



Shiplake C.E. Primary School  
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*'Don't be jealous or proud, but be humble and consider others more important than yourself'*  
Philippians 2:3

The Governors of Shiplake CE Primary School and Little Squirrels @ Shiplake have chosen to adopt this model Department for Education policy for Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints (published March 2019 checked for updates October 2022/October 2025)

### **Policy for Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints**

The governors of Shiplake CE Primary School and Little Squirrels @ Shiplake ('The School') are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

The School defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds



- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the headteacher or Chair of Governors will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact The School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from The School.

#### **Unreasonable or Excessive Contact**

The School recognises that excessive, repetitive, or disproportionate communication from an individual, whether or not it relates to a formal complaint, can have a detrimental impact on staff wellbeing and the effective operation of the school. Where contact becomes excessive in volume, frequency, tone, or demand, and prevents staff from performing their normal duties



or causes undue stress or disruption, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors may apply this policy to manage that behaviour. In such cases, the school may:

1. ask the individual to modify the frequency or method of communication;
2. implement a communication plan specifying accepted methods and times of contact; or
3. in severe or escalating cases, restrict further contact in line with this policy.

This provision applies regardless of whether a formal complaint has been made, provided there is clear evidence that the communication pattern is unreasonable or causing significant disruption.

***Note: This policy will also be used to manage unreasonable or persistent contact not directly associated with, or resulting from, formal complaints.***

October 2025

3 year review