



LEICESTER

THERAPEUTIC SCHOOL

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS THROUGH NURTURE AND MINDSET

Complaints Policy

Policy Owner	Leicester Therapeutic School
Date Published	September 2026
Date Of Next Review	September 2027
Circulation	All Staff and Website
Linked Policies	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Positive Behaviour Policy Whistleblowing Policy Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) at Leicester Therapeutic School

At Leicester Therapeutic School, we are passionate about providing an inclusive education to children with special educational needs. We recognise and celebrate the individuality of our pupils and use personalised approaches, allowing pupils with SEND to feel supported during the school day. We strive to provide pupils with the same opportunities and experiences that pupils would have received at a mainstream school, believing passionately that in the right environment, with the right support, pupils will flourish in education. We do this by focusing on providing a SEND friendly environment, an adapted curriculum, and a strong focus on developing pupils' personal, social, and emotional development. The special educational needs and disabilities of all pupils at Leicester Therapeutic School are carefully considered and a central theme in through all school policies. For more information, please read the school's SEND Information

Safeguarding at Leicester Therapeutic School

At Leicester Therapeutic School, we are committed to providing an environment in which students feel safe and secure to access their education. All stakeholders (e.g school leaders, staff governors and proprietors) are responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of children. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all staff are encouraged to maintain an "it could happen here" attitude. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, neglect, and bullying. Leicester Therapeutic School are dedicated to creating a strong safeguarding culture, and that the safety and well-being of children is the central thread that embeds itself through all aspects of the school. If a person is concerned about anything they read, witness, or hear with regards to the school, they should contact the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) immediately or Headteacher. Safeguarding, and the safety and well-being of all pupils at Leicester Therapeutic School is carefully considered and a central theme through all school policies.

Aims

Leicester Therapeutic School takes complaints seriously and will use learning from complaints as an opportunity for development. We support the right of individuals to raise concerns without fear of negative consequences. The aim of this policy is to support fair, efficient and timely resolution of complaints. Investigations will be carried out using the principles of fairness, impartiality and appropriate confidentiality, and we will seek to resolve issues informally wherever possible. This procedure is designed to meet Part 7 (paragraph 33) of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the related information requirements in Part 6, taking account of the Department for Education independent school standards guidance updated in April 2026.

The statutory three-stage procedure applies to complaints made by parents or carers of current pupils. Leicester Therapeutic School may also consider complaints from other people under this procedure where it is reasonable and appropriate to do so, although this is wider than the minimum requirements of the Independent School Standards.

- by parents or carers of current pupils;
- by parents or carers of former pupils where the complaint was started while the pupil was still on roll, or otherwise at the school's discretion;
- by members of the public, at the school's discretion.

Complaint - an expression of dissatisfaction about actions taken, a failure to take action, or the way in which the school has provided a service or carried out its responsibilities.

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the headteacher and/or proprietor, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Framework of Principles

Our Complaints Procedure will:

- encourage resolution of concerns by informal means wherever possible;
- be accessible, publicised and available free of charge;
- be simple to understand and use, with reasonable adjustments made where required;
- be impartial;
- allow timely handling within clear published timescales;
- be non-adversarial;
- keep complainants informed of progress and explain any necessary delay;
- ensure a full and fair investigation by a suitably impartial person and, at Stage 3, a panel that meets the Independent School Standards;
- respect confidentiality and share information only where necessary or legally required;
- address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary;
- provide appropriate information to senior leaders and governors so that learning can inform school improvement.

When the policy is not relevant

Exceptions	Who to contact
Safeguarding / matters requiring a child protection investigation	Complaints that indicate a safeguarding concern, an allegation that a child has been harmed, or an allegation against an adult working with children will be handled immediately under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and, where relevant, the Allegations Against Staff & Low-Level Concerns Policy. The school will contact the LADO (Local area designates office), children's social care and/or police as required. The complaints procedure will not be used in a way that delays safeguarding action.
Suspension or permanent exclusion*	www.gov.uk Complaints about a suspension or permanent exclusion will be considered under the school's Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy and any review arrangements set out there. *Complaints about the application of the school's Positive Behaviour Policy, where they do not amount to an appeal against an exclusion decision, may be raised through this complaints procedure.
Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for employees, temporary staff and contractors. Staff should normally raise whistleblowing concerns under that procedure. The Department for Education is a prescribed person for certain education matters; current contact routes are available at www.gov.uk/contact-dfe . Volunteers or members of the public may use this complaints procedure where appropriate.
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff conduct will be considered under this complaints procedure and may also result in action under internal disciplinary or safeguarding procedures, as appropriate. The complainant will be told that the matter has been addressed but will not normally be given confidential employment or disciplinary information.
Data protection complaints	www.education.gov.uk Data protection complaints will be handled under this procedure and the school's Data Protection Policy. The school will provide a route to complain, acknowledge receipt within 30 days, investigate and respond without undue delay, and keep the complainant appropriately informed. The complainant may also contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Overview of complaint procedure

At any stage of the process the complaint may be resolved and therefore next stages not put into action. Complaints will be handled in the following stages:

Stage 1 – The Informal Stage

A concern or informal complaint can be made in person, by email or by telephone. It should normally be raised by the person who is concerned with either the class teacher or Headteacher. Although this is the informal stage, concerns are taken seriously. The school will *acknowledge* or *respond* to the concern within 3 working school days of receipt.

