

Complaints Policy

Reviewed	March 2026	Leader of Policy Review	Mr. S. Budgen
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1. Introduction

Hawarden High School is committed to effectively handling all complaints. We aim to clarify any concerns and, where necessary, rectify any mistakes. We are dedicated to learning from these experiences to improve our practices.

Our definition of a complaint is:

"An expression of dissatisfaction regarding the school or a member of staff that requires a response."

We ensure that all complaints are dealt with in an open, fair, and timely manner. This policy applies to anyone with an interest in the school and provides the confidence that their concerns will be heard and addressed appropriately.

This policy is available to all parents, carers, pupils, staff, governors, and the wider school community. Information about the procedure is also made available to pupils through assemblies, the school council, and leaflets, ensuring they are aware of how to raise concerns.

2. Commitment to Respectful Relationships

We promote respectful relationships between learners, parents, staff, and governors, and maintain a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment. Complaints regarding bullying, harassment, or discrimination will be handled with the utmost seriousness, including incidents related to:

- Race, religion, or culture
- Homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia
- Sexism or sexual harassment
- Disability and Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

We also recognise that pupils under 16 can raise complaints, and parental involvement will normally be sought unless the pupil explicitly requests otherwise. Advocacy support (such as MEIC) is available for young people.

3. Handling Complaints Fairly and Impartially

Complaints will be dealt with fairly and without bias. Any prior knowledge of the complaint or individuals involved will not influence decision-making. If any staff or governors have been involved in the issue to an extent whereby they could be seen to influence an outcome, they will be excluded from the process to maintain impartiality. There will be exceptions to this where they are required to provide information to assist the handling of the complaint and, as such, will be treated as a witness.

If a conflict of interest arises, substitute governors may be appointed, or joint committees with other governing bodies may be formed.

A designated Complaints Officer may be appointed by the school to oversee the complaints process and act as the primary contact for complainants.

4. When to use this procedure

We encourage resolving concerns informally by speaking directly with the relevant staff member. If the issue cannot be resolved this way, the formal complaints procedure should be followed. This procedure applies to complaints about the school and its staff.

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Complaints about other matters that are dealt with under statutory processes — such as staff disciplinary or grievance procedures, child protection/safeguarding, admissions, exclusions, curriculum content, or Additional Learning Needs (ALN) — are excluded from this policy. The complainant will be advised of the appropriate procedure in these cases.

5. What we expect from complainants

We believe that all complainants have a right to be heard, understood and respected. School staff and governors have the same right. We expect you to be polite and courteous.

We will not tolerate aggressive, abusive or unreasonable behaviour nor will we tolerate unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence or vexatious complaining. We have a separate policy to manage situations where we find that someone's actions are unacceptable.

6. Our approach to answering your concern or complaint

We will consider all your concerns and complaints in an open and fair way. At all times the school will respect the rights and feelings of those involved and make every effort to protect confidential information.

Some types of concern or complaint may raise issues that have to be dealt with in another way (other than this complaints policy), in which case we will explain why this is so, and will tell you what steps will be taken.

Complaints that are made anonymously will be recorded but investigation will be at the discretion of the school depending on the nature of the complaint.

7. Stages of the Complaints Procedure

Stage A: Early Resolution

Most concerns can be resolved informally. You should raise the issue as soon as possible, normally within 10 school days of the incident. The school aims to respond to concerns within 10 school days. If it cannot be resolved informally, you may proceed to Stage B

Stage B: Written Complaint

If the issue is not resolved, a written complaint should be submitted to the Headteacher. You are encouraged to submit this within five school days of receiving the informal response. If the complaint is about the Headteacher, it should be addressed to the Chair of Governors. The school will aim to respond within 10 school days.

Stage C: Governing Body Review

It is rare that a complaint will progress any further. However, if you still feel that your complaint has not been dealt with fairly, you should write, through the school's address, to the chair of governors setting out your reasons for asking the governing body's complaints committee to consider your complaint. You do not have to write the details of your whole complaint again.

Your complaint at Stage C will be referred to the Governing Body's Complaints Committee by the Chair of Governors. A meeting will be arranged within 15 school days to review the case, and a decision will be communicated in writing within 10 school days of the meeting.

The governing body's complaints committee is the final arbiter of complaints. If a complainant believes the procedure was not followed correctly, they may raise concerns with the Local Authority for review.

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8. Meetings and Communication

Meetings should be scheduled at reasonable times and held on school premises unless there are exceptional circumstances. Video conferencing may be used if all parties agree.

The timescale may need to be changed, to allow for the availability of people, the gathering of evidence or seeking advice. In this case, the person dealing with the complaint will agree a new meeting date with you. Normally, in order to deal with the complaint as quickly as possible, the complaints committee will not reschedule the meeting more than once. If you ask to reschedule the meeting more than once, the committee may think it reasonable to make a decision on the complaint in your absence to avoid unnecessary delays.

If necessary, complainants are welcome to bring a companion for support. However, the complainant is expected to present their concerns directly unless they require additional assistance, such as learners or individuals with disabilities.

9. Record-Keeping and Monitoring

Detailed records of complaints and their outcomes will be kept to ensure transparency and accountability. These records will be retained for a minimum of seven years, following the school's retention schedule, and used to monitor recurring issues or trends.

The Headteacher will report on complaints to the Governing Body to help review and improve school procedures.

10. Dealing with Vexatious or Persistent Complaints

The school will not tolerate aggressive, abusive, or unreasonable behaviour during the complaints process. Vexatious or repetitive complaints will be managed according to local authority guidelines and / or in line with the school's Managing Unacceptable Actions of Complainants Policy.

11. Special circumstances

If the complaint involves members of the governing body or the headteacher, the procedure will be adjusted accordingly to ensure impartiality. Independent investigations may be arranged if required.

12. Our commitment to you

We take all complaints seriously and are dedicated to learning from our mistakes. If you require assistance, we will provide the support you need. Young people can access additional advocacy services, such as MEIC, for further support.

Administration Use	
Statutory/Non-Statutory:	Statutory
School Website:	Yes
Document Author:	Mr. S. Budgen
GB Committee Overview:	Wellbeing & Community Committee
Date Document Reviewed and Approved by Committee:	January 2026
Document Formulated:	
Date Reviewed Document Approved by FGB:	March 2026
To be Reviewed:	Every three years
Next Review Date:	March 2029

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Complaint Form

The person who experienced the problem should normally fill in this form. If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else please fill in Section B also. Please note that before taking forward the complaint we will need to be satisfied that you have the authority to act on behalf of the person concerned. If you are a pupil the school will help you complete, will explain it to you and will give you a copy of it when it is completed.

A. Your details

Title: Mr / Mrs / Ms /
Other

Surname

Forename (s)

Daytime phone number

Mobile phone number

Address
.....

Postcode

Email Address

How would you prefer us to contact you?

B. If you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else, what are their details?

Their name in full

Address
.....

Postcode

What is your relationship
to them?

Why are you
making a
complaint on
their behalf?

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C. About your complaint

C.1 Name the School you are complaining about: **HAWARDEN HIGH SCHOOL**

C.2 What do you think they did wrong or did not do?

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C.3 Describe how you have been affected:

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C.4 When did you first become aware of the problem?

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C.5 Have you already put your complaint to a member of staff? If so, please give brief details about how and when you did so.

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Signature of complainant:

Date:

Signature if you are making a complaint on behalf of someone else

Signature:

Date:

Please send this form and any documents to support your complaint to the headteacher of the school.

Keep a copy for yourself.
