

Giles Junior School

Achieving excellence through leadership

Complaints Policy and Procedure

School name and address: Giles Junior School, Durham Road, Stevenage SG1 4JQ
Website: www.gilesjm.herts.sch.uk
Email: admin@gilesjm.herts.sch.uk
Telephone: 01438 353374

This policy is based on the HfL model document which has not been updated since 2020.

Who can make a complaint?

This complaints process is not limited only to parents or carers of children who are on roll at the school. Other people, including members of the public, may make a complaint to the school, provided that the complaint relates to the provision of facilities or services that we provide.

Any issues for which a separate statutory process applies (such as appeals regarding exclusions or admissions) do not fall within the scope of this process. The school will confirm to you, upon receipt, whether or not your complaint falls under this policy and procedure and what will happen next if it does. For issues that fall outside this policy and procedure, the school will confirm the correct process that applies instead.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

We define a **concern** as:

an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important, for which reassurance is sought.

We define a **complaint** as:

an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions taken or a lack of action, that requires an investigation and a formal response in writing.

It is in everybody's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved as swiftly as possible. Many issues can be resolved informally, without needing to escalate to the formal stages of the complaints process. Giles Junior School takes concerns seriously and we will make every effort to resolve matters as quickly as possible.

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

Giles Junior School understands, however, that there are some occasions when people wish to raise their concerns formally. In such instances, the school will attempt to resolve the issues internally through the stages outlined within this Complaints Policy and Procedure.

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. It may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, provided that the third party is able to demonstrate to the school that they have the appropriate consent to do so.

A flow chart showing the whole process can be found at Appendix 5.

Concerns should normally be raised with either the Class Teacher at the first instance. Should the issue not be resolved then the year group leader will review the concern and offer further guidance. The year group leader will feed this back to SLT (Assistant Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Headteacher). If unresolved then the Assistant Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will organise a

further conversation and review of the incident. If still not resolved then a meeting or phone call with the headteacher can be arranged.

Complainants should **not** approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. Governors have no power to act on an individual basis and doing so may prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 2 of the formal complaints process. If a governor is approached by a complainant, they should signpost the complainant back to the most appropriate person. This could be the Class Teacher, Headteacher or Chair of Governors, depending on which stage the complaint has reached.

- Complaints against school staff (except the Headteacher) should be made in the first instance to the Headteacher via the school office. They should be marked *Private and Confidential*.
- Complaints regarding the Headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors and submitted via the school office. They should be marked *Private and Confidential*. The school office will ensure that the Chair of Governors receives this promptly.
- Complaints about the Chair of Governors, any individual governor or the whole Governing Body should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body and submitted to the school office. They should be marked *Private and Confidential*. The school office will ensure that the Clerk receives this promptly.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included within this policy (Appendix 2). If you require help to complete the form, you should contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau or an independent advocate, to help you.

Giles Junior School will ensure that all formal complaints are documented in writing to ensure that the issues being complained about, and the complainant's desired outcomes, are clear. Complainants will be asked to submit their complaint in writing, either by sending an email or letter via the school office or by completing the school's formal complaint form.

In accordance with equality law, the school will consider making reasonable adjustments, if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints process. This may include providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants to raise a formal complaint, or holding meetings in accessible locations.

If a complainant is unable to submit their complaint in writing, the school will ensure that the issues being complained about and the outcomes being requested are documented in writing. This may be done in either of the following ways:

- Inviting the complainant to a meeting with the Headteacher or Chair of Governors (depending on the stage reached) and a note-taker. The note-taker will document the issues being complained about and the complainant's desired outcomes, as discussed and agreed during the meeting. At the end of the meeting, the complainant will be given a copy of the notes and the school will retain the original for the purposes of investigating the complaint.
- Signposting the complainant to independent support, including advocacy. Advocates provide qualified, independent support for people who have difficulty understanding information and advice or who would like support in communicating their views. Advocates can help complainants to formulate their complaint, submit it on their behalf and support them through the complaints process.

POhWER was founded in Hertfordshire in 1996. They deliver services in Hertfordshire as part of the HertsHelp service, in partnership with a wide range of voluntary sector organisations, including advocacy. It is a free and impartial service.

