

## Complaints Procedures for Children

Last review	Next Review	Review Frequency	Coordinator	Nominated Trustees
March 2026	March 2028	Every 2 years	Director	EC&T Committee

### Introduction

Central to the work of The Mulberry Bush School is reflecting on our practice in order to improve outcomes for the children. Fielding and managing grumbles, worries or complaints is therefore, an important part of this process.

It is in everyone's interest that any grumbles, worries or complaints about The Mulberry Bush School are resolved at the earliest possible stage.

### Aims of the complaint's procedure

- It is crucial that the child should feel their complaint is heard, that there is a robust and active follow up and the child is satisfied with the outcome.
- Staff need to be clear about the difference between a low-level grumble and a complaint. Grumble forms should be found in each house. See Appendix B.
- Taking low levels concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints. However, there may be a time when a child wishes to raise a complaint, and this must be respected and thoroughly followed through.
- The requirement to have a complaints procedure need not in any way undermine efforts to resolve the concern informally. In most cases the staff members will try the first approach. It is helpful when staff can resolve issues on the spot. This may include offering a clear explanation; in some cases, accepting that a situation could have been handled better; in other cases, an apology may be appropriate.
- Addressing children's concerns and complaints quickly keeps us all safe and helps develop a shared understanding of the issues.

### Procedure

- All complaint forms are to be found on the school's electronic information management system (Clear Care).
- An adult can help the child to fill in the complaint's form or they can complete a paper copy themselves. See Appendix A for a copy of this.
- The complaint form has three sections:
  - **The first section is for recording the details of the complaint.**
  - **The second section is for recording the management of the complaint. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also make observations on this section to assess whether this meets a child protection threshold.**
  - **The last section indicates if the child is happy with how the complaint has been dealt with.**

- The three sections of the complaint form need to be completed by all relevant adults; including by the adult who takes the complaint and by other adults who try to sort the complaint out. This will include an adult who is a senior manager at the school.
- Once all the adults concerned have completed the work required to resolve the complaint, they must record the work on the relevant sections of the Clear Care form. If a child is happy with the work that has taken place, they will indicate that this is the case, and the form will then be ready to be signed off by the Complaint's Officer (the Director). If the child is not happy with the work that has taken place the Complaint's Officer will ensure that further work is undertaken in order that the complaint process can be finished so that the child is satisfied with the outcome.
- In some cases, a child may not feel able to take part in the complaint process themselves but are happy for an adult to complete the procedure on their behalf. All adults must offer this opportunity to a child if they are making a complaint at any time.
- There may be occasions when a child does not want to make a complaint, but an adult believes that there are grounds for a complaint. If this is the case the adult must complete the complaint process on the child's behalf.
- All adults must look to deal with the complaint as quickly as possible but, must be considerate of child's developmental age and stage of processing their thoughts about the complaint. However, all complaints should be completed within 28 days. If the timescales in relation to any complaint are not likely to be met due to complexity or other reason(s), the Complaints Officer (Director) will let the child know why this is the case and explain to them how and when the complaint work will be completed.
- If any adult feels uncomfortable with managing the complaint they should seek advice from a manager or the Complaints Officer (Director).
- Any complaint that may have child protection issues must be passed on as soon as possible to a Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Director. This will be followed up as part of our safeguarding policy procedures.
- Any adult who is the subject of the complaint must not be involved in the management of it.
- At part of the process, the child must be asked what they would like to happen with their complaint, i.e. how they would like it dealt with and what outcome they would like.
- The complaint can be dealt with by any staff member as long as they are not the subject of the complaint. Staff should follow the process set out on the complaint form, with the support of a line manager if necessary.
- If a child is asking how to complain, adults should try and help them make an informed decision as to what will happen with the different complaint routes they may choose.
- The child's parents/carers and local authority will always be informed about the complaint and the outcome.

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### **Role of the Management Team**

- The Complaints Officer (Director) must monitor complaints, ensuring they have been properly managed and resolved.

### **Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

- The DSL will assess each complaint to see whether this meets a threshold of a child protection concern. If this is the case, safeguarding procedures will be followed.

### **Role of Staff**

- All staff must be aware of this policy and must know how to help a child make a complaint should this be needed.

### **Role of Children**

- Children should be given the opportunity to make use of the complaints process and procedure when they are not happy with how something has been managed.

### **Raising Awareness of this Policy**

- School Leadership Team.
- All staff for the children.

### **Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy**

Complaints Officer (Director)  
Trustees via their visits  
Reg 44 Independent Visitor

### **Please see other associated documents**

Child Complaint and Adult Guidelines Sep 2025 (Appendix C)



## Complaint form

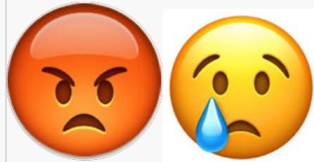
### Summary

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**Adults - The complaint number is the Clear Care Task Number.**

### Tell us about your complaint

We want to know what you are upset about.



