



# SAVS Complaints Policy

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# Introduction

The Governing Board of South Ascot Village School recognises the statutory requirement under Section 29 of the Education Act 2002 to have in place and implement when necessary a policy and procedure to deal with complaints relating to the School and to any community facilities or services that the School provides. The requirement to publicise this policy and procedure is met by occasional reference to it in the regular newsletters and in other appropriate ways including being published on the School website and available from the School office.

This document sets out the School's procedure for addressing complaints. It should be used only when informal attempts to resolve problems have been unsuccessful.

There are some complaints that fall outside of the School complaints procedure and are the subject of separate statutory procedures. Copies of these policies can be obtained from the School.

All complaints will be considered and time frames will be agreed to reflect individual cases.

This policy sets out to ensure the complaints procedure:

- is easily accessible and publicised;
- is simple to understand and use;
- is impartial;
- is non-adversarial;
- enables a full and fair investigation by an independent person where necessary;
- respects people's desire for confidentiality;
- addresses all the points at issue and provides an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary; and,
- provides information to the School leadership team so that the services can be improved.

## Differences between Concerns and Complaints

A 'concern' may be defined as '*an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought*'.

A complaint may be generally defined as '*an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action*' [DfE Best Practice Advice for Schools Complaints 2021](#).

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. South Ascot Village School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, the Headteacher will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the Headteacher will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, South Ascot Village School will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this complaints procedure.

## Who can make a Complaint?

Any person, including members of the general public, may make a complaint about any provision of facilities or services that the School provides, unless separate statutory procedures apply. The School does not limit complaints to parents or carers of children that are registered at the School.

There are occasions when complainants would like to raise their concerns formally. In those cases, the School's formal procedure will be invoked through the stages outlined below.

### Complaint Time Frames

The School believes that complaints need to be considered and resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Complainants must raise the complaint within **three months of the incident** or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents.

We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame only if exceptional circumstances apply.

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

## How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant if they have appropriate consent to do so. Formal complaints must be submitted using the staged procedures outlined in this policy.

### Raising Concerns

Unless there is reason not to, concerns should be raised with the Class Teacher in the first instance. If this does not resolve the concern, it should be escalated for the attention of the Key Stage Lead. If the concern remains after discussing it with the Key Stage Lead, then it should be escalated for the attention of the Headteacher. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

### Making a Complaint

Complainants should not approach individual Governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 2 of the procedures outlined within this policy.

Formal complaints must be submitted in writing using the template complaint form, which is included as an appendix to this policy, and is available via the school website as a word version. The staged procedures outlined in this policy must be followed.

If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

### **Complaints against school staff**

Complaints against school staff, the Headteacher, or Chair of Governors will always be considered a formal complaint.

Complaints against school staff (except the Headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to the Headteacher via the school office/school email. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the Headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors c/o the Clerk to the Governing Body, via the school office/school email please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual Governor or the whole Governing Board should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body via the school office/clerk's email. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

### **Anonymous complaints**

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

## **Scope of this Complaints Procedure**

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by South Ascot Village School, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

<b>Exceptions</b>	<b>Who to contact</b>
Admissions to schools	Concerns should be raised directly with the Local Authority.
Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs	Complaints about School admissions should be addressed to the Chair of Governors.
School re-organisation proposals	Complaints about admissions appeals should be addressed to the Local Government Ombudsman
Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.

	<p>If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).</p> <p>LADO: 07774 332675</p> <p>MASH: 01628 683150</p>
Exclusion of children from school*	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions">www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions</a>.</p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the <a href="#">behaviour policy</a> can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i></p>
Whistleblowing	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>.</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>
Staff grievances	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.</p>
Staff conduct	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.</p>
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.</p>
National Curriculum - content	<p>Please contact the Department for Education at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a></p>

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against South Ascot Village School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

# Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, South Ascot Village School wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made;
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint; and, or,
- an apology.

## Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

## Stage 1 Complaint Procedure

Formal complaints must be made to the Headteacher (unless they are about the Headteacher), via the school office. This may be done using the Complaint Form.

The Headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 10 school days.

