COMPLAINTS POLICY

Policy & Procedure No.	**OP01 inc. KCSIE 2026 ref.**
Reviewed & Updated:	**January 2025, Sept '25, Sept '26**
Next Review:	**September 2027**
Written by:	**James Eagle**

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Reference to

Data Protection Policy
Confidentiality
Staff Discipline, Conduct & Grievance
Child Protection
Whistleblowing
The Education (Areas to which pupils and students Belong) Regulations 1989
UK Gov. Best practice for school complaints Procedure – March 2019

1. Introduction

Amberley Court School (ACS) supports pupils, parents/carers and others, to complain about any aspect of the education and care that they are not happy with, should the need arise.

Within ACS, we recognise that pupils need to be protected and to progress in life; consequently we may, at times, advise a pupil or significant other to make a complaint if the pupil's progression is being hindered.

ACS follow a complaints procedure, which is available to all pupils and their parents/carers.

This procedure does not affect any of the rights to use the Local Authorities' Complaints Procedure.

All complaints received by Amberley court School will be recorded and fully investigated, in the first instance by the Headteacher and, if not resolved, may be followed up by the Chair of Governor and where appropriate; an Independent Consultant.

Those eligible to complain are:

- ✓ Pupils from Amberley Court School.
- ✓ Any parent, family member or advocate of a pupil in the care of Amberley Court School.
- ✓ Any person who has parental responsibility, but not necessarily a birth parent.
- ✓ Any person with enough interest in the pupil's welfare to warrant their complaint being considered.
- ✓ Neighbours.
- ✓ Any representative of the local authority.
- ✓ Any member of the public.
- ✓ Any professional bodies that visit the school.
- ✓ Staff member.
- ✓ Any relevant external agency.

Dissatisfactions/complaints should be addressed directly either by telephone or in writing to:

- Headteacher, Mr. James Eagle, Amberley Court School, County Oak Cottage, 9 Amberley Court, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 7XL
- Tel. 07967 726601

2. Procedure

2.1 All those who request a copy of the Amberley School Complaints Policy which includes a Complaint Form to record their complaint, will be emailed and/or posted a full version and they will always be accessible via the school's website.

The Complaints procedure within ACS aims to:

- Support pupils, and, where able to do so, parents/carers and others who wish to make a complaint regardless of the content.
- Allow the issues being complained about to be kept 'live' and given the necessary weight of significance.
- Allow pupils, parents/carers and others to feel able to make a complaint about the management of the service provided by the school should the need arise.
- Enable the complaint to be effectively dealt with, by the appropriate people and agencies.

2.3 Amberley Court School supports people to realise their right to complain should this be beneficial to the child or Pupil. The staff within ACS recognises that pupils may feel uncomfortable about complaining to them and they will, therefore, attempt to identify an appropriate adult to act as an advocate for the child or pupil.

2.4 Any child, pupil or carer that wishes to make a complaint is asked to complete, or is supported in completing, the official complaint form provided.

2.5 All complaints will be seen by the senior manager/s of the school and when a complaint is made, a strategy for dealing with the complaint will be formulated as soon as possible.

2.6 The Headteacher reviews the Complaints File (located in the SLT office) on a regular basis. This form of monitoring enables policies and practices to be amended accordingly. It will also highlight recurring areas of concern so that these may be amended or eliminated.

2.7 All complaints will be recorded in the Complaints File and reviewed by the Complaints Officer (Head Teacher and/or Chair of Governors) on a monthly basis. The file will also be analysed at tri-annual governance meetings.

2.8 The Complaints File must be made available to Independent Inspection Teams and, where relevant, to the placing local authority / SENAT worker.

2.9 Once dissatisfaction has been voiced, the Headteacher will make every attempt to resolve this informally. In the event of there being no resolution the following stages in the formal procedure will commence.

3. Informal Stage

It is imperative that we maintain a relationship rooted in trust and consistency with all individuals that meet our school, as well as those individuals working within it.

We encourage anyone wishing to discuss their concerns to do so on an informal basis, in the first instance, wherever possible. Members of staff will demonstrate their willingness and availability to discuss any issues with parents and significant others involved. (Appendix 1)

4. Stage One

On receipt of a written complaint the Headteacher will act as the Complaints Officer unless it concerns the Head Teacher directly. If this is the case, the Chair of Governors will act as the Complaints Officer.. They will acknowledge the complaint within five days. They will also help and advise on how to use the procedural documentation and offer support and guidance in all stages of the procedure, if required.

On receipt of a verbal complaint, the Headteacher will ensure that it is recorded in writing usually on Arbor and/or MyConcern) and the contents agreed by the complainant (Appendix 2).

Amberley Court School recognises that pupils may need considerable support at every stage in the proceedings as they are to follow through with their complaint. Where appropriate, and with the permission of the pupil, the Headteacher will seek help from a family member or other significant person, to ensure independence from Amberley Court School personnel. Where there is no other option, the pupil will be given the opportunity to choose a member of staff to support them.

Where the complainant is someone acting on behalf of a pupil, the Headteacher will check with the pupil that the complaint is representative of their feelings (depending on the level of understanding) and that they have granted permission for the complainant to act on their behalf. Where permission has not been granted and the complainant is eligible (as defined above), they will still have a right to appoint another significant other to proceed with the complaints process.

Where the complainant is not eligible to act on behalf of a pupil, as defined under The Education (Areas to which pupils and students Belong) Regulations 1989, ACS has a legislative duty to assess whether the nature of the complaint warrants being treated as if the complainant was the pupil.

