Education Learning Trust Multi Academy Trust

Complaints Policy

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Introduction

The Trustees of the Education Learning Trust have approved and adopted this procedure to allow parents/carers of pupils attending schools of the ELT to raise a concern or complaint. The policy also makes provisions for concerns or complaints received from persons other than parents / carers or pupils.

This procedure does not apply to concerns and complaints relating to the matters listed in Annex 1.

The aims of the procedure are:

- to deal with any complaint against a school or any individual connected with it by following the correct procedure;
- to deal with all complaints thoroughly and by being open, honest and fair when dealing with the complainant.

All staff will be made aware of this complaints procedure and are expected to review this policy regularly in order that they are familiar with our process of dealing with complaints and can be of assistance when an issue is brought to their attention.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to this procedure where required to ensure that all complainants can access and complete this complaints procedure.

Understanding this procedure

The trust expects all complainants to make reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution.

In order to investigate a complaint as fully as possible, we have implemented a staged approach, a summary of which is set out at Appendix 1. We anticipate that almost all complaints that arise will be resolved at Stage 1 or Stage 2 below.

We expect our members of staff to be addressed in a respectful manner and for communication to remain calm at all times. The procedure under Part 3 of this policy will only be used on very rare occasions to deal with unreasonably persistent complainants or unreasonable complainant behaviour.

To enable a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, any matter raised more than 3 months after the event (the subject of the complaint) will not be considered.

An anonymous concern or complaint will not be investigated under this procedure unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If it becomes necessary to alter the time limits and deadlines set out within this procedure, you will be advised accordingly and given an explanation as to why this has been the case and provided with revised timescales.

In this procedure:

- 'concern' means an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought
- 'complaint' means an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action
- 'meeting' means an in person or virtual meeting (ie telephone or video conference where all parties can participate verbally), virtual meetings will only be held if all parties have access to appropriate equipment to attend and are happy to do so. If the parties are unable to meet virtually and the meeting must take place in person, the meeting may be postponed until it is deemed safe to hold an in-person meeting, at the discretion of the trust.
- 'parent' means a parent, carer or anyone with legal responsibility for a child;
- 'school days' excludes weekends and academy holidays and periods of partial or total academy closure;
- 'trust' means the academy trust

Where a complaint is received outside of term time, we will consider it to have been received on the first school day following the holiday period.

On rare occasions, a school may receive complaints from a number of parents relating to the same issue. In order to deal with these complaints efficiently the school will follow the procedure set out in Part 4.

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority safeguarding teams or tribunals/courts, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

Complainants should not approach individual governors or trustees to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis, and it may prevent them from considering complaints at later stages.

Where concerns constitute an allegation about a staff member, this will be dealt with under the Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations made about Staff, Supply Staff, Contractors and Volunteers policy.

PART 1: Complaints Procedure for Parents

Stage 1: Informal concerns

Enquiries and concerns are first dealt with by the class teacher, form tutor or other members of pastoral staff who know your child the best. We value informal meetings and discussions and encourage you to make a phone call or appointment with staff to talk about any concerns you may have and identify how you wish it to be resolved. At any informal meeting, the member of staff dealing with the concern will make sure that actions are agreed and a review meeting set for two weeks where necessary.

Where concerns are not able to be resolved with the class/form/pastoral teacher, then this should always be referred to the next most senior leader e.g. Head of Year or Assistant Headteacher. The school office will support you to identify the right person. This person will then arrange for a meeting to clarify the concern within an agreed timeframe. The complainant should not attempt to escalate the concern further. Any further concerns may be shared at this meeting.

There is no suggested timescale for resolution at this stage given the importance of informal discussion, although it would be expected that most issues will be resolved within three weeks following the issue being raised. Where no satisfactory solution has been found, you will be advised that if you wish your concerns to be considered further you must write to the Headteacher as a Stage 2 complaint. Complainants must follow the complaints process.

Stage 2: Formal Written Complaints

If your concerns are not resolved under Stage 1, you should put your complaint in writing and send this to the Headteacher. Your complaint will only be considered if you have completed the Stage 1 process which gives the school the opportunity to resolve things informally with the staff who know your child best. It is very important that you include a clear statement of the actions that you would like us to take to resolve your complaint and we encourage you to use the Complaint Form provided at Appendix 2 of this procedure.

