

# Lantern

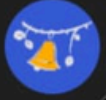
Governed Intelligence Systems

## Example Leadership Studio Analysis

*A parental complaint involving pupil welfare  
and staff conduct*

The following pages show an unedited analysis produced by the Lantern Leadership Studio.

A headteacher enters a situation involving a parental complaint and a potential safeguarding concern.



I have received a written complaint from a parent about how a teacher spoke to their child during a lesson earlier this week.

The parent says the teacher questioned their child in front of the class about bruising on their arm, which made the child feel embarrassed and singled out. The parent describes the interaction as inappropriate and upsetting and has asked what action the school intends to take. They have also indicated they may escalate the complaint to OFSTED.



## Summary of the issue

A parent has submitted a written complaint about a teacher publicly questioning their child about bruising during a lesson.

The parent considers this inappropriate, states the child felt embarrassed, and is asking what action the school will take. They have also indicated possible escalation to Ofsted.

This is no longer an informal concern. You are now holding a procedurally active complaint with potential safeguarding sensitivity.



## What sort of issue this is

This is a **formal parental complaint** about staff conduct within a lesson.

It also **touches safeguarding practice**, because the teacher's questioning relates to a possible indicator of harm (bruising), even though no safeguarding concern has been explicitly raised.

The complaint footing dominates how you must proceed. Safeguarding considerations still sit above it if new information emerges.

# Policies or standards at play

## Complaints procedure (primary framework)

- A written expression of dissatisfaction and request for action engages the complaints process.
- You are required to follow the defined stages, maintain fairness, and document handling.
- Informal resolution outside the process is not permitted once engaged. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE – KNOWLEDGE CORE.txt

## Safeguarding obligations (overriding consideration)

- Staff must respond to indicators like bruising, but safeguarding handling must be appropriate.
- Public questioning that could expose a child may raise practice concerns, even if well-intended.
- If any safeguarding concern is identified during handling, it must move through safeguarding processes immediately. SAFEGUARDING - KNOWLEDGE CORE.txt

## Behaviour / professional conduct expectations (context only)

- Staff conduct in lessons must remain appropriate and not compromise pupil wellbeing or dignity.

BEHAVIOUR POLICY – KNOWLEDGE CORE.txt



## **How quickly this needs to move**

**Immediate to short (0–5 working days)**

- The complaint requires prompt acknowledgement and procedural entry.
  - Delay increases escalation risk (including external referral).
  - Timing matters for credibility, not just compliance.
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## **Where this puts you right now**

You are no longer resolving a classroom incident.

You are now:

- holding a **live complaint under formal procedure**
- accountable for **fair, documented handling**
- managing **parent confidence under potential escalation pressure**

You are **not currently determining staff fault or outcome.**

You are establishing a procedurally sound response.

## What limits apply right now

- You cannot resolve this informally or “reassure it away” outside the complaints process.
- You cannot pre-judge the teacher’s actions before the process is followed.
- You cannot prioritise reputational protection over procedural fairness.
- You cannot ignore the safeguarding dimension if it becomes more than contextual.

Any deviation creates exposure if the complaint is escalated.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE – KNOWLEDGE CORE.txt

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## Pressures you’ll likely feel

- Pressure to **defend the teacher quickly** to maintain staff morale
- Pressure to **appease the parent** to avoid Ofsted escalation
- Pressure to **treat this as minor** because intent may have been safeguarding-led

The risk is collapsing process under pressure and creating a weaker position if scrutiny follows.

# ● Procedurally defensible avenues by timeframe

## Avenue: Procedural handling through the complaints process

You are holding a formal complaint and placing it fully within the school's complaints procedure.

This means:

- you are no longer resolving the issue personally through informal judgement
- you are allowing the process to establish what happened and whether conduct was appropriate
- you are preserving procedural fairness, defensibility, and audit trail

This preserves:

- compliance with complaints governance
- credibility if escalated to governors or external bodies
- appropriate separation between concern, investigation, and outcome

This forecloses:

- quick informal resolution
- immediate reassurance about outcomes
- personal handling based on initial impressions

This avenue holds until:

- the complaint is concluded within the procedure, or
- new information triggers safeguarding escalation

## Defensible next actions

- **Formally acknowledge the complaint in writing within the procedure framework**  
This protects procedural footing and avoids informal drift.
- **Log the complaint clearly, including the safeguarding-related context (bruising and public questioning)**  
This protects accuracy and ensures the safeguarding dimension is not lost.
- **Separate initial fact-finding from judgement (e.g. what was said, context, intent, pupil experience)**  
This protects fairness and avoids pre-determination.
- **Check whether the handling of bruising aligns with safeguarding expectations (without turning this into a safeguarding investigation unless thresholds are met)**  
This protects against missing a higher-order duty.
- **Ensure the staff member is informed through appropriate internal process, not informal conversation alone**  
This protects role clarity and avoids employment exposure through mishandling.
- **Maintain neutral, process-led communication with the parent (no assurances about outcome, only clarity on process and timescale)**  
This protects against escalation based on perceived dismissal or bias.



# What else I can help with

I can map how this could shift into:

- a safeguarding concern if further information emerges
- a staff employment issue if the complaint escalates in seriousness
- governor involvement if the complaint progresses to later stages

Or I can help you frame a procedurally safe written acknowledgement.

**The studio will always respond in the same calm and measured way.**

**Assessments and next steps will always be grounded in school policy, and the same layout will be presented every time.**

**This is what governed intelligence looks like.**