5. Stage Two

The Headteacher may appoint a nominated person and work with the appointed individual to investigate and consider the complaint. This will be done within 14 working days of receiving the complaint. Both parties will provide written recommendations to be considered by the school's Governing Board.

After consideration of the recommendations passed to the chair of the governing body – Dave Johns - have been discussed by all parties, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will notify (within 28 working days of the receipt of the complaint) the pupil, or if different, the complainant acting on behalf of the pupil, the nominated person and any other significant body with a sufficient interest in the welfare of the pupil, of the outcome of the consideration. The complainant will be reminded of the right to challenge the decision.

6. Stage Three

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they have the right to have the complaint reconsidered by the Local Authority Designated Officer and a panel, which may be inclusive of a nominated person and at least one independent person. In order to ensure that the consideration offers the opportunity for fresh input, the nominated person will be different from the previous one.

If the complainant wishes to take this step, they must notify the Headteacher and the LA Designated Officer within 7 days of receipt of the letter informing them of the initial decision.

The panel, which will be made up of the Headteacher, a Governing Body member, a nominated person, an independent person and the school's HR Manager (where applicable) will meet within a further 7 working days of receipt of the complainant's request.

The complainant has a right to attend the meeting and to submit any relevant information and to be accompanied by a nominated person of their choice who may also offer contributions on their behalf. The complainant has a right to submit written information prior to the meeting. The original nominated person has the same right to represent their views in writing prior to the meeting, or verbally at the meeting.

The panel will provide, within 48 hours, written recommendations (along with an explanation of those recommendations) to a member of the Governing Body and Senior Management Team. The panel will notify the complainant, the original nominated person and any other significant body of their recommendations.

7. Stage Four

Amberley Court School's Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body will meet as a panel to consider the recommendations. The complainant and any other significant persons who have an interest in the welfare of the pupil will be informed of the outcome within 28 working days of receipt of the recommendations.

8. Stage Five

Any changes due to the outcome will be implemented immediately, if practical, or within 28 working days of the date of the final decision. All complaints, their nature and the outcome will be recorded in Amberley Court School's Complaints Forms (Appendix 1, 2, 3 & 4), along with the timescale for the implementation of the procedure and for the implementation of any actions following the final decision.

8.1 ACS will comply with legislative requirements under The Education (Areas to which pupils and students Belong) Regulations 1989, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, and ensure that the operation and effectiveness of the Complaints Procedure is monitored on a regular basis.

8.2 To this end, the investigating person will compile a report, which can be made available to Ofsted. The report will provide information on the number and nature of complaints, performance in relation to timescales for dealing with a complaint, outcomes, action taken and performance in relation to timescales for implementing any action. The monitoring process will seek, where possible, to assess user satisfaction and collate the views of those who have used the procedure in relation to any improvements, which may be made.

9. Contact Details

Charlotte Reid - Director – ACSCrawley Ltd. – trading as Amberley Court School – c.reid@acscrawley.co.uk

Dave Johns - Chair of Governors – Amberley Court School – d.johns@acscrawley.co.uk

Appendix 1 – Confidential, Telephone or Meeting, Informal Complaints or Concerns

Confidential, *Telephone or Meeting,* Informal Complaints or Concerns ***(not requiring the full complaint procedure)***			
Date:		***Time:***	
Complainants name:			
Staff name:			
Complaint /Concern			
Agreed Outcome			
Followed up on: ***(Date)***			

Appendix 2 – Stage 1 Complaint Form

Stage 1 Complaint Form

Date of Complaint	
Name of Complainant	
Pupil name *(if different to above)*	
Your relationship to pupil *(if applicable)*	
Your address and postcode	
Your telephone number (day/evening/mobile)	
Your email address	

Details of complaint

1. Did you follow official procedure as identified above? **2. What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve this issue?** ***(State who you spoke to and the response you received)***

What actions does the complainant feel may resolve the problem at this stage?

Please give details of any paperwork attached

Complainant's Signature		**Date**	

Official Use Only

Complaint Ref No.	
Person Managing Complaint	
Stage Number of Complaint	
Date acknowledgment sent	
Acknowledgment sent by	
Complaint referred to	
Date	
Any other supporting documentation	

Appendix 3 – Complaint Investigation Form

Complaint Investigation Form

Chronology Referencing			
Complaint Investigation	**Ref No.**		**Ref No.**
	Ref No.		**Ref No.**
	Ref No.		**Ref No.**

Source of complaint

Details of complaint

What would the complainant like to happen?

Who has been spoken to?

What information has been gathered?

Who has this information been passed to?

What actions have been taken?

Is the complainant satisfied with the outcome? If not, what would they like to happen next?

Completed by	
Signature	
Date	

Appendix 4 – Complaint Action Form

Complaint Action Form

Chronology Referencing			
Complaint Action	**Ref No.**		**Ref No.**
	Ref No.		**Ref No.**
	Ref No.		**Ref No.**

What was the initial complaint?

How was it resolved?

What are the lessons learned?

What are we going to do now?

How long have we given ourselves to implement change?

When, how and by whom will the plan be reviewed/evaluated?

Completed by	
Signature	
Date	

Headteacher's comments	
Headteacher's Signature	
Date	
Governor's Signature	
Date	
Actions	

END

POSITION	Headteacher	**NAME**	**James Eagle**	**SIGNATURE**	***J Eagle***	**DATE**	**01/09/2026**
POSITION	Governor	**NAME**	**Dave Johns**	**SIGNATURE**	***D Johns***	**DATE**	**01/09/2026**
POSITION		**NAME**		**SIGNATURE**		**DATE**	