In all cases, your written complaint must include:

- the nature of the complaint;
- details of how the matter has been dealt with so far;
- the names of potential witnesses, dates and times of events and copies of all relevant documents; and
- a clear statement of the actions that you would like us to take to resolve your complaint.

Your complaint will normally be acknowledged in writing within 5 school days. The acknowledgement will give a brief explanation of the school's complaints procedure and a target date for providing a response to the complaint. This will normally be within 20 school days.

The Headteacher (or someone appointed by them) will usually invite you to a meeting first, to clarify your complaint(s) and to explore possible resolutions. If you accept that invitation, you may be accompanied by one other person, such as a friend, relative, advocate or interpreter, to assist you.

Where possible, this meeting will take place within 10 school days after we have received the written complaint. If you are unable to accept that meeting, then the matter will proceed based on the written complaint.

Once all the relevant facts have been established, either at this meeting or in writing, an investigation will take place. You will be provided with a written response to the complaint, including a full explanation of the decision and the reasons for it. This will include what action the school will take to resolve the complaint. You will be advised that if you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, you may request that your complaint be heard by a Complaints Committee under Stage 3 of this procedure.

Investigations may take time and it could be necessary for witness statements to be taken from students involved. The school should always ensure that cases are not focused on, or target individual students and statements taken will be in the full knowledge of parents, as they may wish to support/accompany their child. If this would seriously delay the investigation of a serious or urgent complaint or if the child has specifically said that they would prefer that their parents were not involved, another member of staff with whom the child feels comfortable should be present. The school may wish to reserve this right where there are safeguarding concerns about the student. If the complaint is against a member of staff, then they must have the opportunity to present their case and seek advice if they so wish.

If, in the early stages of the investigation, the Headteacher considers that the complaint is best dealt with immediately at Stage 3, it will be passed to the Chair of the Academy Governing Board and you will be informed of this action without delay.

What if the complaint is about the Headteacher?

If the complaint is about the Headteacher directly, your complaint should be sent to the Chair of the Academy Governing Board who will carry out all the Stage 2 procedures.

What if the complaint is about a member of the Academy Governing Board?

You should contact the Chair of the Academy Governing Board who will investigate the concerns in accordance with Stage 2. If the complaint is about the Chair of the Academy Governing Board, you should contact the Vice Chair.

If the complaint is about the Academy Governing Board as a whole, you should send your complaint to the Chair of Trustees.

What if the complaint is about the Chief Executive Officer?

If the complaint is about the CEO of the trust, your complaint should be sent to the Chair of Trustees (see above) who will arrange for a trustee to carry out all the Stage 2 procedures.

What if the complaint is about a Trustee?

You should contact the Chair of Trustees, or the Vice Chair if the complaint is about the Chair, who will investigate the concerns in accordance with Stage 2.

If your complaint is about the Trust Board as a whole, you should send your complaint to the Clerk of Governors who will arrange for the matter to be independently investigated.

Complaints for the attention of governors should be sent to the school office. Complaints for the attention of the trustees must be sent to: Education Learning Trust, Hawthorn Road, Gatley, Cheadle, Cheshire. SK8 4NB

Stage 3: Referral to the Complaints Committee

If you are dissatisfied with the decision under Stage 2, you may request that a Complaints Committee be convened to consider your complaint. The request must be submitted in writing within 10 school days. The Complaints Committee will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

Your request will only be considered if you have completed the relevant procedures at Stages 1 and 2.

To request a hearing before a Complaints Committee, you should complete the **School Complaint Review Request Form** (Appendix 3) and send this to the Clerk of the Academy Governing Board at the school address. Where the complaint is about the Academy Governing Board, it should be sent for the attention of The Trustees, Education Learning Trust, Hawthorn Road, Gatley, SK8 4NB. In all cases this should be sent within 10 school days of receiving notice of the outcome of Stage 2. This can be sent by registered post or password protected email.