POhWER

Telephone: 0300 456 2370

Text: send the word 'pohwer' with your name and number to 81025

Email: pohwer@pohwer.net

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Anonymous complaints

Giles Junior School will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. In such cases, the Headteacher and/or the Chair of Governors will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation and will ensure that this is completed if so. The outcome of the investigation cannot be shared with the complainant, as the school will not know who they are and therefore cannot ascertain whether they are entitled to confidential information about the complaint.

Timescales

All complaints must be raised within three months of the incident or event. Where a series of associated incidents has occurred, the complaint must be raised within three months of the last of these incidents.

Giles Junior School will only exercise discretion to consider matters raised outside this timeframe if the school deems that exceptional circumstances apply. To enable the school to make this decision, the complainant will be asked to explain why they have taken longer than three months to raise their complaint. If no explanation is provided, or the school deems that the explanation is not sufficiently compelling to warrant a late complaint being investigated, the school will confirm this in writing and take no further action.

Complaints received outside term time

Giles Junior School will treat any complaints made outside term time as having been received on the first school day after the holiday period. The school will send the complainant an acknowledgement, confirming the date of receipt, what will happen next and the timescale that applies. This will differ depending on the stage of the process.

Scope of this Complaints Policy and Procedure

This policy and procedure only applies to complaints about the provision of facilities or services by Giles Junior School.

Examples of issues that may be complained about include:

- Complaints from individuals, including members of the public, about the provision of facilities or services by the school.
- Issues from parents or carers of children who attend the school.
- Complaints regarding pupil welfare and wellbeing.
- Complaints regarding bullying.
- Complaints regarding staff behaviour.
- A governor complaining about a member of staff.
- A member of staff complaining about a governor.
- A governor complaining about another governor.

- Complaints about the school's handling of a Subject Access Request (SAR) or a Freedom of Information (FOI) request.

The following matters **cannot** be dealt with as a formal complaint under this policy:

- Complaints about pupil behaviour outside school hours (e.g. weekends and holiday periods) – such issues are not the school's responsibility.
- Complaints regarding third parties using or hiring school premises – third-party providers should have their own complaints processes and you should contact them directly.
- Complaints about the school carrying out a statutory duty (e.g. making a child protection referral) – the complaints process cannot be used to prevent the school fulfilling its legal duties.
- Matters likely to require a child protection investigation – these are handled under the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and in accordance with statutory guidance.
- A member of staff complaining about another member of staff – refer to the school's internal grievance procedures.
- A member of staff complaining about an action or decision of the full Governing Body – the Governing Body will already have given the matter full consideration.
- Whistleblowing – refer to the school's internal Whistleblowing Procedure for all employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for whistleblowers in education who do not wish to raise matters directly with their employer. Referrals can be made at www.education.gov.uk/contactus.
- Complaints regarding internal management decisions (e.g. class and teacher allocations, school session time changes).
- National Curriculum content – contact the Department for Education at www.education.gov.uk/contactus.
- Complaints about a decision or process that has been subject to a full consultation and subsequently approved by the full Governing Body – the Governing Body has already given the matter full consideration and respondents have had the opportunity to put forward their views.
- Unsuccessful school admission applications – these may be appealed to an Independent Appeal Panel.
- Complaints about fixed-term or permanent exclusions – permanent exclusions may be appealed to an Independent Review Panel (IRP). For fixed-term exclusions, representations can be made to the Chair of Governors outside the provisions of this complaints process.
- Wishing to overturn a decision to unauthorised absence where the DFE Guidance has been followed outlined in the school's Attendance Policy

If other bodies are looking into aspects of a complaint (for example, the Police, Local Authority safeguarding teams or a Tribunal), this may impact the school's ability to adhere to the timescales in this policy or may result in the process being suspended until the other body has concluded its enquiries.

If a complainant commences legal action against Giles Junior School in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints process until the legal proceedings have concluded. The school will only consider investigating the complaint afterwards if those proceedings did not address the issues at the heart of the complaint.

Resolving complaints

At each stage, Giles Junior School will aim 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, where appropriate:

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

Withdrawal of a complaint

If a complainant wishes to withdraw their complaint, they must inform the school. Giles Junior School will ask them to confirm this in writing. If they are unable to do so, the school will write to them to confirm that their complaint has been withdrawn in accordance with their wishes.

