



# John Keble Church of England Primary School

## Vexatious Complaints Policy

Chair of Governors	Tim Johnston
Head teacher	Catherine Allard
Date	May 2024
Review date	May 2027

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*Rooted together in love, growing without limits...*

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*Believing in the worth of every individual, we are a nurturing, Christian sanctuary of learning, where all can flourish. We aspire for everyone to achieve heights of success, to deepen courage and to experience breadth of creativity, knowing the joy of God's love.*

John Keble School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff, pupils or governors to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect them from behaviour of that kind, including behaviour that involves harassment or is abusive, offensive or threatening.

John Keble School defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school or their conduct more generally. This includes but is not limited to cases in which 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 investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- raises large numbers of detailed but peripheral questions, and insists they are fully answered
- refuses to accept that the complaint will be dealt with in line with the timescales set out in the complaints policy
- makes additional and unjustified complaints about staff or governors who are responding to the complaint, 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)
- repeatedly makes complaints that material overlap with a previous complaint
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint 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 and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums
- coordinates or directs complaints by others, including by organising or encouraging a number of overlapping or duplicative complaints.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the 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 being reached.

Whether or not behaviour meets the unreasonable threshold is a question for the headteacher or Chair of Governors exercising their discretion and taking into account all relevant considerations.

Where possible, the headteacher or Chair of Governors may discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If they have determined that the behaviour is unreasonable, the headteacher, or Chair of Governors will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact John Keble School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we may immediately inform the police and communicate our actions to the police in writing, without informing the individual first. This may include barring an individual from John Keble School.