You should ensure that you provide copies of all relevant documents and state all the grounds for your complaint and the outcome that you are looking for. This should make explicit the reasons for which you remain dissatisfied with outcomes of the Stage 2 investigation, or this may result in the complaint not being considered at Stage 3.

Your written request will be acknowledged within 5 school days of receipt.

The Clerk will arrange an independent panel for a Complaints Committee to be convened, made up of at least three members, including:

- members of the Academy Governing Board and/or trustees (as appropriate) **with no prior involvement** in the matter; and,
- one person who is **independent of the management and running of the school** with no prior involvement in the matter.

The Clerk shall appoint one of these members to be the Chair of the Committee.

Every effort will be made to enable the hearing to take place within 20 school days of the receipt of your request. As soon as reasonably practicable and in any event at least 5 school days before the hearing, you will be sent written notification of the date, time and place of the hearing, together with brief details of the committee members who will be present. Fair consideration will be given to any bona fide objection to a particular member of the committee. You will also be informed of the name of the person who will be presenting the case on behalf of the school (referred to in this policy as the 'school representative'). This may be the person who undertook the investigation at Stage 2 or another person with sufficient knowledge of the matter.

The notification will also inform you of your right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend, relative, advocate or interpreter and explain how the meeting will be conducted. You should notify the Clerk in advance if you intend to bring anyone to the hearing.

If, despite best efforts, it is not possible to find a mutually convenient date and time for a hearing within a reasonable timeframe, the Clerk may determine that the hearing proceeds on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

A copy of the complaint and any other documents provided by you in support of your complaint or by the school in defence of the complaint will be provided to the Complaints Committee as soon as practicable upon receipt. Copies of these documents shall also be provided to you or the Headteacher (as applicable) at least 3 school days before the hearing. The Complaints Committee reserves the right not to consider any documentation presented by either you or the school less than 3 school days prior to the hearing. The Complaints Committee is under no obligation to hear oral evidence from witnesses but may do so and/or may take written statements into account. The committee will not accept recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The hearing will be conducted in such a way as to ensure that each party has the opportunity to address the Complaints Committee. The procedure to be followed during the hearing will be set out to the parties by letter in advance of the hearing. The Clerk will ensure that sufficient notes are taken to record an accurate reflection of the points considered and any decisions taken or actions agreed.

Unless otherwise stated, the agenda for the Stage 3 hearing is as follows:

- the parent and school representative enter the hearing together;
- the Chair of the Committee introduces the committee members and outlines the process;
- the parent will explain their complaint;
- the school representative and committee members will question the parent;
- the school representative will explain the school's actions;
- the parent and the committee members will question the school representative
- the parent will sum up their complaint;
- the school representative will sum up the school's actions;
- the Chair of the Committee will explain that both parties will hear from the committee within 10 school days;
- both parties will leave together while the committee decides;
- the Clerk will stay to assist the committee with its decision making.

The Clerk and or Complaints Committee reserves the right to modify the above procedure at their sole discretion, for example requiring the parent and the school representative to present their complaint/actions separately to the Complaints Committee in the absence of the other party.

After the hearing, the Complaints Committee will consider their decision and inform you of their decision and, if relevant, the person complained about in writing within 10 school days. The outcome information must be available for inspection on the school premises by the Headteacher

and CEO. The letter will set out the decision of the committee together with the reasons underpinning that decision. The committee can (by a majority if necessary):

- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not happen again.

Stage 4: Referral of complaint to Department for Education (DfE)

If you are dissatisfied with the decision of the Complaints Committee, you are entitled to refer your complaint to the Department for Education (DfE) who has limited powers to review the handling of the complaint in accordance with DfE's 'How DfE handles complaints about academies'.

The DfE will consider complaints that fall into any of the following three categories:

1. where there is undue delay or the school did not comply with its own complaints procedures when considering a complaint;
2. where the school is in breach of its funding agreement with the Secretary of State; or
3. where the school has failed to comply with any other legal obligation.