Stage 1

If a concern has been raised with the relevant members of staff and a resolution has not been reached (see page 2 how to raise a concern or make a complaint) then a formal complaint must be made to the Headteacher in the first instance (unless the complaint is about the Headteacher) via the school office.

If you are unable to submit your complaint in writing by email, letter or by using the formal complaint form, the school will follow the steps set out earlier in this policy, by offering to meet you and/or signposting you to free and impartial advocacy and support.

The Headteacher will record the date the complaint was received and will acknowledge receipt in writing (letter or email) within **3 school days**.

Within this response, the Headteacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, what remains unresolved and what outcome(s) the complainant would like to see. The Headteacher will consider whether a face-to-face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this. The Headteacher may delegate the investigation of the complaint to another member of the Senior Leadership Team, but not the decision.

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

- Interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish (who is interviewed and how is at the Investigator's discretion).
- Keep a written record of any meetings or interviews.

Once the investigation has concluded, the Headteacher will provide a formal written response within **10 school days** of the date of receipt of the complaint. If, for any reason, the Headteacher is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and a revised response date.

The response will detail the actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision(s) made and the reasoning behind them. Where appropriate, it will include details of any actions the school will take to try to resolve the complaint.

The Headteacher will advise the complainant how they may escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, or a member of the Governing Body (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled governor will be appointed to carry out the Stage 1 process.

Complaints about the Headteacher or a member of the Governing Body must be made to the Clerk, via the school office.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors,
- about the majority of the Governing Body, or
- about the entire Governing Body,

Stage 1 will be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the Clerk. This may be a governor from another school. At the conclusion of their investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response to the complainant.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage 1 response, they have **10 school days** in which to request escalation to Stage 2. Escalation requests made outside this timeframe do not have to be accepted. Late requests will only be considered if the school deems exceptional circumstances apply.

Stage 2 – Governors' Complaints Panel Hearing

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, where it will be heard by a panel of governors. Stage 2 is the final stage of the school's complaints process. The Governors will need to be sure that the informal processes and stage 1 has been taken before they will become involved.

A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the Chair of Governors (or to the Clerk if the complaint is about the Chair), via the school office, within **10 school days** of the Stage 1 response being issued.

The Chair (or Clerk) will record the date the escalation request is received and acknowledge it in writing within **3 school days**.

Stage 2 will only consider complaints that have already been lodged and investigated at Stage 1. It is **not** an opportunity to raise new complaints.

The Chair (or Clerk) will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the Stage 2 panel hearing. They will aim to convene a panel within **20 school days** of receipt of the Stage 2 request. If this is not possible, an anticipated date will be provided and the complainant kept informed.

If the complainant rejects three proposed dates without good reason, the Chair (or Clerk) may set a date and the hearing may proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis that the panel will consider all written submissions.

The Stage 2 panel will consist of at least three governors with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. If there are fewer than three eligible governors available from Giles Junior School, impartial governors from other schools or via the Local Authority Governor Services may be used. In some cases, an entirely external panel may be convened.

The panel will decide whether to deal with the complaint via a hearing or by written representations, being sensitive to the complainant's needs. Hearings may take place with both parties present or separately, depending on the circumstances.

Both parties (the complainant and the respondent on behalf of the school) may be accompanied by a friend, relative or independent supporter. Whilst not prohibited, legal representation is **not** normally encouraged, as this is not a court and cross-examination is not permitted. All questioning is conducted by the panel.

Witnesses, including staff, may be invited to give evidence and may also be accompanied by a supporter.

If a complaint about a member of staff's conduct is upheld, in full or in part, this may result in internal disciplinary action. In such cases, the complainant will be informed that the matter will be progressed through staff disciplinary procedures, but the outcome of those procedures will remain confidential between the employer and employee.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend a Stage 2 hearing.

At least **14 school days** before the hearing, the Chair (or Clerk) will:

- Confirm the date, time and venue of the hearing for all parties. Every effort will be made to ensure the arrangements are reasonable and accessible.
- Request any further written material to be submitted at least **7 school days** before the meeting. Late evidence will not normally be accepted.

