

Deuparth Ffordd Ei Gwybod



Complaints Policy & Procedure

The Governing Body has adopted this Complaint Procedure.

This Policy will be reviewed when any changes are made.

Approved: September 2026

Reviewed: September 2026

Signed: *J. Barton*

1. Introduction

Ysgol Garth Olwg is committed to building positive and constructive relationships with pupils, parents, carers and the wider community. The school welcomes feedback, concerns and complaints and recognises that they provide valuable opportunities for reflection, learning and school improvement.

Our definition of a complaint is "An expression of dissatisfaction concerning the school, a member of staff, governor, decision, service or action requiring a formal response."

A concern becomes a complaint when the complainant wishes the matter to be formally investigated and responded to through the school's complaints procedure.

This policy aims to ensure:

- complaints are addressed fairly and consistently;
- concerns are resolved at the earliest possible stage;
- investigations are proportionate;
- unnecessary escalation is avoided;
- staff, governors and complainants are treated with dignity and respect;
- complaints are managed efficiently and within reasonable timescales.

This procedure is based on the Welsh Government model complaints framework and reflects good practice advice for schools in relation to managing complaints

2. When to use this procedure

- 2.1 When you have a concern or make a complaint, we will usually respond in the way we explain below. Sometimes you might be concerned about matters that are not decided by the school, in which case we will tell you who to complain to. At other times you may be concerned about matters that are handled by other procedures, in which case we will explain to you how your concern will be dealt with.
- 2.2 If your concern or complaint is about another body as well as the school (for example the Local Authority) we will work with them to decide how to handle your concern.

3. Have you asked us yet?

- 3.1 If you are approaching us for the first time you should give the school an opportunity to respond. If you are not happy with our response, then you may make a complaint (Stage A) using the complaints procedure. The school takes this opportunity to

emphasise that most concerns can be settled quickly by speaking to the relevant person in school, without the need to use a formal procedure.

4. What we expect from you

- 4.1 We believe that all complainants have a right to be heard, understood and respected. School staff and governors have the same rights. We expect you to be polite and courteous. We will not tolerate aggressive, abusive or unreasonable behaviour. We will also not tolerate unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence or vexatious complaining. If the Headteacher and/or Governing Body receive unreasonable persistence or vexatious complaining, the school may decline to progress the complaint further. If the complaint is determined to be reasonable it will be dealt with in accordance with this procedure.

An unreasonable, unacceptable or vexatious complaint can be characterised in a number of ways:

- Complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious;
- Insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason;
- Insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner;
- Complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance;
- Demands for redress which lack any serious purpose or value.
- Complaints that are abusive, threatening, discriminatory, intimidating, include personal attacks or harassment.

(www.oiahe.org.uk)

- 4.2 A formal complaint at Stage B or Stage C must comply with the following requirements in order for it to be considered by the school. In the event that a complaint does not comply with these requirements, the school may decline to progress the complaint further until it has been resubmitted in accordance with this procedure. Formal complaints must therefore:

- be submitted within 5 school days of the Stage A response;
- be no longer than two sides of A4 (approximately 700 words);
- use a minimum font size of 12;
- use minimum line spacing of 1.5;
- identify no more than three complaint issues;
- avoid introducing new complaints during the complaints process
- clearly state the outcome sought.

Relevant supporting evidence may be attached where necessary. The school may decline to consider excessive documentation where a representative sample would reasonably allow the complaint to be investigated.

The school reserves the right to request that complaints exceeding these limits are resubmitted in an acceptable format.

5. Our approach to answering your concern or complaint

- 5.1 We will consider all your concerns and complaints in an open and fair way.
- 5.2 At all times the school will respect the rights and feelings of those involved and make every effort to protect confidential information.
- 5.3 Timescales for dealing with your concerns or complaints may need to be extended and in such cases this will be shared with you.
- 5.4 We may ask for advice from the Local Authority where appropriate.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 The Governing Body will retain records of documents used to investigate your concern or complaint in accordance with the school's retention schedule.
- 5.7 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.
- 5.8 Where complainants are considered to have been made only to cause harm or offence to individuals or the school, the Governing Body will ensure that records are kept of the investigations that are made and what actions are taken, including the reasons for "no action".