Within this response, the Headteacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The Headteacher can consider whether a face-to-face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

*Note: The Headteacher may delegate the investigation and decision to another member of the school's senior leadership team.*

During the investigation, the Headteacher (or investigator) will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish; and,
- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the Headteacher will provide a formal written response. This will usually be within 20 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint. If the Headteacher is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions South Ascot Village School will take to resolve the complaint.

The Headteacher will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, or a member of the Governing Board (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled Governor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 1.

Complaints about a member of the Governing Board must be made to the Clerk, via the school office/clerk's email.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair;
- about the entire Governing Board; or,
- about the majority of the Governing Board,

Stage 1 will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the Governing Board. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response.

## Stage 2 Complaint Procedure

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 2 – a meeting with members of the Governing Board's complaints panel, which will be formed of the first three, impartial, governors available. **This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.**

A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the Clerk, via the school office or clerk's email, which is displayed on the Formal Complaint Form, within 10 school days of receipt of the Stage 1 response.

The Clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 school days.

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Clerk will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 15 school days of receipt of the Stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed dates, without good reason, the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

The complaints committee will consist of at least three Governors with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Panel.

If there are fewer than three Governors from South Ascot Village School available, the Clerk will source any additional, independent Governors through another local school or through their LA's Governor Services team, in

order to make up the panel. Alternatively, an entirely independent panel may be convened to hear the complaint at Stage 2.

The panel will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the panel meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate. For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

*Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.*

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least 10 school days before the meeting, the Clerk will:

- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible; and,
- request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the panel at least 5 school days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 5 school days before the date of the meeting. The committee will not accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The panel will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The panel can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part; or,
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the panel will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint; and,
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the panel will provide the complainant and South Ascot Village School with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 5 school days.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if they are dissatisfied with the way their complaint has been handled by South Ascot Village School.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair;
- about the entire Governing Board; or,
- about the majority of the Governing Board,

Stage 2 will be heard by a panel of independent Governors.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions South Ascot Village School will take to resolve the complaint.

The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.

## Next Steps

If the complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 2.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by South Ascot Village School. They will consider whether South Ascot Village School has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

The complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online [here](#).

At every stage of the formal procedure, the handling of the complaint will be:

- non-adversarial;
- swift (using agreed time limits);
- fair (using independent investigation where necessary); and,
- confidential.

Throughout the process, the school will be willing:

- to listen;
- to learn;
- to admit mistakes;
- to apologise if appropriate;
- to address any issues raised;
- to change school practice and procedure if appropriate; and,
- to maintain professional relationships .

In using this procedure:

- Staff are asked to be aware that complainants may feel intimidated by the School as an institution and unsure whether they will be treated fairly.
- Complainants are asked to be aware that those complained about, especially individual members of staff, may feel very vulnerable during this process.
- Throughout the procedure, therefore, the aim of all parties should be not only to resolve the complaint but also to develop and sustain good relationships between all members of the School community. However formal or serious the complaint, or however dissatisfied the complainant, the aim will always be reconciliation between all parties and a renewed commitment to work together amicably.
- Every complaint will be investigated with due urgency and thoroughness.
- Whenever a complaint is upheld, every effort will be made to rectify the issue and, if necessary, action will be taken to prevent a recurrence of the problem.
- The School Complaints Procedure and Policy is available on the school website and as a paper copy from the school office.
- The Headteacher will review the handling of complaints from time to time in order that services can be improved, believing that the process of listening to and resolving complaints contributes to School improvement.
- When individual complaints are heard there is an opportunity to identify possible issues that need addressing.
- The Headteacher will report to staff and to the Governing Board on the number and type of complaints received and their outcomes whilst maintaining confidentiality.

