

Epworth Trust Complaints Process

For full details of the Trust's Complaints Policy, including scope, definitions and statutory guidance, please refer to the full [Complaints Policy](#)

Stage 1 - Raising Your Concern - Informal Resolution

A concern may be raised:

- In person
- In writing
- By telephone
- By a third party acting on behalf of the complainant (with appropriate consent)

What happens at Stage 1

- The concern is discussed with the appropriate person
- Informal meetings may be offered where appropriate
- Further enquiries may be carried out if needed
- Notes of the concern and any agreed resolution are recorded
- The complainant is made clear about any actions agreed
- Most concerns should be resolved within 15 school days.

End

Yes

resolved?

No

Stage 2 - Formal Written Complaint

Provides a structured, impartial investigation where the concern cannot be resolved informally.

The written complaint must include:

- The nature of the complaint
- How the matter has been dealt with so far
- Relevant dates, times, witnesses and documents
- A clear statement of the outcome sought

Incomplete complaints may be returned for clarification.

What happens at Stage 2

- Complaint is acknowledged within 5 school days
- An impartial investigator is appointed
- Investigation may include:
 - Meetings with the complainant
 - Witness interviews
 - Written statements
- A written outcome is issued, normally within 15 school days
- The outcome explains:
 - The decision
 - The reasons
 - Any actions to be taken
 - The right to escalate to Stage 3

End

Yes

resolved?

No

Stage 3 - Referral to Complaints Committee

A formal review by an independent complaints committee.

- Request must be in writing
- Sent to the Trust Complaints Department or emailed to Confidential@epworthtrust.org.uk
- Must be submitted within 15 school days of the Stage 2 outcome
- All relevant documents and desired outcomes must be provided

What happens at Stage 3

- A Clerk is appointed
- A Complaints Committee is formed, including:
 - At least three members
 - No prior involvement
 - At least one independent member
- A hearing is arranged (normally within 20 school days)
- The complainant may be accompanied
- Both parties present their case
- The committee considers all evidence

Outcome of Stage 3

The Committee may:

- Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part, or
- Uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- If upheld, actions and recommendations are agreed
- A written decision is issued within 15 school days

➔ This decision concludes the Trust's complaints procedure



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Who to Contact and How to Raise a Complaint

A complaint may be resolved at any stage of the process.

If a complaint is resolved, the process ends.

Complaints only progress to the next stage if they are not resolved.

Who is the complaint about?

This table applies for stages 1 and 2 of the complaints process.

The complaint is about...	Who to contact
A general school matter (e.g. teaching, curriculum, pastoral care, day-to-day issues)	Teacher, pastoral staff member, or other appropriate school leader
A member of staff	Headteacher
Headteacher	Trust - Confidential@epworthtrust.org.uk or 01942 777706
School Governor(s), the Chair of Governors or the whole Governing Body	Clerk to the Local Advisory Board
The Trust (not school-specific)	Trust - Confidential@epworthtrust.org.uk or 01942 777706
a Central Staff Member	CEO
The CEO	Chair of Trustees
A Trustee or the Chair of Trustees	Clerk to the Trust Board

Contact details for schools, the Trust and Clerks are available on the school and Trust websites.

How do I raise the complaint at each stage?

Stage	How the complaint is raised	What happens at this stage
Stage 1 – Raising a Concern	In person, by telephone or in writing	Informal discussion takes place. Meetings may be arranged. Some concerns can be resolved immediately. A brief record may be kept.
Stage 2 – Formal Written Complaint	Complaint must be submitted in writing	Complaint is acknowledged within 5 school days. An impartial investigation is carried out. A written outcome is normally provided within 15 school days.
Stage 3 – Complaints Committee	Written request for a panel hearing	A Complaints Committee reviews the matter. A hearing is arranged where appropriate. A final written decision is issued.

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