



DATA PROTECTION COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This policy applies to the whole school including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is publicly available on the school website and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the School Office.

Owner: Emma Redgrave
Effective Date: June 2026 Review Date: June 2027

Status: Statutory Policy

Applies to: Parents, prospective parents, pupils, former pupils (where appropriate), and members of the public

Responsible Person: Headteacher

Approved by: Proprietor / Advisory Board

Date Approved: June 2026

Date Effective: 19 June 2026

Next Review: June 2027 (or earlier if legislation changes)

1. Purpose

Eastcourt School is committed to providing a high-quality education within a caring, respectful and supportive environment. We value positive relationships with parents and recognise that concerns and complaints are an opportunity to improve our provision.

This procedure aims to ensure that concerns and complaints are:

- dealt with fairly, consistently and promptly;
- handled with sensitivity and confidentiality;
- resolved as quickly as possible;
- managed in accordance with the Independent School Standards and good practice.

Most concerns can be resolved informally. Where this is not possible, this procedure provides a clear formal process.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to complaints made by:

- parents and those with parental responsibility;
- prospective parents;
- pupils (where appropriate);
- former pupils where the complaint relates to matters arising whilst they attended the school;
- members of the public affected by the school's services.

This procedure does **not** apply to:

- safeguarding concerns (which will be dealt with under the school's safeguarding procedures);
- whistleblowing concerns raised by staff;



- staff grievances;
- complaints relating to admissions or exclusions where separate statutory procedures apply.

3. Guiding Principles

Eastcourt School will ensure that complaints are:

- listened to carefully;
- investigated objectively;
- treated seriously;
- responded to within published timescales wherever possible;
- recorded appropriately;
- used to improve school practice.

Everyone involved in a complaint is expected to behave respectfully. Abusive, threatening or unreasonable behaviour may result in communication being restricted.

4. Confidentiality

Complaints will be handled with discretion.

Information will only be shared with those who need it in order to investigate or resolve the complaint.

Records will be held securely in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy and UK GDPR requirements.

5. Stage One – Informal Resolution

Parents are encouraged to raise concerns as soon as possible with the appropriate member of staff.

Depending upon the nature of the concern, this may be:

- the class teacher;
- subject teacher;
- another appropriate member of staff.

Many concerns arise from misunderstandings and can often be resolved quickly through discussion.

Where appropriate, staff may arrange:

- a meeting;
- a telephone conversation;
- written clarification;
- practical steps to resolve the concern.

If the concern cannot be resolved informally, the complainant may proceed to Stage Two.

6. Stage Two – Formal Complaint

Formal complaints should normally be made in writing to the Headteacher.

The complaint should include:

- the complainant's name and contact details;
- a clear description of the complaint;
- relevant dates;



- any supporting evidence;
- details of attempts to resolve the matter informally;
- the outcome sought.

The school will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within **five working days**.

The Headteacher (or another appropriate senior leader where delegated) will:

- investigate the complaint;
- meet with relevant parties where appropriate;
- review any documentation;
- reach a balanced conclusion.

A written response will normally be provided within **20 working days**.

Where additional time is required, the complainant will be informed of the reasons and given a revised timescale.

If the complaint concerns the Headteacher, it should be submitted directly to the Proprietor or Chair of Advisory Board (where applicable).

7. Stage Three – Complaint Review Panel

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after receiving the Stage Two response, they may request that the complaint is considered by a Complaint Review Panel.

The request should:

- be made in writing;
- be submitted within **10 working days** of receiving the Stage Two outcome;
- explain why the complainant remains dissatisfied.

The Panel will normally consist of **at least three people** who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.

At least **one panel member will be independent of the management and running of Eastcourt School**, in accordance with the Independent School Standards.

8. Panel Hearing

The complainant will receive reasonable notice of the hearing.

The complainant may attend and may be accompanied by another person if they wish.

The Panel will consider:

- all written evidence;
- the investigation already undertaken;
- any further representations.

The Panel is not required to reinvestigate every aspect of the complaint but will consider whether the complaint has been handled fairly and whether the conclusions reached were reasonable.

9. Outcome

The Panel may:

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;



- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- recommend actions to improve school procedures;
- recommend further actions to resolve outstanding issues.

The decision of the Panel is final within the school's internal procedures.

A written decision will normally be issued within **10 working days** of the hearing.

10. Record Keeping

The school will maintain a confidential complaints register including:

- date received;
- nature of complaint;
- actions taken;
- outcome;
- whether resolved at informal, formal or panel stage.

Records will be retained in accordance with the school's Records Retention Policy and Data Protection Policy.

The school will make available, upon request from the Secretary of State or inspection authorities, a written record of formal complaints showing:

- whether each complaint was resolved at the preliminary stage or proceeded to a panel hearing; and
- any action taken by the school as a result.

Personal information will be redacted where appropriate.

11. Equality

Eastcourt School will make reasonable adjustments where required to ensure complainants are able to access this procedure.

Alternative formats or additional support will be provided where appropriate.

12. Unreasonable or Persistent Complaints

Where a complainant behaves unreasonably, repeatedly raises substantially the same issues, or acts in a manner that is abusive or vexatious, the school may:

- limit methods of communication;
- nominate a single point of contact;
- decline to respond to repeated correspondence where all issues have been fully addressed.

Such decisions will always be proportionate and recorded.

13. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this procedure.

The Proprietor/Advisory Board will review this policy annually, or sooner where changes in legislation or guidance require.

Lessons learned from complaints will be used to improve policies, procedures and the quality of education provided by Eastcourt School.



Complaints Timescales

Stage	Timescale
Acknowledge formal complaint	Within 5 working days
Formal investigation response	Normally within 20 working days
Request for Panel	Within 10 working days of Stage Two response
Panel decision	Normally within 10 working days of hearing

Approved by: *C.Redgrave*

Position: Proprietor

Date: 19.06.26

Review Date: June 2027