Child using this form

The date you are filling this form in:

Is this complaint for you, or for somebody else?  For me  For somebody else

If for somebody else, please tell us their name

If this complaint is for somebody else, do they know you have complained?

What are you unhappy about?

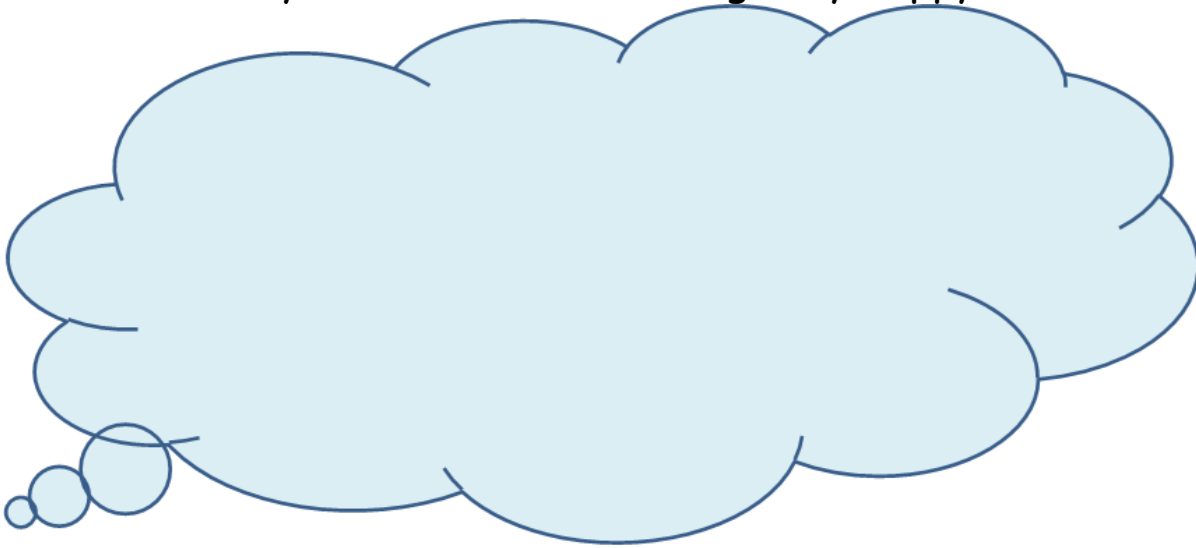
<p><b>How did it start?</b></p>	
<p><b>What happened next?</b></p>	
<p><b>How did it end?</b></p>	
<p><b>What do you want to happen to sort it out?</b></p>	
<p><b>Action taken about this complaint</b></p>	
<p><b>Safeguarding Threshold met? Please explain rationale</b></p>	
<p><b>This section to be completed by the adult who takes the complaint and by senior adults who try to sort the complaint out.</b></p>	
<p><b>Staff member this is dealing with the complaint: what action has been taken? Name and date / time for each entry please.</b></p>	

<p>Other relevant people informed: SW, TT, etc. Please say where record of communication can be found. Name and date/time for each entry please.</p>	
<p>Senior member of staff (HM, SLT): what has been done about this complaint? Name and date / time for each entry please.</p>	
<p><b>Are you happy?</b></p>	
<p><b>Adults should check with the child who complained:</b></p>	
<p>Are you happy that your complaint has been sorted out</p>	
<p>What else would you like to be done? If this is revisited, please add date / time for each entry.</p>	
<p>Director's Comments</p>	
<p><b>Director / Complaints Officer to confirm they are satisfied that this complaint has been dealt with and is now complete.</b></p>	
<p>Director / Complaints Officer to confirm they are satisfied that this complaint has been dealt with and is now complete.</p>	<p>Complaint <input type="checkbox"/> complete</p>

