Rawdah Montessori Primary School
Complaints Policy

Version: 2.0
Reviewed: October 2025
Next Review Due: October 2026

1. Introduction and Policy Statement

Rawdah Montessori School is committed to providing the highest quality of education and pastoral care for all pupils. We recognise that, despite our best efforts, occasions may arise where parents or others have concerns or complaints about the school's provision.

This policy sets out a clear, fair, and transparent procedure for handling complaints. It aims to:

- Resolve concerns informally at the earliest stage wherever possible.
- Ensure that all formal complaints are investigated thoroughly, impartially, and promptly.
- Protect the confidentiality of all parties involved.
- Use feedback and complaints as opportunities to learn and improve.
- Comply with the requirements of the **Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014** (as amended) .

This policy should be read in conjunction with the:

- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- **Data Protection Policy**
- **Staff Code of Conduct**
- **Grievance Policy** (for staff complaints)
- **Whistleblowing Policy**

2. Legal Framework

This policy is guided by the following legislation and guidance:

Legislation / Guidance	Relevance
Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended)	Requires independent schools to have a written procedure to deal with complaints and to investigate them effectively .
Equality Act 2010	Protects complainants from discrimination and requires the school to make reasonable adjustments where needed.
Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR	Governs the handling of personal data during the complaints process.
Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)	Sets out requirements for handling safeguarding concerns and allegations against staff .

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework	Sets specific timescales for complaints relating to EYFS provision .

3. Scope and Application

This complaints procedure applies to:

- Parents and carers of current pupils at Rawdah Montessori.
- Former pupils and their parents (for complaints about their time at the school, though timescales may vary).

This procedure does **not** apply to:

- Complaints made by staff (these are covered by the **Grievance Policy**).
- Complaints made by members of the public not connected to the school.
- Concerns about safeguarding or child protection (these must be referred immediately to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** and may be handled under separate procedures).

4. Principles

Principle	Explanation
Confidentiality	All complaints will be treated confidentially. Information will only be shared on a strict need-to-know basis.
Fairness	All parties will be given a fair opportunity to state their case.
Timeliness	Complaints will be acknowledged promptly and resolved as quickly as possible.
No Penalisation	No child will be penalised because a parent has made a complaint in good faith.
Learning	The school will use complaints to improve practice and will record outcomes for review.
Transparency	The number of formal complaints will be published annually on the school's website.

5. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- All correspondence, statements, and records relating to a complaint will be kept **confidential**, in line with the **Data Protection Policy**.
- Records will be stored securely and accessed only by those directly involved in the complaint.
- Records of complaints will be retained for at least **3 years** (or longer if required for safeguarding or legal reasons) .

6. Complaints Involving Safeguarding

If a complaint raises **safeguarding concerns** (e.g., about a child's welfare, an allegation against a member of staff, or peer-on-peer abuse), the matter must be referred immediately to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** .

- The DSL will follow the procedures in the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**.
- The school may need to refer the matter to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), children's social care, or the police.
- The complaints procedure may be paused or modified to avoid prejudicing any external investigation.

All complaints involving peer-on-peer sexual harassment or abuse will be logged and, where required, reported to the Department for Education (DfE) .

7. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will be considered at the discretion of the Headteacher. However, the school's ability to investigate anonymous complaints may be limited. Complainants are encouraged to identify themselves to allow for a full and fair investigation.

8. Complaints Against the Headteacher or Proprietor

If the complaint is about the **Headteacher**, it should be made directly to the **Chair of Governors** (or Proprietor). Contact details are available from the school office.

If the complaint is about a **member of the Governing Body** or the **Proprietor**, it should be made in writing to the **Clerk to the Governing Body**, who will determine the appropriate course of action.

9. Time Limits

- Complaints should be made as soon as possible after the event giving rise to the complaint.
- The school reserves the right not to investigate complaints that are made outside a reasonable timeframe (normally **3 months** after the event), unless there are exceptional circumstances.

10. The Complaints Procedure

The complaints procedure has three stages:

10.1 Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

Who to contact: The child's class teacher (Guide/Form Tutor) in the first instance.

Process:

- Parents should raise their concern with the class teacher, either in person, by telephone, or by email.
- The teacher will listen to the concern, seek to understand the issue, and work with the parent to resolve it.
- If the teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, they may consult the **Head of Department** or **Deputy Head**.
- The teacher will make a brief written record of the concern and the outcome.

Timescale: Most informal concerns will be resolved within **5 working days**.

If the matter is not resolved within **14 days**, or if the parent is not satisfied with the outcome, they will be advised to proceed to Stage 2.