The school will aim to **resolve** the concern or informal complaint within 10 working school days. If this cannot be achieved, the complainant will be given an update and a revised response date. If the concern cannot be resolved at Stage 1, the complainant may make a formal complaint in writing. Reasonable assistance will be offered where a complainant would have difficulty putting a complaint in writing.

Stage 2 – The Formal Written Stage

Formal complaints must be made in writing to the Headteacher via the school office, by post, by hand or by email. The Headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge it in writing within 3 working school days. If making a complaint by email, the subject heading should clearly identify it as a formal complaint.

Subject: Formal Written Complaint FAO Headteacher. Email address: office@leicesterts.co.uk

Complainants should be clear and refer to the following:

1. Clearly present the nature of the complaint
2. If the complaint is about an individual or a group of individuals, it should clearly state who those individuals are by name.
3. If the complaint is about the school / school processes or procedures, complainants should identify this clearly.
4. If appropriate and/or able to, the complainant is welcome to identify their desired outcome in writing.

Within this time period, the Headteacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The Headteacher will consider whether a face-to-face meeting or a phone call is the most appropriate way of doing this.

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

Following this initial clarification, a full investigation will take place. During the investigation, the Investigator will:

- If necessary, gain an account of what happened from those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish. This is likely to be via a written statement or interview.

- Keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation in an action log.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Headteacher will provide a formal written response within 30 working school days of receiving the formal complaint. If this deadline cannot be met, the complainant will be given an update, the reason for the delay and a revised response date. The response will explain the steps taken to investigate, the decision reached and the reasons for it. Where appropriate, it will also explain any action the school will take as a result. The response will explain how the complainant may request Stage 3 if they remain dissatisfied.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will oversee Stage 2. If the complaint is about the Chair of Governors, a governor or a proprietor, the school will appoint a suitably impartial person who has not been involved in the matters complained about to oversee the stage. Where a conflict of interest exists, an external investigator may be appointed.

Stage 3 – The Panel Hearing

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and wishes to take the matter further, they may request Stage 3: a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor. The panel will consist of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, and at least one panel member will be independent of the management and running of the school. The hearing will be arranged within 15 working school days where reasonably practicable, taking account of the parent's availability. A parent may attend and be accompanied if they wish. There is no automatic right to legal representation, although the panel may permit it where appropriate. If a parent chooses not to attend, the school will still hold the panel hearing in accordance with this policy and will make reasonable arrangements to allow the parent to submit their case.

The panel will consider the complaint, the school's investigation and the evidence presented. It will make findings and recommendations. The findings and recommendations will be provided in writing within 10 working school days of the hearing to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about. A copy will also be available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and Headteacher. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will remain confidential except where disclosure is required by law, requested by the Secretary of State, or requested by a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee 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 committee 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.

If, after completing all stages of the school's complaints procedure including Stage 3, the complainant believes that the school has not handled the complaint in accordance with its published procedure, has failed

to meet the Independent School Standards, or has acted unlawfully in relation to education law, they may contact the Department for Education (DfE).

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance or merits of an individual complaint or overturn the school's decision. It may consider whether the school has complied with education law and the Independent School Standards, including whether the complaints procedure has been effectively implemented.

www.education.gov.uk/contactus The complainant can contact the Department for Education online through www.gov.uk/contact-dfe or by telephone on 0370 000 2288. Current contact details should always be checked on GOV.UK.

On occasion there may be need for some flexibility; for example, the possibility of further meetings between the complainant and the member of staff directly involved and further investigation or the involvement of an external agency to provide an independent appeal or review.

Each complaint will be considered on its own facts. A matter will not normally be reopened once the school's complaints procedure has been exhausted unless significant new evidence or a materially different issue is raised.

Withdrawal of a complaint

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

Dealing with Complaints- Initial concerns

Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints. In most cases the class teacher or individual delivering the will be the first approach, it would be helpful if staff were able to resolve issues on the spot, including apologising where necessary. This may be enough to avoid a formal procedure.

Investigating complaints

At each stage, the person investigating the complaint, makes sure that they:

- establish what has happened so far, and who has been involved;
- clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information is necessary);
- clarify what the complainant feels would put things right;
- interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- keep notes of the interview.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure we will keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- an apology;
- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the event complained of will not happen again;
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

It would be useful if complainants were encouraged to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage. **An admission that the school could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence.**

An effective procedure will identify areas of agreement between the parties. It is also of equal importance to clarify any misunderstandings that might have occurred as this can create a positive atmosphere in which to discuss any outstanding issues.