At the time of writing this procedure, the DfE procedure and-school complaints form are available at:
https://form.education.gov.uk/service/Contact_the_Department_for_Education

Or you can write to the DfE at the following address:

Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Part 2: Concerns or Complaints from Other Persons

Part 1 of this complaints policy applies only to complaints made by parents or carers of current registered pupils of schools within the trust. However, the trust wishes to work closely with other members of the local community and will deal with their concerns and complaints as follows:

Stage 1 - a concern regarding a school or its operations may be made to any member of relevant staff. That member of staff will attempt to resolve the matter or may refer the matter to their line manager or member of the Senior Leadership Team (not the Headteacher, which is Stage 2) who is best placed to deal with the concern. It is expected that most concerns will be responded to orally or in writing within 15 school days. If a longer period is required, you will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation.

Stage 2 - where a concern is not resolved at Stage 1 and you wish to progress your concerns as a formal complaint, you should put your complaint in writing within 10 school days of receiving your response and send this to the Headteacher of the relevant school to investigate. The Headteacher may delegate the task of investigation and/or responding to the complaint to a member of SLT or may escalate the complaint straight to Stage 3. A formal response to the complaint will usually be

provided within 10 school days of receipt of the letter of complaint although if a longer period is required to respond, you will be kept updated.

Stage 3 - if you are not satisfied with the response at stage 2, you may request a review by writing to the school's Chair of the Academy Governing Board. You should write to the Chair within 10 school days of receipt of the letter at stage 2. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if **exceptional** circumstances apply. The Chair will consider the complaint alone or may convene a complaints committee on the same terms as set out in Part 1 of this Complaints Policy. The decision at this stage will usually be sent to you within 20 school days of receipt of the request for a review. The decision at Stage 3 finalises the school's complaints procedure.

Concerns or complaints regarding the Headteacher or the trust as a whole should be referred direct to the Clerk of Governors c/o Education Learning Trust, Hawthorn Road, Gatley, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 4NB, who will arrange for the stages above to be considered by an appropriate person.

PART 3: Unreasonably Persistent Complainants and Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour

There are rare circumstances where we will deviate from the Complaints Procedure set out in Part 1. These include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- where the complainant's behaviour or language towards staff, members of the local governing body or trustees is unacceptable, for example, is abusive, offensive or threatening;
- where, because of the frequency of their contact with the school, the complainant is hindering the consideration of their or other people's complaints and/or the proper running of the school;
    a) refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
    b) refuses to co-operate with the complaint investigation process
    c) refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaint procedure
    d) insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaint procedure or with good practice
    e) introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
    f) raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
    g) makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
    h) changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
    i) seeks an unrealistic outcome, such as the inappropriate dismissal of staff or sanctioning of other students
    j) 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
    k) knowingly provides falsified information
    l) publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums

m) makes unreasonable and repeated Subject Access Requests (see Subject Access Request Policy)
n) expects the school to take decisions based upon acrimonious familial situations. It is not for schools to manage or interpret court orders.

- where the complainant's complaint is clearly frivolous, vexatious and/or has patently insufficient grounds, including where the complainant uses Freedom of Information requests excessively and unreasonably. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator defines the characteristics of a 'frivolous' or 'vexatious' complaint as:

a) complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious
b) insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason
c) insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner
d) complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance
e) demands for redress that lack any serious purpose or value

- where the complainant's complaint is the same, similar to or based on the same facts of a complaint which has already been considered in full.

If a staff member, volunteer or governor is subject to unreasonably persistent complainants or unreasonable complainant behaviour, they should report it as soon as possible to the Headteacher who will take the appropriate action.

In the case or persistent or vexatious complaints and/or harassment, the school will verbally inform the complainant that their behaviour is considered to be becoming unreasonable / unacceptable and, if it is not modified, action may be taken in accordance with this policy. This will be confirmed in writing.