Any written material submitted will be circulated to all parties at least **5 school days** before the hearing.

The panel will not normally accept covert audio or video recordings as evidence where informed consent was not obtained.

The panel will not review new complaints at this stage. Any new matters must go through Stage 1 first.

The hearing will be held in private. Electronic recording is not normally permitted unless it is a reasonable adjustment for disability or special needs. Any request to record must be agreed by all present and noted by the Clerk.

The panel will consider the complaint and evidence presented. It may:

- Uphold the complaint in full or in part
- Reject the complaint in full or in part
- Conclude that there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement

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

- Decide on appropriate action to try to resolve the complaint
- Where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues arising

The Chair of the panel will provide the complainant, and the respondent on behalf of the school, with a written decision and reasons within **5 school days** of the hearing.

The outcome letter will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if the complainant remains dissatisfied with how their complaint has been handled.

If the complaint is:

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

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

Stage 2 – Governor Review (complaints where a child is no longer on roll)

Where a child has left the school and is no longer on roll, a full remedy directly benefiting the pupil may not be possible. However, the Governing Body still has a duty of care to current pupils.

In such cases, the Chair of Governors has discretion to commission a **Stage 2 Governor Review** instead of a panel hearing. A governor with no prior involvement will review the original complaint, the Stage 1 investigation and response, the complainant's escalation request and any further relevant evidence.

A governor may be appointed from another school or via Governor Services if required.

On completion of the review, the complainant will be informed in writing whether the complaint is upheld or rejected, in full or in part, and of any changes to practice and procedures agreed by the Governing Body.

Further recourse

Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision complaints

If your complaint relates to the way the school has delivered the provision set out in Section F of your child's EHCP, you may complain further to the Local Authority that maintains the plan (details retained as in your draft – they are fine).

Complaints of any other nature

If, after Stage 2, the complainant believes that the school did not follow this policy correctly, or acted unlawfully or unreasonably under education law, they may approach the **Department for Education (DfE)**.

The DfE will not normally re-investigate the substance of the complaint or overturn the school's decisions. They will consider whether the school has followed education legislation and any statutory policies relevant to the complaint.

Contact details remain as in your draft (they are fine).

Next review

November 2025

Distribution

This policy will be made available to:

1. All school staff
 2. All governors
 3. The Clerk to the Governing Board
 4. All parents (via the school website, and on paper by request)
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Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

The complainant should:

- Explain their complaint in full as swiftly as possible.
- Co-operate fully with the School to try and resolve the complaint.
- Respond promptly to requests for information or meetings.
- Agree the details of their complaint and their desired outcomes in a timely way if clarification is requested.
- Ask for assistance if or when needed.
- Treat everybody involved in their complaint and the complaints process with dignity and respect.
- Refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.
- Refrain from making allegations and threats.

If the complainant fails or refuses to follow the above, the School may have to suspend its consideration of their complaint, either temporarily or permanently, depending on the nature of the complainant's behaviour and how this affects the School's handling of the complaint. In such circumstances, the School also reserves the right to invoke its Policy and Procedure for Managing Persistent and Vexatious Behaviour and Complaints (contained in Appendix 3).

Investigator (if one is required or appointed)

This could be the Headteacher or another member of the School's Senior Leadership Team. 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 any staff, children, young people or any other people relevant to the complaint.
 - Consideration of records and other relevant information.
 - Analysing information.
 - Referring to any relevant School policies and procedures that apply.
- Liaising with the complainant and the Complaints Co-ordinator as appropriate to try and identify how the complaint may best be resolved.

The Investigator should:

- Conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in their questioning if they deem this necessary.
- Keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to document the meeting.
- Ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending further consideration of the complaint.
- Be mindful of the timescales to respond.
- If the Investigator is somebody other than the Headteacher, then they should prepare

a comprehensive report for the Headteacher or the Stage 2 Complaints Panel that sets out the facts, tries to identify solutions and makes recommendations to try and resolve the issues.

The Headteacher or Stage 2 Complaints Panel will then determine whether to uphold or reject the complaint in full or in part and communicate their finding(s) to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

Complaints Co-ordinator

This could be the Headteacher, a Designated Complaints Governor or a member of School staff providing administrative support.

