

'FROM GREAT TO AMAZING'



SUFFOLKS PRIMARY SCHOOL



**Vexatious
Complaints
Policy**

NOV 2025

POLICY FOR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

Suffolks Primary School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and will always ensure a thorough and fair investigation with open and productive dialogue with all parties involved. However, there are occasions when despite a complaint being considered under all stages of the complaints policy, the complainant persists in making the same complaint.

There may also be occasions when a complainant raises unreasonable persistent complaints or makes a complaint that is so trivial it would be a waste of the school's resources to deal with it under the formal stage of the standard complaints policy.

What is a vexatious complaint?

A vexatious complaint is one that is pursued, regardless of its merits, solely to harass, annoy or subdue somebody; something that is unreasonable, without foundation, frivolous, repetitive, burdensome or unwarranted.

In identifying vexatious complaints, school leaders must be careful to:

- Distinguish between complainants who are raising genuine concerns; and
- Recognise when people are being difficult.

This can be achieved by recognising that complainants may often be aggrieved, frustrated or have other reasons for their behaviour; the focus must be on careful consideration of the merits of the case rather than the attitude of the complainant.

The school reserves the right to regard a complaint as vexatious and/or unreasonable if the person making the complaint:

- 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 co-operate with the complaints investigation process whilst will wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of a complaints procedure;
- Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the adopted complaints procedure or with good practice;
- Introduces trivial or irrelevant information which the complainant expects to be taken into account and commented on, or raises large numbers of details but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately or to their own timescales;
- Makes unjustified complaint 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 a complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented;
- Seeks unrealistic outcomes;

- Makes the complaint through or seeks to involve a third party who has no legitimate need to contact or be involved with the school in any way;
- Makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff while the complaint is being dealt with;
- Insisting that all concerns raised are immediately responded to by a member of the senior leadership team.

What is a malicious complaint?

A malicious complaint is one that is made with the intention of causing harm, for example:

- Deliberately seeking to defame somebody and raising a complaint with intent;
- Through lying or sensationalising an issue or incident in the knowledge that this will cause harm;
- Through knowingly basing a complaint on rumour and gossip with the intent of cause harm

A malicious complaint is defined as one:

- That the investigation has shown to be without foundation
- Where the investigation evidence demonstrated that the complainant knowingly lied or misled the investigation

What is considered to be harassment?

For the purpose of the policy, harassment is the unreasonable pursuit of actions on complaints in such a way that they:

- Appear to be targeted over a significant period of time on one or more members of school staff;
- Cause ongoing distress to individual members of school staff;
- Have a significant adverse effect on whole/parts of the school community;
- Are pursued in a manner which can be perceived as intimidating and oppressive by the recipient (this includes situations where persistent demands or criticism, whilst not particularly serious in isolations, have a cumulative effect of undermining confident, health and well-being)

A complaint will also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either face-to face, by telephone, in writing or electronically:

- Maliciously
- Aggressively
- Using threats, intimidation or violence
- Using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language
- Using falsified information
- Publishing unacceptable information on a range of media, including social media, websites or newspapers

Where a complaint is deemed vexatious/malicious/unacceptable

If the complainant continues to contact the school in a vexatious manner, the school will inform the complainant in writing that their behaviour is now considered to be unreasonable by the school, and if not modified, action may be taken in accordance with the terms of this policy.

The following actions may be taken, as necessary, having regard to the nature of the complainant's behaviour and the effect of this on the school community, the complainant may be:

- Given a limit on the number of times they can make contact with the school, such as a fixed number per term;
- Given a single point of contact for all communication with the school (except in the case of emergencies) e.g. via a single email address;
- Informed that all meetings with a member of staff will be conducted with a third person, nominated by the Chair of Governors, present and that notes of the meeting may be taken in the interest of all parties;
- Asked to engage a third party on their behalf;
- Remove all contact with the complainant for a given amount of time.

In response to any serious incident of verbal aggression or physical violence, the school will:

- Follow the school's Zero Tolerance for Unacceptable Behaviour Policy
- Immediately inform the police;
- Consider taking advice on pursuing a case under the anti-harassment legislation or request an Anti-Social Behaviour Order