If the complainant's behaviour is not modified following a verbal caution the school will take some or all of the following actions as necessary, having regard to the nature of the complainant's behaviour and the effect of this on the school community:

(a) inform the complainant in writing that their behaviour is now considered by the school to be unreasonable/unacceptable and, therefore, to fall under the terms of this;
(b) restrict the complainant's access to the school e.g. requesting contact in a particular form (for example, letters only), requiring contact to take place with a named person only, restricting telephone calls to specified days and times or banning the complainant from the school's premises;
(c) inform the complainant that all meetings with a member of staff will be conducted with a second person present and that notes of meetings may be taken in the interests of all parties;
(d) conduct the Complaints Committee on the papers only i.e. not hold a hearing;
(e) refuse to consider the complaint and refer the complainant directly to Stage 4;
(f) consider putting in place a specific procedure for dealing with complaints from the complainant, i.e. the complainant will not be able to deal directly with the Headteacher but only with a third person to be identified by the school's local governing body, who will investigate, determine whether or not the concern / complaint is reasonable or vexatious and then advise the Headteacher accordingly.

In all cases, we will write to tell the complainant why we believe his or her behaviour is unacceptable or unreasonably persistent, what action we are taking and the duration of that action.

We may take the decision not to respond to any further correspondence where:

- we have taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's concerns;
- the complainant has been given a clear statement of our position and their options and
- the complainant contacts us repeatedly, making substantially the same points each time.

The case for ceasing further correspondence is stronger where:

- letters, emails, or telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive or make insulting personal comments about or threats towards staff
- we have reason to believe the complainant is contacting us with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience

Where the behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of children, staff, members of the school's Academy Governing Body or trustees, we will report the matter to the police and take legal action. In such cases, we may not give the complainant prior warning of that action but written confirmation will follow.

Part 4: Complaint campaigns

For the purposes of this policy, a complaint campaign is defined as a complaint from three or more separate individuals (whether or not connected with a school or the trust) which are all based on the same subject.

Depending on the subject in question, we may deviate from the procedure set out in this policy and instead:

- send a template response to all complainants and/or
- publish a single response on the school's/trust's website (as applicable)

Part 5: Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The Trust recognises that artificial intelligence (AI) may assist individuals in preparing or communicating a complaint. The use of AI will not, in itself, affect how a complaint is considered.

Complainants remain responsible for the content of their complaint and must ensure that all information provided is accurate, relevant and appropriately verified. This is particularly important where information has been generated by AI, which may produce inaccurate or misleading content.

The School/Trust will consider concerns and complaints fairly and in accordance with this Complaints Policy, regardless of whether AI has been used.

The Trust may take proportionate and reasonable steps to manage correspondence where AI or other automated means are used excessively, unreasonably or inappropriately. This may include where correspondence:

- is submitted in large volumes without providing new or relevant information;
- repeatedly duplicates matters that have already received a full response;
- raises multiple substantially overlapping or duplicate complaints, questions or requests;
- places an unreasonable administrative burden on the School/Trust;
- contains information or allegations that appear not to have been appropriately verified; or
- prevents the School/Trust from identifying the specific issues requiring consideration.

Where correspondence is considered excessive or unreasonable, the Trust may ask the complainant to identify the specific outstanding issues requiring consideration and may place reasonable limits on further correspondence, in accordance with the provisions relating to unreasonable or persistent complainants (see Part 4).

The use of AI alone will not constitute unreasonable behaviour or provide grounds for preventing a genuine complaint from being heard. Any decision to restrict or manage further correspondence will be proportionate and based on the nature and volume of the correspondence, rather than solely on the use of AI.

Part 6 Data Protection and Confidentiality

The Trust and its schools have a legal duty to protect the personal data and privacy of students, parents/carers, staff and other individuals. Complaints will therefore be handled in accordance with applicable data protection legislation and the Trust's data protection and privacy policies which are available on the Trust website here: https://www.educationlearningtrust.com/about-us/policies

When investigating or responding to a complaint, we will provide the complainant with information that is relevant and appropriate to their complaint, subject to our legal obligations regarding confidentiality and data protection.

We will not discuss, disclose or provide personal information about other students, families or members of staff with a complainant unless there is a lawful basis for doing so and it is appropriate and necessary to share that information. This includes information about disciplinary matters, allegations, safeguarding concerns, health or personal circumstances, performance, employment matters or actions taken in relation to another individual.

Where a complaint concerns the actions of a member of staff, the Trust may investigate those concerns under relevant HR policies and procedures and take any appropriate action. However, we will not normally disclose confidential employment or disciplinary information to the complainant, including details of any action taken in relation to an individual member of staff.