6. Answering your concern or complaint

- 6.1 The chart in Appendix A shows what may happen when you make a complaint or raise a concern. There are up to three stages: A, B and C. Most complaints can be resolved at stages A or B. You can bring a relative or companion to support you at any time during the process but you will be expected to speak yourself. However, we recognise that when a complainant is a pupil it is reasonable for the parent to speak on their behalf and/or to advise the pupil. Legal representatives will not be permitted to attend or advocate during complaints meetings as the procedure is intended to be an internal school process rather than a legal hearing.

- 6.2 As far as possible, your concern or complaint will be dealt with on a confidential basis. However, there could be occasions when the person dealing with your concern or complaint will need to consider whether anyone else within the school needs to know about your concern or complaint, so as to address it appropriately.
- 6.3 If you are a pupil under 16 and wish to raise a concern or bring a complaint, we will usually ask for your permission before we involve your parent(s) or carer(s), however we reserve the right to ask your parent(s) or carer(s) to become involved and attend any discussion or interview with you where it is considered necessary for safeguarding, wellbeing, legal compliance or fair investigation purposes.
- 6.4 If you are a pupil under 16 and are involved in a complaint in any other way, we may ask your parent(s) or carer(s) to become involved and attend any discussion or interview with you.
- 6.5 If there are any complaints relating to the provision for pupils with ALN these will be dealt with in the first instance by the ALN Leader. A member of the Governing Body may be involved if necessary.

STAGE A

- 6.6 If you have a concern, you can often resolve it quickly by talking to a teacher, Head of School, Deputy Headteacher or other members of the Senior Leadership Team. You should raise your concern as soon as you can; normally we expect you to raise your issues within 5 school days of any incident. The longer you leave it the harder it might be for those involved to deal with it effectively.
- 6.7 If you are a pupil, you can raise your concerns with your school council representative, Form Tutor or the relevant Head of School. This will not stop you, at a later date, from raising a complaint if you feel that the issue(s) you have raised have not been dealt with properly.
- 6.8 We will try to let you know what we have done or are doing about your concern normally within 10 school days, but if this is not possible, we will share the revised timescale with you.
- 6.9 The person overseeing your concern or complaint will keep you informed of the progress being made. This person will also keep a log of the concern for future reference.

STAGE B

- 6.10 In most cases, we would expect that your concern is resolved informally. If you feel your initial concern has not been dealt with appropriately you should put your complaint in writing to the Headteacher. This can be sent to the Head of Business & Finance via gweinyddol@gartholwg.cymru
- 6.11 We would expect you to aim to do **this within 5 school days of receiving a response to your concern at Stage A** as it is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as soon as possible.
- 6.12 If your complaint is about the Headteacher, you should put your complaint in writing to the Chair of the Governing Body, addressed to the school, to ask for your complaint to be investigated.
- 6.13 In all cases, an appropriate member of staff can help you put your complaint in writing if necessary.
- 6.14 The appropriate member of staff will explain what will happen and the sort of help that is available to you.
- 6.15 The Headteacher will investigate and consider your complaint and provide formal feedback within 15 school days. The formal feedback will be provided in the following way(s):
- Formal telephone conversation
 - TEAMS call / Meeting
 - Face to face meeting
 - E-mail
 - Written response document
- 6.16 If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may request formal consideration by the Governing Body Complaints Committee at Stage C. The complainant should formally request this in writing within 5 school days of receiving the Stage B outcome. The Committee will acknowledge receipt of the request and determine whether the matter can be considered through a formal review of written evidence or whether a formal complaints meeting is required. The purpose of Stage C is to review whether the complaint was investigated fairly, procedures were followed appropriately and the conclusions reached were reasonable in light of the evidence available. At this stage the nominated Governors may review relevant school records where necessary and lawful in order to investigate the complaint fairly. If a complainant chooses not to provide information requested by the school, this may affect the Committee's ability to fully consider aspects of the complaint. If your complaint is against the Headteacher, this complaint will be referred directly to the Chairperson of the Governing Body.

STAGE C

6.17 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 Chairperson of the Governing Body setting out your reasons for asking the Governing Body's complaints committee to formally consider your complaint. You do not have to write down details of your whole complaint again but your written submission must comply with the requirements as noted in 4.2. If a complainant is unable to submit a written request for a Stage C review, the school will provide reasonable assistance to ensure the complaint is recorded accurately.

6.18 Requests for review should be submitted within 5 school days of receipt of the Stage B outcome.

Upon receipt of a request for review, the Complaints Committee will acknowledge the request and determine whether:

- a) the matter can be fairly considered through a review of the written evidence; or
- b) a complaints meeting is required.