Note for EYFS: For complaints relating to Early Years Foundation Stage provision, the school will investigate and respond within **4 working days** of the complaint being received in writing .

10.2 Stage 2 – Formal Complaint to the Headteacher

Who to contact: The Headteacher.

Process:

1. The parent should put their complaint in writing, addressed to the Headteacher. The letter should include:
    - The nature of the complaint.
    - Any relevant dates, times, and names.

    - What action the parent would like to see taken.
    - Copies of any relevant documents.
2. The Headteacher will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within **5 working days**.
3. The Headteacher will investigate the complaint. This may involve:
    - Meeting with the parent.
    - Speaking with staff involved.
    - Reviewing relevant records.
4. The Headteacher will provide a written response, setting out their findings and any actions to be taken, normally within **14 working days** of receiving the complaint. If the investigation takes longer, the parent will be kept informed.
5. If the complaint is about the Headteacher, it will be referred directly to the **Chair of Governors** (see Section 8).

Outcome: If the parent is satisfied with the outcome, the matter is closed. If they are not satisfied, they may proceed to Stage 3.

10.3 Stage 3 – Panel Hearing

Who to contact: The Clerk to the Governing Body (or Proprietor).

Process:

1. If the parent wishes to appeal the Headteacher's decision, they must submit a written appeal to the **Clerk to the Governing Body** within **10 working days** of receiving the Stage 2 response.
2. The appeal must state:
    - The grounds for the appeal.
    - Which elements of the Stage 2 decision are being contested.
    - Any new evidence not previously considered.
3. The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within **5 working days** and arrange a **Complaints Panel Hearing**.

Complaints Panel Composition:
The panel will consist of:

- Two members of the Governing Body (one of whom will act as Chair).
- One **independent person** who has no connection to the school (i.e., not a governor, staff member, or parent of a current pupil) .

None of the panel members will have been involved in the earlier stages of the complaint.

Hearing Procedure:

- The hearing will normally be held within **14 working days** of the appeal being received.
- The parent may be accompanied by one other person (e.g., a relative, friend, or advocate). Legal representation is not normally appropriate.
- The Headteacher (or relevant staff) may also attend.
- The panel will consider all evidence and may ask questions of both parties.
- If further investigation is needed, the panel may adjourn and reconvene later.

Outcome:

- The panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations.
- The panel will provide a written decision to the parent, the Headteacher, and any other relevant parties within **10 working days** of the hearing.
- The decision of the panel is **final**.

Reporting:

- A copy of the panel's findings and recommendations will be kept on file and made available to the Governing Body.
- The Governing Body will ensure that any recommendations are implemented.

11. Recording and Monitoring

- A written record will be kept of all complaints, including whether they were resolved at Stage 1, Stage 2, or proceeded to a Stage 3 Panel Hearing.
- Records will include:
    - The nature of the complaint.
    - The date received.
    - The outcome at each stage.
    - Any actions taken.
- Records will be retained for at least **3 years** in line with the school's Data Retention Policy .
- The number of formal complaints (Stage 2 and Stage 3) will be published annually on the school's website, within this policy.

12. External Review

If a complainant remains dissatisfied after completing the school's internal complaints procedure, they may refer the matter to:

Body	Contact Details	When to Use
Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)	CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA Tel: 020 7600 0100 Email: concerns@isi.net	For complaints about regulatory compliance (e.g., safeguarding, standards).
Ofsted	Royal Exchange Buildings, St Ann's Square, Manchester M2 7LA Tel: 0300 123 4666 Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk	For complaints about early years provision (if applicable).
Department for Education (DfE)	www.gov.uk/dfe	For complaints about independent school standards.

Complainants should note that these bodies will normally only consider a complaint after the school's internal procedures have been exhausted.

13. Unreasonable or Persistent Complaints

The school reserves the right to limit contact with a complainant if their behaviour is deemed **unreasonable** or **persistent** (e.g., making excessive demands, refusing to accept outcomes, using aggressive language). In such cases:

- The Headteacher may write to the complainant to explain that further correspondence will be limited.
- The school may specify a single point of contact and/or require that all future communication be in writing.
- This does not affect the complainant's right to approach external bodies.

14. Review of This Policy

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the Governing Body, or sooner following:

- A significant complaint that highlights a need for change.
- Changes to legislation or regulatory requirements.
- A recommendation from an external inspection.

Review of Policy Dates

REVIEW DATE	REVIEWED BY	SIGNED OFF (Name & Role)
Oct 2025	Governing Body	**Chair:** Sohaib Tanvir
Next Review Due:		
Oct 2026	Governing Body	**Chair:**
	Headteacher	**Headteacher:**