Denefield School
Policy for Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints

Approved by Trust Board on	21 October 2026
Date of next review	October 2027
Review cycle	Annual
Policy control sheet updated	Yes
Policy owner	Headteacher and Chair of Trustees
Location of policy	Website

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Policy for Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints

Denefield School (the **School**) 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 take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive, or threatening.

Unreasonable Complaints

The School will not normally investigate anonymous complaints, but we may consider whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable if the parent:

- Refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved
- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaint's procedure
- Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaint's procedure or with good practice
- Introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the parent expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, sometimes 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
- Makes excessive demands on school time by either frequent, lengthy, complicated and/or stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint
- Repeatedly makes the same complaint and refuses to accept previous findings (despite responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- Seeks an unrealistic outcome (such as a claim for compensation)
- Hinders the consideration of other people's complaints because of the frequency and/or nature of their own complaint

A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the parent:

- Acts maliciously
- Acts aggressively, using threats, intimidation or violence
- Uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language
- Makes defamatory statements
- Makes statements known to be false
- Publishes information or threatens to publish information on social media such as on websites and in newspapers

Furthermore, a complaint may be considered unreasonable, if it is manifestly unjustified, inappropriate or an improper use of formal procedure. In assessing this, the School will have regard to all the circumstances, including:

- Whether a complaint has a reasonable foundation
- The history and context of the complaint

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- Whether the time and cost of investigating the complaint is proportionate to the issue
- Whether an investigation is likely to cause an unjustified level of disruption or distress
- Any evidence of a complaint being brought for an improper purpose

Where, at any stage a complaint is deemed by the Headteacher or the Chair of the Board of Trustees to be unreasonable, the School may take any of the following actions:

- Implement a limited communications strategy
- Advise that a third-party act on the parent's behalf
- Notify the parent that the complaint procedure will not be implemented and that there will be no further response to their complaint

Where aggression or abusive behaviour has been used, the Trust may:

- Ask the parent to leave the school premises
- Inform the police
- Bar them from the School's premises

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation of policy

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees on an annual basis.

The Headteacher reports to the Board of Trustees on the number and nature of complaints on a termly basis.

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