## Confidentiality

Complainants can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

## Recording Complaints

Written records will be kept of all formal complaints, and of whether they were resolved at a preliminary stage or preceded to a panel hearing. A copy will be kept on the School premises available for inspection.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Complainant

The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint
- ask for assistance as needed
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

## Investigator

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
  - sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved
  - interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint
  - consideration of records and other relevant information
  - analysing information
- liaising with the complainant and those involved to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal
- be mindful of the timescales to respond
- prepare a comprehensive report for the Headteacher or complaints committee that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

The Headteacher or complaints committee will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

## Complaints Co-ordinator

*This could be the Headteacher / designated complaints governor or other staff member providing administrative support)*

The complaints co-ordinator should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- liaise with staff members, Headteacher, Chair of Governors, Clerk and LAs (if appropriate) to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure
- be aware of issues regarding:
  - sharing third party information
  - additional support. This may be needed by complainants when making a complaint including interpretation support or where the complainant is a child or young person
- keep records.

## Clerk to the Governing Board

The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the panel and should:

- ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of their legal rights and duties, including any under legislation relating to school complaints, education law, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties (if they are invited to attend) and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example; stage 1 paperwork, school and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale
- record the proceedings
- circulate the minutes of the meeting
- notify all parties of the panel's decision within 10 working days.

## Panel Chair

The panel's chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint meeting, should ensure that:

- both parties are asked (via the Clerk) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting
- the meeting is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy
- complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person
- the remit of the panel is explained to the complainant
- written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR.
- If a new issue arises it would be useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it; this may require a short adjournment of the meeting
- both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting or verbally in the meeting itself
- the issues are addressed
- key findings of fact are made
- the panel is open-minded and acts independently
- no member of the panel has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- the meeting is minuted
- they liaise with the Clerk (and complaints co-ordinator, if the school has one).

## Panel Member

Panel members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so
  - No Governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- the aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant

- We recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.
- many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting

Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child.

- extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child/young person and present during all or part of the meeting
- Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated.
- The panel should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.
- If the child/young person is the complainant, the panel should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the child/young person's parent is the complainant, the panel should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child/young person needs to attend. However, the parent should be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child/young person to attend a part of the meeting that the panel considers is not in the child/young person's best interests.
- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

All other complaints are handled by the School according to the arrangements set out in this document.

## Serial or Persistent Complaints

The School will help and support those who contact them with a complaint or concern or request information.

Sometimes, however, the School may be repeatedly contacted with regard to the same information and points, asking for the School to reconsider the position or decisions made. If the complainant tries to repeatedly re-open the same issue once the procedure has been complete, this will be considered serial or persistent and appropriate action will be taken. The application of a serial or persistent marking will be against the subject or complaint itself rather than the complainant.

- The Chair of Governors can inform the complainant that the case has been closed.

The School recognises that all complainants have the democratic right to refer their complaint to their local MP regardless of which stage the complaint has reached.

## Discontinue Responding

The School believes the decision to stop responding should never be taken lightly. The School needs to be able to say yes to all of the following:

- The School has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's needs;
- The complainant has been given a clear statement of the School's position and their options (if any); and,
- The complainant is contacting the school repeatedly but making substantially the same points each time.

The case to discontinue responding is stronger if the School agrees with one or more of these statements:

- The School has reason to believe the individual is contacting them with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience – have they actually said as much in a letter, email or telephone call?
- Their letters/emails/telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive.
- They make insulting personal comments about or threats towards staff.

The School will continue to respond professionally and will not stop responding just because an individual is difficult to deal with or asks complex questions. In most circumstances, the School will refuse to respond to the subject matter. It is the subject matter that the School can refuse to respond to, not the complainant.

The School will provide parents with the information they are entitled to under The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005 (S.I. 1437) and subsequent amendments in the School Information (England) Regulations 2008 (S.I. 1471).

However, where an individual's behaviour is causing a significant level of disruption the School may implement a tailored communications strategy such as restricting them to a single point of contact via an email address or by limiting the number of times they make contact; e.g. a fixed number of contacts per term.

The school recognises that complainants have a right to have any new complaint heard, and obstruction by a school could result in the complaint being referred to the Department for Education.

If School staff find it difficult to deal direct with a complainant because of their unreasonable behaviour and other strategies are not working, they may be able to approach the governor services team at their LA to ask for assistance. If this is agreed, complainants can be advised not to contact the School, but to communicate instead with the LA, who will co-ordinate any response.

Complainants who may have been restricted in their communications with the School can also be advised to ask a third party to act on their behalf, such as the local Citizen's Advice Bureau.

