



**EDGEWOOD  
ACADEMY**



# **EDGEWOOD ACADEMY**

## Complaints Policy

Date policy last reviewed:	10 <sup>th</sup> February 2026		
Signed by:			
Kate Manning, Headteacher	Date:	12 <sup>th</sup> February 2026	



# EDGEWOOD ACADEMY

## **Safe, supported learning that inspires growth through innovation.**

At Edgewood Academy, every learner grows in a safe, supportive environment where curiosity is nurtured, individuality is valued, and innovation inspires new possibilities.

We believe that when children feel secure and connected, they are free to explore, create, and achieve beyond expectation — growing deep roots of confidence and reaching new heights of potential.

## **Core Principles**

### **Safe to Grow**

We build trust through care, respect, and consistency — ensuring every learner feels protected and valued in all they do.

### **Inspired to Innovate**

We embrace creativity and technology as tools for discovery, equipping pupils with the confidence to explore, question, and lead.

### **Connected to Community**

We grow together — learners, families, and educators — supporting each other with empathy and collaboration.

### **Rooted in Excellence**

Like a strong tree, we are grounded in high expectations, with teaching and learning that challenge and inspire progress at every stage.

## **Summary**

This policy and its associated procedures apply to all staff at **Edgewood Academy**.

Edgewood Academy is committed to fostering an environment in which pupils, staff, parents and carers, and external partners feel confident and empowered to express their views on our practices and conduct.



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We value and actively encourage feedback from everyone connected with Edgewood Academy — including the children and young people we support, the staff who work alongside them, families, external professionals, and members of the wider community.

Edgewood Academy is continuously seeking opportunities to strengthen the quality of care and education we provide. Central to this is our commitment to a “*how can we improve?*” culture, ensuring that constructive feedback informs ongoing development across the school.

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## **1. WHO CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT?**

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of pupils registered at **Edgewood Academy**. Any individual, including members of the public, may raise a complaint regarding any aspect of the facilities, services, or provision we offer.



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Unless a concern is covered by a separate statutory process (for example, appeals relating to admissions or exclusions), it will be managed in accordance with this complaints procedure.

### 2. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CONCERN AND A COMPLAIN

A **concern** is defined as *“an expression of worry or doubt about an issue considered important, where reassurance is sought.”*

A **complaint** is defined as *“an expression of dissatisfaction, however communicated, regarding actions taken or a perceived lack of action.”*

Edgewood Academy recognises that it is in everyone’s best interests for concerns and complaints to be addressed and resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many matters can be dealt with informally, without progressing to the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Edgewood Academy takes all concerns seriously and will make every reasonable effort to resolve issues promptly and effectively.

If you feel uncomfortable discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your wishes. In such cases, the Headteacher will arrange for you to speak with an alternative member of staff. Equally, if the staff member directly involved feels unable to address the concern, the Headteacher will assign another colleague who can do so. This individual may be more senior, but this is not essential; what matters most is their ability to handle the issue objectively and impartially.

However, we recognise that there may be occasions when individuals prefer to raise their concerns formally. In these circumstances, Edgewood Academy will seek to resolve the matter internally, following the stages set out in this complaints procedure.

### 3. HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN OR MAKE A COMPLAINT

A concern or complaint may be raised in person, in writing, or by telephone. Concerns and complaints may also be submitted by a third party acting on behalf of the complainant, provided appropriate consent has been given.



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In the first instance, concerns should be directed to the class teacher. Where necessary, the matter will be escalated to a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). If the issue cannot be resolved informally, the next step is to submit a formal complaint.

Complaints about members of staff (other than the Headteacher) should be addressed initially to the Headteacher. To support this process, a template complaint form is provided at the end of this procedure. If you require assistance in completing the form, please contact a member of the SLT. You may also seek support from external organisations, such as Citizens Advice.

### **Complaints Concerning the Headteacher**

*(Independent School Standards – Part 7 Compliant)*

Where a complaint concerns the Headteacher, Edgewood Academy ensures that the matter is managed independently, impartially and without conflict of interest, in accordance with the Independent School Standards (Part 7: Complaints).

In such cases:

- The complaint will not be investigated by the Headteacher.
- The complaint will be referred directly to the Proprietor/ Safeguarding Advisor Elizabeth Braithwaite part of the Advisory Board
- Where appropriate, an independent investigator may be appointed to support a fair and objective process.