The complainant will be informed in writing of the Committee's decision and the next steps in the process.

6.19 The Complaints Committee will acknowledge receipt of the request within 5 school days. Within 10 school days of receipt, the Committee will determine whether:

- a) the complaint can be fairly considered through a formal review of the written evidence; or
- b) a formal complaints hearing is required.

Where a formal review is undertaken, the Committee will normally provide its written decision within 20 school days of receipt of the request.

Where a formal hearing is required, the Committee will normally convene the hearing within 20 school days of receipt of the request and provide its written decision within 10 school days of the hearing.

Where this timescale cannot reasonably be met due to governor availability, the complexity of the complaint or other exceptional circumstances, the complainant will be informed of the revised timescale and the reasons for the delay

6.20 Where the Complaints Committee determines that a hearing is required, the school will notify all parties of:

- the date, time and format of the hearing;
- the deadline for the submission of any additional evidence;
- the process that will be followed.

Only documentation that is relevant to the agreed complaint issues will normally be considered.

The Committee may decline to consider documentation that is repetitive, excessive, submitted after the deadline, unrelated to the agreed complaint issues or where a representative sample would allow the matter to be considered fairly.

Relevant documentation will normally be shared with all parties before the hearing, subject to data protection, safeguarding and confidentiality requirements. Where a hearing is not required, the Committee may instead consider the complaint through a review of the written evidence.

- 6.21 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 is reasonable to make a decision on the complaint in your absence to avoid necessary delays.
- 6.22 We will write to you within 10 school days of the meeting explaining the outcome of the Governing Body's complaints committee's consideration.
- 6.23 The school will maintain appropriate records relating to complaints, investigations, decisions and outcomes. Records will be retained in accordance with the school's Records Retention Schedule and applicable data protection requirements. Access to complaint records will be restricted to those individuals who require access for the proper discharge of their duties.
- 6.24 The Governing Body's complaints committee is the final arbiter of complaints and their decision is final.

7. Special circumstances

- 7.1 Where a complaint is made about any of the following the complaints procedure will be applied differently.
 - 7.1.1 A governor or group of governors**

The concern or complaint will be referred to the Chairperson of the Governing Body for investigation. The Chairperson may alternatively delegate the matter to another governor for investigation. Stage B onwards of the complaints procedure will apply.
 - 7.1.2 The Chairperson of the Governing Body or Headteacher and Chairperson of the Governing Body**

The Vice-Chairperson will be informed and will investigate it or may delegate it to another governor. Stage B onwards of the complaints procedure will apply.
 - 7.1.3 Both the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body**

The complaint will be referred to the clerk of the Governing Body who will inform the nominated Governor of the complaints committee. Stage C of the complaints procedure will then apply.
 - 7.1.4 The whole Governing Body**

The complaint will be referred to the clerk of the Governing Body who will inform the Headteacher, Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Local Authority. The Local Authority will usually agree arrangements with the Governing Body for independent investigation of the complaint.

7.1.5 The Headteacher

The concern or complaint will be referred to the Chairperson of the governing body who will undertake an investigation or may delegate it to another governor. Stage B onwards of the complaint procedure will apply.

- 7.2 In all cases the school and Governing Body will ensure that complaints are dealt with in an unbiased, open and fair way.

8. Our commitment to you

Ysgol Garth Olwg takes concerns and complaints seriously and is committed to resolving them fairly, consistently and promptly.

We will:

- listen carefully to concerns that are raised;
- investigate complaints proportionately and objectively;
- keep complainants informed about the progress of their complaint;
- learn from complaints where improvements can be made; and
- provide reasonable assistance to individuals who require support in accessing this procedure.

If you need help to make your concerns known, we will try and assist you. If you are a young person and need extra assistance the Welsh Government has established MEIC, which is a national advocacy and advice helpline for children and young people. Advice and support can also be accessed from the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

MEIC may be contacted by freephone: 0808 802 3456 or text: 84001. This service is operated 24 hours a day.

The Children's Commissioner for Wales can be contacted by freephone: 0808 801 1000 (Monday – Friday 9.00a.m. to 5.00p.m.), text: 80 800 (start your message with COM) or e-mail: advice@childcomwales.org.uk

APPENDIX A

School Complaints

In exercising its role of the strategic management of a school, a Governing Body may from time to time be required to consider complaints about the school, or about any facilities or services the Governing Body provides.

