



Complaints Policy

This policy applies to Steephill School, including the EYFS setting.

Policy Author: Helen Millward, Headteacher

Reviewed and approved by Full Governing body: September 2025 – Amended June 2026
due to Data Protection Act 2018 changes

Next review due: September 2026

Policy statement

Steephill School values strong partnerships with parents and pupils and prides itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care. However, we recognise that concerns or complaints may arise, and this policy outlines how they will be addressed fairly, transparently, and in line with statutory requirements.

This procedure has regard to:

- Part 7 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended 2023–24)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework 2024

This policy applies to parents of current pupils, and parents of former pupils where the complaint was initially raised while their child attended the school.

All complaints and associated records will be kept confidential, except where disclosure is required by law, regulatory body, or in relation to safeguarding.

Confidentiality and record keeping

Complaint records are kept securely by the Headteacher in a dedicated folder (hard copy and electronic).

Records are retained **for 7 years**.

Where safeguarding concerns are raised, records will be preserved in line with KCSIE 2024 and until at least the conclusion of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), and for no fewer than 10 years or until the individual concerned reaches pension age (whichever is longer).

In line with the amendment to the Data Protection Act 2018 and the insertion of section 164A: Section 164A establishes a statutory right for data subjects to lodge complaints directly with data controllers regarding infringements of their data protection rights. Any complaints regarding the mishandling of personal data should be reported to the Bursar using the Data Protection Complaints form. This can be requested from bursar@steephill.co.uk.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

We hope most concerns can be resolved informally.

- Parents should first raise concerns with their child's Class Teacher.
- Teachers will respond within 2 school days and attempt to resolve matters promptly.
- If unresolved, the Class Teacher may consult the Headteacher.

- If parents raise concerns directly with the Headteacher, these will usually be referred back to the Class Teacher unless the Headteacher decides to handle them personally.
- If no resolution is reached within 10 school days, parents will be advised to progress to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Formal resolution

If unresolved informally, parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headteacher.

- The Head will acknowledge receipt within 2 school days.
- The Head will meet/phone parents within 5 school days to discuss the matter.
- Any necessary investigation will be completed within 10 school days.
- The Head will provide a written decision with reasons within 15 school days of receiving the complaint.

If dissatisfied, parents may proceed to Stage 3.

Complaint against the Headteacher or Governors

- If the complaint concerns the Headteacher, it should be directed to the Vice-Chair of Governors who will manage the complaint under Stages 2 and 3.
- If the complaint concerns a Governor, it should be referred to the Chair of Governors.
- If it concerns the Chair, another governor will be nominated to oversee the process.

Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

If parents remain dissatisfied, they may request referral to the Complaints Panel.

- Requests should be made in writing to the Chair of Governors within 10 school days of receiving the Stage 2 outcome.
- The Chair will acknowledge receipt within 3 school days.
- A panel of three people will be convened, at least one of whom is independent of the management and running of the School.
- A hearing will be scheduled within 20 school days of the request.
- All parties will receive copies of relevant documentation at least 5 school days before the hearing.
- Parents may be accompanied by one other person (relative, friend, or supporter - not legal representation).
- The Panel will aim to resolve matters immediately or within 7 school days after the hearing.

- Parents will receive the Panel's decision in writing, including reasons and recommendations.
- Copies of the findings will also be shared with the Headteacher, the Governing Body, and where relevant, the person complained about.
- The decision of the Panel is final.

EYFS

- All written complaints relating to the EYFS are investigated, and parents will be notified of the outcome within 28 calendar days.
- Records of complaints in the EYFS are kept for at least 3 years.
- Parents may contact ISI or Ofsted if they believe the EYFS requirements are not being met:

Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)

CAP House, 9–12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA

Tel: 020 7776 8849

Email: info@isi.net

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 1231

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Managing serial and unreasonable complaints

The School is committed to handling complaints fairly but will not tolerate abusive, offensive, or threatening behaviour.

Repeated complaints already addressed through all 3 stages may be deemed vexatious.

The Head (or Chair of Governors) may restrict communications with persistent complainants and implement a communication plan, reviewed every 6 months.

In cases of aggression or violence, the School will inform the police and may bar individuals from site.

Annual review of complaints

The School publishes the number of formal complaints received during the preceding academic year.

In the 2024–25 academic year, the School received 1 formal complaint, 0 of which proceeded to a panel hearing.

Policy review and availability

This policy is reviewed annually by the Head and Governors.

A copy is available on the School's website and in hard copy upon request.