Policy for Dealing with Persistent or Vexatious Complaints and Harassment 2025-2027

Spurcroft Primary School & Nursery

This policy is due for review in November 2027

Headteacher	Sign & Date:	
Chair of Governing Board	Sign & Date:	

The content complies with Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016 (Department for Education – January 2016)

The Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and staff deal with specific complaints as part of their day-to-day management of the school in accordance with the School's Complaints Policy and Procedure. The majority of complaints are handled in an informal manner and are resolved quickly, sensitively and to the satisfaction of the complainant. However, there are occasions when complainants behave in an unreasonable manner when raising and/or pursuing concerns. In these circumstances the school may act in accordance with this policy.

1. **AIMS OF POLICY :**
   - To uphold the standards of courtesy and reasonableness that should characterise all communication from the school to persons who wish to express a concern or pursue a complaint;
   - To support the well-being of students, staff and everyone else who has legitimate interest in the work of the school, including governors and parents/ carers;

- To deal fairly, honestly and appropriately with those who make persistent or vexatious complaints and those who harass members of staff in school,
- To ensure that other stakeholders suffer no detriment.

2. PARENTS' EXPECTATIONS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents/carers/members of the public who raise either informal concerns or formal complaints with the school can expect the school to:

- Provide access to the school's Complaints Policy and other associated documentation.
- Respond within a reasonable time.
- Respect your privacy.
- Be available for consultation within reasonable time limits bearing in mind the needs of the pupils within the school and the nature of the complaint.
- Attempt to resolve problems using reasonable means in line with the school's complaints policy, other policies and practice.
- Keep complainants informed of the progress towards a resolution of the concern/complaint raised.

3. THE SCHOOL'S EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS/CARERS/MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The school can expect parents/carers/members of the public who wish to raise concerns or complaints with the school to:

- Treat all school staff with courtesy and respect.
- Respect the needs and well-being of pupils and staff in the school.
- Avoid any use of abusive, aggressive, threatening, coercive or intimidating behaviour whether verbal, written or online.
- Avoid broadcasting the concern/complaint via social media.
- Recognise the time constraints under which members of staff in schools work and allow the school a reasonable time to respond.

4. THE SCHOOL'S DEFINITION of PERSISTENT/VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS and HARASSMENT

A persistent or vexatious complainant is a parent/carer or member of the public who repeatedly raises complaints or concerns, either formally or informally, about matters they believe fall within the school's remit, and whose behaviour in doing so is considered unreasonable. Such behaviour may be characterised by:

- Actions which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, coercive, prolific, repetitious.
- Excessive correspondence via e-mail or telephone.
- Uses Freedom of Information requests excessively and unreasonably.
- An insistence on repeatedly pursuing a complaint.
- Actions that are contrary to the expectations stated in Section 3 of this policy.

5. THE SCHOOL'S ACTIONS in CASES of PERSISTENT or VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS and HARASSMENT

In the first instance the school will communicate either in writing or verbally (confirmed with a letter) to inform the complainant that his/her behaviour is considered to be becoming unreasonable/unacceptable and, if it is not modified, action may be taken in accordance with this policy.

If the behaviour is not modified the school will take some or all of the following actions as necessary, having regard to the nature of the complainant's behaviour and the effect of this on the school community:

- Inform the complainant in writing that his/her behaviour is now considered by the school to be unreasonable/unacceptable and, therefore, to fall under the terms of this policy.
- Inform the complainant that all meetings with a member of staff will be conducted with a second person present and that notes of meetings may be taken in the interests of all parties.
- Inform the complainant that, except in emergencies, all routine communication with the complainant to the school should be by letter only.
- In the case of physical, or verbal aggression or other forms of coercive and intimidating behaviour, the school will take appropriate advice which may lead to the complainant being banned from the school site on a temporary or permanent basis.
- May seek advice from the HR / Legal Services about putting in place a specific procedure for dealing with complaints from the complainant.
- May take appropriate advice on pursuing a case under Anti-Harassment legislation.
- Keep the Chair of Governors informed.

6. CONSEQUENCES for cases of PERSISTENT or VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS and HARASSMENT

Consequences for cases of persistent or vexatious complaints and harassment could include but are not limited to:

- Exclusion of the pupil
- Being banned from the school site
- Legal proceedings

7. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

The next date for review is November 2027.