The complaint will be handled in line with the Academy's published Complaints Policy, including:

- Clear stages and timescales
- Written acknowledgment and response
- The opportunity for the complaint to be escalated to a panel hearing if not resolved



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Records of all complaints, outcomes and actions taken are maintained in accordance with regulatory requirements.

### **Safeguarding and Statutory Duties**

Where a complaint about the Headteacher includes a **safeguarding concern** or allegation:

- The Academy will follow statutory safeguarding procedures without delay
- Referrals will be made to the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** or other relevant agencies as required
- Safeguarding concerns will be managed **separately** from disciplinary or complaints procedures where appropriate

At all times, the **welfare of pupils is the Academy's paramount consideration.**

### **Advisory Board Oversight and Accountability**

Edgewood Academy ensures that:

- There is a **clear and accessible route for raising concerns** about senior leaders
- The Advisory Board arrangements provide **effective oversight, challenge and independence**
- Outcomes of complaints are reviewed to inform **continuous improvement** in leadership and practice

In line with equality legislation, Edgewood Academy will consider and implement reasonable adjustments where needed to ensure all individuals can access and follow this complaints procedure. This may include providing information in alternative formats, supporting individuals in raising a formal complaint, or arranging meetings in accessible venues.



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### **4. ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS**

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Head Teacher or Proprietary bodies, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

### **5. TIME SCALES**

You 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 if exceptional circumstances apply.

### **6. COMPLAINTS RECEIVED OUTSIDE OF TERM TIME**

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

### **7. EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

All complaints made by someone external to the School are managed by the Head Teacher and over-seen by a member of the Proprietary Body. The complaint will be fully responded to within 28 days of it being received and all relevant agencies notified of the complaint and the outcomes and actions taken.

### **8. INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS**

To ensure transparency in practice, Edgewood Academy may also use an Independent person to undertake independent investigations if required, e.g. if a complaint was



made regarding the Head Teacher or member of the Proprietor body or if an individual making the complaint felt that the investigation needed to be undertaken by an external professional.

## 9. SCOPE

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

<b>Exceptions</b>	<b>Who to Contact</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="252 1294 751 1420">▪ Admissions to schools Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs</li><li data-bbox="252 1451 751 1487">▪ School reorganisation proposals</li></ul>	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school reorganisation proposals should be raised with Stoke-on-Trent Council.

Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has legal
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	<p>responsibility for safeguarding or the MultiAgency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).</p> <p><a href="http://www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk/ccm/content/safeguardingchildren/education/procedures.en;jsessionid=assVs0-WZPoa">http://www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk/ccm/content/safeguardingchildren/education/procedures.en;jsessionid=assVs0-WZPoa</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/professionals/multiagencysafeguarding-hub/">http://www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/professionals/multiagencysafeguarding-hub/</a></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>*complaints about the application of the Behaviour policy can be made through the School's complaints procedure</p>
Whistleblowing	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. 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 directly to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>



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Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the School's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the School's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. 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.
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them directly.
Curriculum Content	Please contact the Department for Education at: <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus">www.education.gov.uk/contactus</a>

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 Edgewood Academy 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.



## **10. RESOLVING COMPLAINTS**

At each stage in the procedure, Edgewood Academy 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
- an apology.

## **11. WITHDRAWAL OF A COMPLAINT**

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

## **12. STAGE 1**

If a carer / parent / social worker (i.e. person with parental responsibility) is unhappy with the care or quality of education a young person is receiving, or member of the public has concern relating to the school, they are encouraged in the first instance to



talk to the class teacher immediately or as soon as is possible, with the aim of resolving the matter informally, through face to face, class dojo or email.

If the complainant is satisfied with the way their concern or complaint has been addressed, and agrees with the decisions reached, they are asked to confirm this in writing (email is acceptable) to the Headteacher, and the complaint procedure stops at this point.

### **13. STAGE 2**

If following Stage 1 the complainant remains unsatisfied with the outcome, they can make a complaint to the Head Teacher via Class Dojo The Head Teacher will try and resolve the complaint through discussions with the complainant. If the complainant is happy with the way their concern or complaint has been addressed, and agrees with the decisions reached, they are asked to confirm this in writing (email is acceptable) to the Head Teacher, and the complaint procedure stops at this point.