The Complaints Co-ordinator should:

- Ensure that the complainant is updated at each stage of the School's complaints process.
- Liaise with staff members, the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors, the Clerk and any another relevant sources of information or support, to ensure a smooth and effective complaints process.
- Remain mindful of issues regarding:
 - Sharing third party information.
 - Additional support. This may be needed, for example, by complainants when making a complaint, including an Interpreter or where the complainant is a child or young person.
- Keep accurate records and store them securely.

Clerk to the Governing Body

The Clerk is the point of contact for the complainant, the respondent on behalf of the School and the Stage 2 Complaints Panel. They should:

- Ensure that everybody involved in the complaints process is aware of their legal rights and responsibilities, 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 (unless three proposed dates have been declined without good reason in which case the Clerk or the Chair of Governors will decide when the Hearing will be). They should also ensure that the venue and proceedings are accessible for all attendees.
- Collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example; the Stage 1 paperwork, the respondent on behalf of the School's submission, the complainant's submission and signed, dated witness statements) and send it to all parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale (including the Panel).
- Take detailed notes of the Stage 2 Complaints Panel Hearing.
- Provide a copy of their detailed notes to either or both parties if requested to do so.
- Notify both parties of the Panel's findings.

Chair of the Stage 2 Complaints Panel

The Chair of the Stage 2 Complaints Panel will be appointed in advance of the Hearing and 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 Hearing.
- The Hearing is conducted fairly and impartially, 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 attending such Hearings are put at ease insofar as possible. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child or young person.
- The remit of the Complaints Panel is explained to both parties.
- 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 it and comment upon it. This may require an adjournment of the Hearing. New issues would need to be passed back for consideration at Stage 1 first.
- Both the complainant and the respondent on behalf of the School are given the opportunity to put forward their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the Hearing or verbally in the Hearing itself.
- No cross questioning is permitted. All questioning is conducted by the Panel.
- 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 has had any involvement at an earlier stage of the complaints process.
- The Clerk takes detailed notes of the Hearing.
- They liaise with the Clerk whenever the need arises (and the Complaints Co-ordinator, if the School has one).

Stage 2 Complaints Panel Member

Stage 2 Complaints Panel Members should remain mindful that:

- The Hearing must be independent and impartial and should be seen to be so.
- No Governor may sit on the Panel if they have had prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- The aim of the Hearing should be to try and resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the School and the complainant wherever possible.
- The complainant may not be satisfied with the outcome if the Panel does not find in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.
- Many complainants will feel nervous in a formal setting such as this.
- Parents and carers often feel emotional when discussing issues that affect their children.
- Extra care needs to be taken if the complainant is a child or young person and they are present during all or part of the Hearing.
- Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should be given to ensure that a child or young person does not feel intimidated.
- The Panel should respect the views of a child or young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.
- If a child or young person is the complainant, the Panel should ask them in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint.

- Where a child or young person's parent or carer is the complainant, the Panel should give them the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child or young person would like to be present for.
- The complainant should be advised that it may not be agreed for a child or young person to attend a Hearing if the Panel considers that it is not in the child or young person's best interests.
- The welfare and best interests of the child or young person should remain at the forefront at all times.

Appendix 2

Formal Complaint Form

Name:		
Address:		
Postcode:		
Email address:		
Telephone No:	Day:	
	Evening:	
	Mobile:	
What is the nature of your complaint? (Please use additional sheets if needed)		
Have you raised your issue(s) with your child's Class Teacher at the informal stage? If so, when did you do this?	Yes (inc. date)	No

Have you complained to the Headteacher at Stage 1?	Yes (inc. date)	No
What happened when you complained to the Headteacher?		
What are your desired outcomes?		
Signed:		
Date:		

Please return your completed complaint form to the School Office either by email at <insert email address here> or in hard copy format and it will be passed to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, depending on what stage the complaint is at and what it is regarding.

Appendix 3

Giles Junior School
Policy and Procedure for Managing Persistent and Vexatious Behaviour
and Complaints

Giles Junior School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and in accordance with the complaints policy and procedure that the Governing Body has adopted.

