

Persistent or Vexatious Complaints and/or Harassment Policy



Approved by:	The Board of Governors	Date: 31 st of August 2026
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1. Introduction

At **Eden Park Academy**, the Headteacher manages complaints in line with the school's **Complaints Procedure**, with most resolved informally and quickly. However, in rare instances, complaints may escalate into persistent or vexatious behaviour, negatively affecting staff, pupils, and the school's operations. This policy outlines the steps the school will take to address such situations.

The school is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and respectfully while protecting staff and pupils from unacceptable behaviours, including abuse, harassment, or threats.

2. Aims

This policy seeks to:

- Promote respectful and courteous communication between the school and stakeholders.
- Protect the well-being of staff, pupils, and the school community.
- Address persistent or vexatious complaints fairly and transparently without detriment to other stakeholders.

3. Expectations

3.1 Expectations of Parents/Carers and Members of the Public

Parents, carers, and members of the public raising concerns or complaints are expected to:

- Treat all school staff with courtesy and respect.
- Respect the well-being of pupils and staff.
- Avoid aggression, threats, or verbal abuse.
- Recognise the time constraints under which staff operate and allow a reasonable response time.
- Use the school's formal complaints procedure to address concerns.

3.2 School's Commitment to Parents/Carers and Members of the Public

Parents and carers can expect the school to:

- Communicate clearly about how concerns can be raised.
- Respond to complaints within reasonable timeframes.
- Attempt to resolve complaints courteously and transparently.
- Inform complainants of progress towards resolving their concerns.

4. Definitions

4.1 Vexatious Complaints

A vexatious complaint is one pursued to harass, annoy, or subdue someone, without merit or substance. Examples include:

- Repeating complaints already investigated without providing new information.
- Raising trivial issues out of proportion to their significance.
- Making excessive or unrealistic demands on staff time.

4.2 Malicious Complaints

A malicious complaint is one intended to cause harm, often through knowingly false allegations or rumours.

4.3 Harassment

For this policy, harassment refers to unreasonable actions that target individuals or the school persistently, causing distress, undermining confidence, or impacting well-being.

4.4 Persistent Complainants

Persistent complainants exhibit unreasonable behaviours, including:

- Raising repetitive, minor, or unfounded issues.
- Demanding immediate responses or unreasonable outcomes.
- Refusing to accept decisions reached through the complaints process.

5. Unacceptable Behaviours

Examples include:

- Abusive or threatening language.
- Making knowingly false claims.
- Excessive or repetitious correspondence.
- Using social media to criticise or defame the school or its community members.

6. Actions for Persistent or Vexatious Complaints

6.1 Informal Resolution

- The complainant will be informed verbally or in writing that their behaviour is becoming unreasonable.

6.2 Formal Actions

If behaviour persists, the school may:

- Limit the complainant's contact with the school (e.g., a single point of contact).
- Set communication restrictions, such as only accepting correspondence in writing.
- Require meetings to be conducted with a third party present.
- Ban the complainant from the school premises if behaviour becomes threatening or abusive.

6.3 Immediate Actions for Aggression or Threats

- The school will document incidents and, if necessary, notify the police.
- Further action, including anti-harassment orders or legal measures, may be pursued.

7. Social Media and Online Activity

The school considers inappropriate use of social media to include:

- Posting defamatory or libellous comments.
- Sharing images or information about pupils without consent.
- Publicly challenging school policies or criticising staff.

Inappropriate online behaviour will be addressed under the school's **Parent and Visitors Code of Conduct Policy**.

8. Communication

The school will use model letters to:

1. Inform a complainant that their behaviour is becoming unreasonable.
2. Notify them when their behaviour has escalated to being considered vexatious or persistent.

9. Monitoring and Review

- The Headteacher and Governing Body will regularly review cases of persistent or vexatious complaints to ensure fairness and transparency.
- If no further contact is received from the complainant for six months, restrictions may be lifted.

10. Records

All records of unreasonable complaints will be securely stored on **MyConcern** (the school's safeguarding management system).