Formal complaints must be made to the Head Teacher (unless they are about Head Teacher, please see additional flow chart). This may be done in person, in writing (preferably on the Complaint Form), or by telephone.

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

Within this response, the Head Teacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see.

The Head Teacher can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.



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Note: The Head Teacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior management team but not the decision to be taken.

During the investigation, the Head Teacher (or investigator) will:

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

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

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

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

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

At the conclusion of their investigation, the Head Teacher will provide a formal written response within 10 school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.

If the Head Teacher 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 Edgewood Academy will take to resolve the complaint.



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The Head Teacher will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2.

***If the complaint is about the Head Teacher, a suitably skilled Proprietor will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 2. Complaints about the Head Teacher must be made to the Proprietor – Tom Bourne.***

*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.*

### 14. STAGE 3

If after the initial formal routes have been exhausted, the person with concerns remains unhappy with the outcome, they can make a further complaint to the Proprietor. This complaint must be made in writing and dated, stating the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled matters so far and include as much detail as possible. The proprietor must consider and acknowledge all written complaints within 21 days of receipt and arrange a meeting to discuss the complaint with the complainant. The meeting will be chaired by the Proprietor along with two other Members of the leadership team and an impartial Independent Panel Member outside of the school's workforce who is not involved in the management or running of the school.

After hearing all the evidence and conferring with the other two members of the leadership team present at the meeting, the proprietor makes a decision and informs



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the complainant of the outcome in writing. If the complainant is happy with the way their concern or complaint has been addressed, and agrees with the decisions reached, they are asked to confirm this in writing (email is acceptable) to the Proprietor, and the complaint procedure stops at this point.

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 committee 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.

### **15. 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 3. The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by Edgewood Academy. They will consider whether Edgewood Academy 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 at: [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus),

by telephone on:

0370 000 2288



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or by writing to:

Department for Education

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD.

### **16. APPEALS PROCEDURE**

If the complainant has followed Stage 1, 2, and 3 of this complaints procedure yet remains dissatisfied with the outcome or the manner in which it has been addressed, they have the right to appeal within 5 working days of the stage 3 decision being communicated to them. The complainant must include all evidence to support the grounds for their appeal. On receipt of the appeal letter, the owner shall make arrangements for an external consultant to hear the appeal at an appeal meeting to which the complainant is invited. The complainant is advised to make every effort to attend the appeal meeting. Following the meeting, the Head Teacher will endeavour to respond to the appeal as soon as possible and, in any case, within five working days of the appeal hearing.

### **17. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **Complainant**

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



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- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- cooperate 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 o consideration of records and other relevant information
  - analysing information
  - liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate 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



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- 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 proprietor that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

The Headteacher or proprietor 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 (Tom Bourne)**

The complaints co-ordinator should:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure
- liaise with staff members, Head Teacher, Responsible Individual and LAs (if appropriate) to ensure the smooth running of the complaints procedure
- be aware of issues regarding:
  - o sharing third party information
  - o 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
  - o keeping of records.

The Complaint Coordinator should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so

No staff member may sit in on the complaint meeting if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.



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- 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 co-ordinator 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 co-ordinator 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 co-ordinator 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 co-ordinator considers is not in the child/young person's best interest
  - The welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

### 18. IMPORTANT CONTACTS

#### **Dame Rachel de Souza Children's Commissioner for England**

The Office of the Children's Commissioner  
Sanctuary Buildings  
20 Great Smith Street



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London  
SW1P 3BT

**Tel:** 020 7783 8330

**Email:** [info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)

[cco.communications@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](mailto:cco.communications@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

### **Ofsted**

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

**Tel:** 0300 123 1231



### **19. COMPLAINT FORM**

Please complete and return to the Head Teacher who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

<b>Your name:</b>
<b>Pupil's name (if relevant):</b>
<b>Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):</b>
<b>Address:</b>
<b>Postcode:</b>
<b>Day time telephone number:</b>
<b>Evening telephone number:</b>
<b>Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.</b>
<b>What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?</b>
<b>Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.</b>



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<b>Signature:</b>
<b>Date:</b>
<b>Official use</b>
<b>Date acknowledgement sent:</b>
<b>By who:</b>
<b>Complaint referred to:</b>
<b>Date:</b>