future. If a complaint is received by an individual governor or a group of governors, they will immediately forward this to the Chair of Governors.

Concerns should also not be raised with the Local Authority as they have no powers to investigate these matters which are the responsibility of the school and its governing board. If people do contact the Local Authority, they will be advised to refer to the school's complaint procedure.

#### **4. How to Make a Complaint**

If after following our guidance in paragraph 3 above the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint. You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will only consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

As with concerns, the confidentiality of the complainant will be respected by TGMS and it is required that, in return, complainants will respect the confidentiality of any staff and children included in the complaint by not publicising details on social media or sending emails to other organisations before TGMS has had a chance to investigate the complaint.

Where complaints are found to be malicious or deliberately unfounded, TGMS will take steps to protect staff wellbeing and professional reputation. This may include applying the "Unreasonable Complaints" procedure (Appendix 4) or other appropriate action in line with the school's Code of Conduct and safeguarding responsibilities.

#### **4.1 Stage 1**

Complaints involving school staff should be made in the first instance to the Headteacher via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

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

The Headteacher can consider whether a face-to-face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this. *(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:

- establish with the complainant what they think might resolve the issue.
- 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 the investigation, the Headteacher will provide a formal written response within 15 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

In complex cases, where it is not possible to conclude the investigation within 15 school days, the Headteacher (or investigator) will write to the complainant to explain the reason for the delay and set out a revised but reasonable timeframe. This ensures transparency and maintains communication with the complainant.

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 TGMS will take to resolve the complaint.

The Headteacher will advise the complainant on how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

Complaints that involve or are about the Headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors, via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole governing board should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Board via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, or any individual member of the governing board, a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 1.

If the complaint is about the entire governing board or the majority of the governing board then an independent investigator will be appointed by the Board to complete Stage 1.

A template complaint form is included in Appendix 2. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third-party organisations like Citizens Advice to help you.

## **4.2 Stage 2**

Following the outcome of the investigation at Stage 1, if you feel your complaint has not been resolved, you may choose to move to Stage 2, the final stage of the formal procedure. You must let the school know if you wish to do this within 15 school days of the completion of Stage 1. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

At this stage, the complaint will be considered by the Governing Boards' Complaints Committee. This will be made up of a panel of three governors, who will meet to consider the complaint and make a final decision about it on behalf of the Governing Board. The 3 governors will elect which of them will chair the committee. Panel members will have no detailed prior knowledge of the complaint or connection with you. If there are fewer than

three governors from TGMS available, then additional, independent governors will be sourced from another local school.

The meeting will normally take place within 15 school days of your request.

The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting all parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 5 school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed 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 evidence presented. 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 the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and TGMS with a full explanation of their decision and the reasons 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 TGMS.

If the complaint is about the Chair, the entire governing body or the majority of the governing body, Stage 2 will be heard by a committee of independent governors.

#### **4.3 Next Steps**

If you are still not satisfied, you may wish to put your complaint to the Department for Education who can review whether TGMS has acted in accordance with the published complaints procedure and whether they have acted reasonably and lawfully.

The Department for Education can be contacted via: -

- National Helpline 0370 000 2288
- online at: [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus)
- by writing to the Department for Education, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

#### **5. Monitoring and review**

The governing body monitors the complaints procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. Complaints received are regularly reviewed by the Head and Chair of Governors. Stage 1 complaints are logged. Governors examine this log on an annual basis and consider the need for any changes to the procedure.

In addition to reviewing the number of complaints received, the governing board will consider the themes and issues arising from complaints annually. Findings will be used to inform school improvement planning, safeguarding oversight, and staff development.

This procedure is reviewed every three years, when significant changes are made in Government guidance or when we gain learning from processing a complaint.

A copy of this procedure is available to all parents on through the School website.

## Appendix 1: Complaints Procedure - Flowchart

### Concern Raised

- Initial concern is raised and discussed with a member of staff or the Headteacher.



Resolved?



Yes. No further action



### No - Stage 1 – Formal Complaints Procedure

- You can let us know in person, by telephone or in writing if your concerns have not been resolved and you would like to move to the formal stage of the Complaints Procedure.
- Details of the complaints should be in the format shown in Appendix 2.
- Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged in 5 school days



### Investigation

- By the Headteacher
- By a nominated Governor if the complaint is about the Headteacher or a governor
- By an independent investigator if the complaint is about the Chair / Vice Chair of the Governing Board jointly, the whole Governing Board or the majority of the Governing Board



### **Investigation Outcome**

- Communicated within 15 school days of receipt of the complaint.



**Resolved?**



**Yes.** No further action



### **No - Stage 2 – Formal Complaints Procedure**

- If you wish to take your complaint to Stage 2 of the procedure you will be asked to confirm this within 15 school days of the completion of Stage 1.



### **Governing Board Complaints Committee Meeting**

- A panel of three governors will meet to consider your complaint within 15 school days of confirmation of Stage 2. The committee meeting will be independently clerked.
- If you wish to submit evidence to the panel you will be invited to do so in advance of the meeting.
- You may also be invited to attend the panel meeting to explain the nature of your complaint.



### **Complaints Committee Decision**

- The panel will make a final decision on behalf of the Governing Board and will write to you within 10 school days.
- You will be told whether the complaint has been upheld or dismissed and whether the panel have agreed any actions or made any recommendations.



**Resolved?**



**Yes. No further action**

### **No**

- You can contact the Department for Education if you feel the school has acted unreasonably or not followed the correct procedures.

## **Appendix 2: Complaint Form**

Please complete and forward to the School as directed in section 4.1 in the TGMS Complaints Procedure.

**Your name:**

**Pupil's name (if relevant to the complaint):**

**Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):**

**Address:**

**Postcode:**

**Daytime telephone number:**

**Evening telephone number:**

**Email:**

**Please give concise details of your complaint, including any relevant dates, names of witnesses etc., to allow the matter to be fully investigated:**

**What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve this issue?  
(Who did you speak to and what was the 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 whom:**

**Complaint referred to:**

**Date:**

### Appendix 3: Other Complaint Procedures

Category	Who to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admissions to schools</li> <li>• Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs</li> <li>• School re-organisation proposals</li> </ul>	<p>Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with the Local Authority. See link to their website.</p> <p><a href="http://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk">www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk</a></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under the child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>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).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion of children from school*</li> </ul>	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions">www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions</a>.</p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy can be made through the school's complaints procedure. &lt;link to school behaviour policy&gt;.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities</li> </ul>	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them directly.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Curriculum - content</li> </ul>	<p>Please contact the Department for Education at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collective Worship</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints about the content of the daily act of collective worship should be signposted to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Local Authority</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whistleblowing</li> </ul>	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters directly with their employer. Referrals can be made at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>.</p>

#### **Appendix 4: Serial and Unreasonable Complainants**

TGMS is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will act to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

TGMS defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, 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 cooperate 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 trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be considered 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 and completed, including referral to the Department for Education
- 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
- Uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- Knowingly provides falsified information
- Publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint while the complaint is being processed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an '*unreasonable*' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact TGMS, causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six 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 TGMS.