The School will not normally limit the amount of contact that parents, carers or complainants have with us; however, the School does not expect its staff to tolerate unreasonable behaviour and we will take decisive action to protect staff from such behaviour, including any that the School deems to be abusive, offensive or threatening.

Giles Junior School defines unreasonable behaviour as that which affects the smooth and efficient running of the School on a daily basis, or that which hinders the School's consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the School, such as, if the complainant:

- 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 process at any stage.
- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints process.
- Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints process or with good practice, or only in a way that suits themselves.
- Introduces trivial or irrelevant information that they expect to be taken into account and commented upon.
- Raises detailed but unimportant questions and insists they are answered fully, often immediately and to their own timescales.
- Makes unfounded complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues and seeks to have them replaced.
- Seeks to change the basis of some or all of the complaint as the complaints process proceeds.
- Repeatedly makes the same complaint(s) (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is unfounded or has been fully addressed).
- Refuses to accept the outcome of the complaints process despite the fact that the process has been exhausted and correctly implemented, including signposting the complainant to the Department for Education (DFE).
- Seeks an unrealistic outcome.
- Makes excessive demands on School time by way of frequent, lengthy, complicated and stressful contact(s) with staff regarding the complaint, in person, in writing, by email and by telephone whilst the complaint is being dealt with.
- Uses threats to intimidate.
- Uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence.
- Makes and breaks contact with the School on an ongoing basis with varying time delays in between.
- Knowingly provides false information.
- Persistently approaches various individuals at the School, as well as the Local Authority, Ofsted and the Department for Education, etc, through different routes about the same issue(s) in the hope of eliciting different responses.
- Publishes what the School deems to be inappropriate or unacceptable information on social media or other platforms.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the School where it relates to their complaint, whilst the complaint is being progressed through the complaints process. It

is unhelpful and unnecessary if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome(s) being finalised.

Wherever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the Complainant/Parent/Carer about their behaviour informally before deciding to invoke this policy and procedure for managing persistent and vexatious behaviour and complaints.

If any unreasonable behaviour continues after the Headteacher or Chair of Governors has spoken informally with the Complainant/Parent/Carer, the Headteacher will write to them. The Headteacher will confirm that the School deems their behaviour to be persistent and/or vexatious and will ask them to stop behaving in this way.

Wherever Complainants/Parents/Carers continue to contact Giles Junior School excessively, causing a significant level of disruption, the School will consider whether to impose some or all of the following communication restrictions and confirm this in writing accordingly:

- Requesting that contact only takes place in a particular form (e.g. letters only).
- Requiring contact to take place with a designated member of Staff (e.g. the Headteacher).
- Restricting telephone calls to specified days and times.
- Asking the complainant to enter into an agreement about their future contact with the School.
- Informing the complainant that if they do not follow this advice (as stated above), any further communication/correspondence that does not present significant new matters or new information will only be kept on file and will not be acknowledged or responded to.
- If the complainant tries to re-open an issue that has already been considered through the complaints process, the Chair of Governors will inform them in writing that the process has been exhausted, that the matter is now closed, and that the School will not enter into any further correspondence about it.

The decision of the Headteacher or Chair of Governors to invoke this policy and procedure (and any communication restrictions imposed as a result) is final and cannot be challenged or overturned through the School's complaints process. This is because the decision will be reviewed by the Headteacher or Chair of Governors after six months. If the Complainant/Parent/Carer's behaviour has remained the same or worsened, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors reserves the right to extend the communication restrictions for a further six months each time they review the situation. If the Complainant/Parent/Carer's behaviour has improved to a level that the School deems acceptable, then communication restrictions will be lifted on the proviso that should matters regress, the School reserves the right to reinstate the communication restrictions that previously applied.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, Giles Junior School will immediately inform the Police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring the individual(s) from the School premises. Should the School deem this necessary, it will ensure that it adheres to the guidance issued by the Department for Education (DFE) entitled [Controlling access to School premises](#).

The School also reserves the right to use and adapt this policy and procedure whenever it deems it appropriate to manage unreasonable or persistent contact not directly associated with, or resulting from, formal complaints.

Appendix 4

Process to resolve concerns