Serial, persistent and unreasonable complaints

Office of the Independent Adjudicator The school will not refuse to consider a complaint simply because a complainant is persistent or disagrees with an outcome. However, after the published procedure has been followed, the school may manage contact where a complainant's behaviour or communication becomes unreasonable, abusive or disproportionately burdensome. Any restrictions will be proportionate, recorded, explained in writing and reviewed where appropriate. The school will continue to respond to any genuinely new safeguarding concern or materially new complaint.

- repeatedly contacting the school about substantially the same matter after it has been fully addressed;
- making an unreasonable volume of contacts or demanding responses within unrealistic timescales;
- refusing to identify the substance of the complaint or the outcome sought despite reasonable assistance;
- using abusive, threatening, discriminatory or personally offensive language or behaviour;
- seeking to reopen a completed complaint without significant new evidence or a materially different issue.

Time limits

Complaints will be considered and resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible. The timescales in this policy refer to working school days (days when the school is open to pupils) unless stated otherwise. Where further investigation or exceptional circumstances make a deadline impracticable, the complainant will be told the reason for the delay and given a revised date. Data protection complaints are also subject to the statutory requirements described in the section above.

Recording complaints

A concern may be raised in person, by telephone or in writing, but a Stage 2 formal complaint must be recorded in writing. Reasonable support will be offered to anyone who cannot do this independently. The school will keep a secure written record of all formal complaints, including whether each was resolved at Stage 2 or proceeded to a panel hearing, and any action taken by the school as a result, regardless of whether the complaint was upheld. Stage 1 concerns may also be recorded on the school's secure systems where appropriate. Records will be retained in accordance with the school's Data Retention Schedule and Data Protection Policy.

Out of term complaints

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

Administration of complaints

The school will keep the records required by Part 7 of the Independent School Standards for formal complaints. This includes the complaint, investigation records, outcome, whether it was resolved at the formal stage or proceeded to a panel hearing, and action taken by the school regardless of the outcome. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 requests access, or where disclosure is otherwise required by law. The governing body will review anonymised complaint information and learning at least annually.

The governing body

The Board of governors will monitor the level and nature of complaints and review the outcomes to ensure the procedure is effective and make changes where necessary. Complaint information (from Stage 2 and above) is shared with chair of governors by the headteacher. The reports will be confidential and not name individuals.

The Chair of Governors and proprietors will be made aware of any complaints on-going from Stage 2 and above but without any specific detail to keep it anonymous pending the need for subsequent stages.

As well as addressing an individual's complaint, the process of listening to and resolving complaints will contribute to school improvement. Listening to complaints can help identify underlying issues to be addressed. The monitoring and review of complaints by the Local Governing committee can be a useful tool in evaluating the school's performance.

Publicising the procedure

This complaints policy will be published on the school website and available free of charge. The school will also make available the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year. Individual complaint records will remain confidential.

Checklist for a panel hearing

The panel needs to take the following points into account:

- At least three panel members must have had no direct involvement in the complaint, and one must be independent of the management and running of the school.
- The hearing is as informal as possible.
- Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.
- After introductions, the complainant is invited to explain their complaint, and be followed by their witnesses.
- The senior representative for the school concerned may question both the complainant and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The senior representative for the school concerned is then invited to explain the school's actions and be followed by the school's witnesses.
- The complainant may question both the senior representative for the school concerned and the witnesses after each has spoken.
- The panel may ask questions at any point.
- The complainant is then invited to sum up their complaint.
- The senior representative for the school concerned is then invited to sum up the school's actions and response to the complaint.
- Both parties leave together while the panel decides on the issues.
- The chair explains that the written findings and recommendations will be issued within 10 working school days.

Procedure & Timescale Flowchart

Stage 1

Informal Stage.

Expected response, within **3 working school days**.

Concern or informal complaint to your child's class teacher or the Headteacher

Stage 2

Formal Complaint made in writing to the Headteacher.

Response within **3 working school days** acknowledging complaint.
Investigation carried out by Headteacher.

Investigation outcome within **30 working school days** of complaint.
governing body of the school.

Complaint response in writing.

Stage 3

Final stage of complaints procedure.

Panel of at least 3, including 1 member independent of the school's management and running.

Findings and final outcome will be communicated within **10 working school days** of the panel meeting.

Findings and recommendations sent to the complainant and relevant person.

Available Support

A template complaint form is available from the school office. The school will offer reasonable assistance and make reasonable adjustments where required. Data protection complaints may use the same contact route and will also be handled in line with the school's Data Protection Policy and statutory requirements.

Please contact the school office should you wish to access the school's complaint form.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

Please see below for an example template:

Your name:	
Pupil's name:	
Your relationship to the pupil:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Daytime telephone number:	
Evening telephone number:	
Please give details of your complaint.	
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak to and what was the response)?	
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?	
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.	
Signature:	
Date:	
Official use	