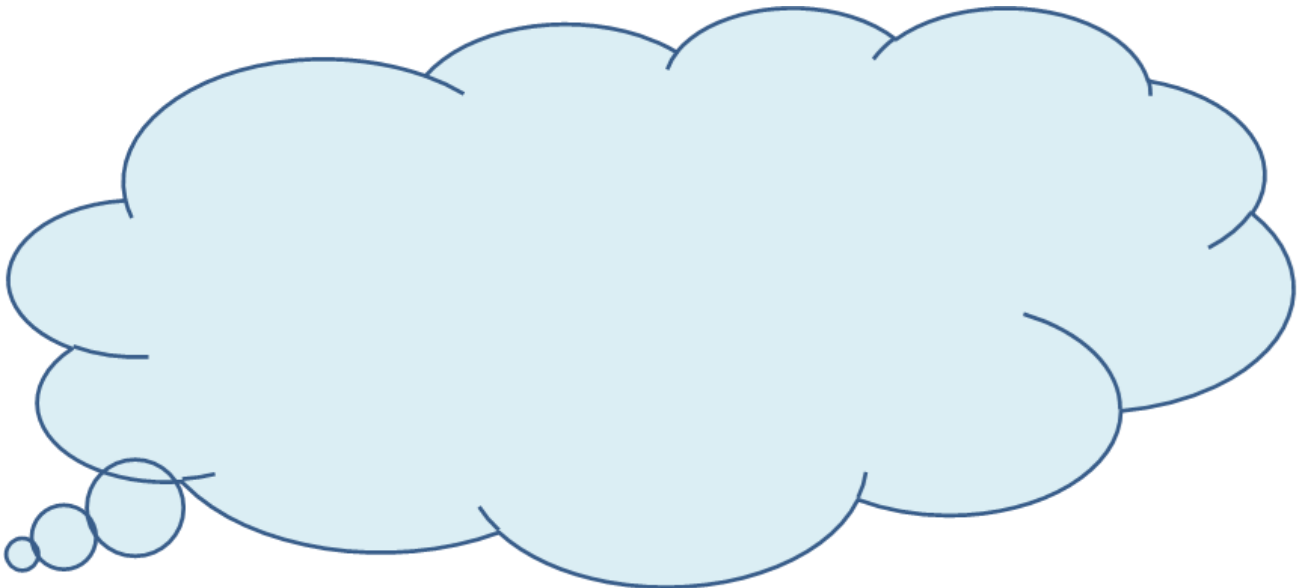
APPENDIX B: A GRUMBLE FORM

MY GRUMBLE FORM

I want to tell you that I'm not feeling very happy about something...



Ok so let's have a think about what we can do to make this better?



## Complaints Procedures for Children

We want you to tell us if you are not happy with the way you are looked after.

We want you to tell us if you have any grumbles, worries or complaints.

We will listen to you and ask you what you would like to happen. To help us get it right, we will need to know what you want to happen to make everything all right again.

The adults are here to keep everyone safe so you can tell any adult. It is your choice who you would feel happy talking to. This might be your Key Worker, Teacher, Family Worker, your House Manager, or someone else. If you want, you can speak to Lee, Claire, Jess, Angus or Jane.

There are lots of different ways you can tell us you are unhappy about something:

1. Tell an adult who will listen and you can have a think whether you want to fill in a Grumble sheet or a Complaints form. An adult will help you to think about what you want to do.
2. The adult will help you fill in the form or you can do this by yourself.
3. You can talk to the VOICE adult (Annmarie) she is an independent advocate who listens to children's wishes and feelings. Annmarie also visits the school every month or you can speak to her on the Voice phone.



Here is a picture of Annmarie

If you talk to the Voice phone, this can be a private conversation if this is what you wish.

4. Tell the people who look after you at home.
5. You can contact Ofsted on 0300 123 4666.
6. You can also talk to your Social Worker or another member of staff from that department and make a complaint using their procedures.
7. The NSPCC 0808 8005000 and the Children's Commissioner 020 7783 8330 are also there to listen to children.

What you say will be taken seriously and dealt with quickly.



If you don't think your complaint is being taken seriously,

please speak to Lee

# Staff Guidelines Following a Complaint made by a child.

The aim of this process is that the child should feel their grumble, worry or complaint.

Addressing children's grumbles, worries and complaints quickly keeps us all safe and helps develop a shared understanding of the issues.

## Guidelines for adults regarding complaints:

- Any complaint made by a child should be listened to seriously and a Complaint Form must be completed. These can be found on Clear Care in the child's filing cabinet. If a complaint is raised as part of an incident, Clear Care will automatically trigger a Complaint Form, as long as the complaints box has been checked.
- Once a Complaint Form is triggered, Lee (the Complaints Officer), Jane (the Designated Safeguarding Lead) and the safeguarding team will automatically receive a notification.
- If the adult feels uncomfortable with managing the complaint, they should seek advice from a manager or Lee.
- Any complaint that may have child protection issues will automatically be picked up by the safeguarding team.
- Any adult who is the subject of the complaint must not be involved in the management of it.
- At the end of the process, the child should be asked what they would like to happen with their complaint, i.e. how they would like it dealt with and what outcome they would like.
- Adults can print off a complaints form if a child wants to complete it independently.



Please see the Children's Complaints Policy if you need more information .