THE CAREY FEDERATION

Aim High; Be Resilient; Take Care of Each Other

Managing Serial & Unreasonable Complaints and Persistent Contact

September 2026

This policy applies to Ashwater, St Giles-on-the-Heath and Halwill Primary Schools. Where 'The Carey Federation' is used, it refers to all 3 schools.

This policy also applies to managing unreasonable or persistent contact not directly associated with, or resulting from both informal and formal complaints.

The Carey Federation is 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, insulting. offensive, defames character, threatening or unreasonably frequent.

The Carey Federation defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints, both informal and formal or significantly impacts on our time available to undertake our duties because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, whether in person, in writing, by email, on-line messaging and by telephone. Examples include, if the complainant:

- makes frequent and unrealistic demands on staff
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent / lengthy / complicated contact with staff regarding a complaint(s)
- makes demands relating to or about other Federation parents or children
- uses abusive, insulting, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- makes remarks which defame the character of staff
- uses threats to intimidate
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure or beyond the control or remit of The Carey Federation
- 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
- 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
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues
- 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

- making an audio or video recording of staff or conversation with staff
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes information on social media or other public forums which brings the good name of the school into disrepute.

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, on-line messaging or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

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

If the behaviour continues, the Executive 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 Carey Federation causing a significant level of disruption or take up a disproportionate amount of staff time, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan or remove contact completely. 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 Carey Federation.

Policy updates

November 2025 – no change

September 2026 – St Giles-on-the Heath added to the policy