Ultimately, if a complainant persists to the point that the School considers it to constitute harassment, legal advice will be sought as to the next steps.

Once the School has decided that it is right to stop responding, they will need to let the complainant know; ideally through a hard copy letter, but an email will suffice.

## Unreasonable Complainants

The School defines unreasonable complainants as '*those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the School, hinder the School's consideration of their or other people's complaints*'. The school does not expect staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

For the purposes of this policy, "**unreasonable complaints**" includes:

### **Vexatious complaints, which:**

- Are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific or repetitious.

- Insist upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason.
- Insist upon unmeritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner.
- Are designed to cause disruption or annoyance
- Demand for redress which lacks any serious purpose or value.

**Serial or persistent complaints which:**

- 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 while still wishing their complaint to be resolved;
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of this 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 detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately or 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;
- 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 that complaint where the School's complaints procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed, including referral to the Department for Education;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- makes excessive demands on School time by frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

A complainant may also be considered unreasonable if they make their complaint whether face-to-face, by telephone, in writing or electronically:

- maliciously;
- aggressively;
- using threats, intimidation or violence;
- using abusive, offensive or discriminatory language;
- knowing it to be false;
- using falsified information.

Complainants should limit the number of communications with the School while a complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text) as it could delay the outcome.

Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and asking them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact the School causing a significant level of disruption, the School may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed. This may include banning an individual from the School.

## Barring from the School Premises

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private places. The public has no automatic right of entry. The School will therefore act to ensure it remains a safe place for pupils, staff and other members of its community.

If an individual's behaviour is a cause for concern, the School can ask him/her to leave school premises. In serious cases, the Headteacher or the Local Authority can notify them in writing that their implied licence to be on School premises has been temporarily revoked subject to an appeal hearing.

If this decision is taken, the School will put it in writing and explain how the decision can be appealed. The School will give the individual the opportunity to formally express their views on the decision to ban in writing.

The decision will then be reviewed and either confirmed or lifted. If the decision is confirmed the individual will be notified in writing, explaining how long the ban will be in place.

Anyone wishing to complain about being barred can do so, by letter or email, to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors. However, complaints about barring cannot be escalated to the Department for Education. Once the School procedure has been completed, the only remaining avenue of appeal is through the Courts; independent legal advice must therefore be sought.



# SAVS Formal Complaint Form

Please complete and either return to the Headteacher by hand or email via the School Office: in person or [main@southascotvillageschool.org.uk](mailto:main@southascotvillageschool.org.uk). The Headteacher will acknowledge receipt of this form and explain what action will be taken, within 10 school days.

If, however, the complaint is about the Headteacher then please either return the form to the School Office in a sealed envelope marked 'Personal for the Chair of Governors' or email directly to the Clerk of Governors: [r.jackson@southascotvillageschool.org.uk](mailto:r.jackson@southascotvillageschool.org.uk), who will acknowledge receipt and forward to the Chair of Governors.

Printed versions of this form are available from the School Office. An editable version of this form is available on the school website or via the School Office. A printable version of this form is available as an appendix to the complaints policy.

<b>Your name:</b>	
<b>Pupil's name:</b>	<b>Pupil's Year Group:</b>
<b>Your relation to the pupil:</b>	<b>Telephone day:</b>
<b>Email address for contact:</b>	

*Please use space overleaf and additional pages as you see fit.*

<b>Please give details of your complaint:</b>
<b>Have you raised this matter with the Class Teacher? If so, what was the outcome. If not, why not?</b>
<b>Have you raised this matter with the Key Stage Lead? If so, what was the outcome. If not, why not?</b>
<b>Have you raised this matter with any other member of staff?</b>

**What other action has been taken to resolve the matter and by whom?**

**What actions or outcomes do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?**

**Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.** Yes / No

**Signature:**  
**Date:**

<b>INTERNAL USE</b>	
<b>Date received:</b>	<b>Date acknowledgement sent and by whom:</b>
<b>Stage:</b>	
<b>Complaint referred to:</b>	
<b>Action taken:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>	
<b>Date Resolved/Concluded:</b>	