Similarly, where a complaint refers to another student or family, we will consider the concerns raised and take appropriate action where necessary, but we cannot provide information about that student or family or disclose confidential outcomes.

These confidentiality requirements do not prevent the concern or complaint to be properly investigated. They may, however, mean that the information we are able to provide in our response is limited. This is necessary to ensure that the rights and privacy of all members of our Trust community are respected and protected.

Records of complaints

A written register (Appendix 4) will be kept of all written formal complaints, including at what stage they were resolved and action taken by us as a result of those complaints regardless of whether they were upheld. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where;

- access is requested by the Secretary of State;
- disclosure is required in the course of a school inspection;
- under other legal authority.

We will make the findings and recommendations of the panel available for scrutiny by the trust and the CEO.

Monitoring and Review

Senior Leaders should always be aware of informal concerns and complaints. The Headteacher will update the school complaints register (Appendix 4), with dates and a record of how they were resolved. Governors and Trustees examine this log on an annual basis. Actions identified during Stage 3 investigations must be subsequently reviewed by the academy governing board.

The Board of Trustees review this policy annually and schools complete a central register of complaints and themes at Stage 2 and above so that the Trust Board can be aware of any local issues or learnings for our schools. This policy is made available to all parents, so that they can be properly informed about the complaints process.

APPENDIX 1 - The Complaints Procedure (Overview)
Stage 1 – Informal (concern at staff level)

- Concerns will be managed by the relevant member of staff who understands the pupil/circumstances.
- An informal meeting may be held.
- There is no set timeframe but aims to be resolved within 15 school days
- Where no satisfactory solution has been found, the concern may proceed to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Formal written complaint to Headteacher

This Stage will not be considered until the concern has been dealt with at Stage 1.

Parent to complete parent complaint from in Appendix 2 to submit a formal written complaint to the Headteacher.

The School should:

- acknowledge the complaint within 5 school days;
- offer to hold an investigation meeting within 10 school days;
- appoint a senior leader to investigate;
- respond in writing within 20 school days.

If parent is dissatisfied with the decision under Stage 2, you may request that a Complaints Committee be convened to consider your complaint at Stage 3.

Stage 3 – To Governors Complaints Committee

Complete **School Complaint Review Request Form** (Appendix 4) citing areas where you remain dissatisfied. Submit to Clerk of the Academy Governing Board (using school address) within 10 school working days of Stage 2 outcome.

School should:

- acknowledge within 5 school working days;
- convene committee within 20 school working days;
- send an invitation at least 5 school working days prior to the meeting;
- circulate copies of supporting documents shared 3 school working days prior to the meeting
- Respond of outcome within 10 school working days.

Stage 4 – Referral of Complaint to Department for Education (DfE).

If you remain dissatisfied, complete the DfE Complaints form available at: https://form.education.gov.uk/service/Contact_the_Department_for_Education
Or you can write to the DfE at the following address:

Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

APPENDIX 2 – Parental Complaint Form

P A R E N T A L C O M P L A I N T F O R M Stage 2: Formal Written Complaints
When we receive a complaint, we aim to acknowledge its receipt within 5 school days and send a full or interim response within 20 school days.

Name of parent / carer	
Pupil's Name	
Address	
Postcode	
Telephone (day)	
Telephone (evening)	

What is your concern and how has it affected your child?
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please list this below:
Have you discussed this matter with a member of staff before filling in this form? If so, who did you speak to and what was the response?
What would you like to happen as a result of making this complaint?

Signature:	Date:

Official use only Initial response and acknowledgment: By whom: Date:	Complaint reference number: Action taken: Date:

All functions of the complaints procedure must adhere to the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please complete and return to the school office in a sealed envelope addressed to the Headteacher or relevant person as per Stage 2 of this policy for Written formal complaints

APPENDIX 3– School Complaint Review Request Form

S C H O O L C O M P L A I N T R E V I E W R E Q U E S T F O R M

Stage 3: Formal Written Complaints

Complainant Name(s)			
General nature of complaint			
Reasons for Dis-satisfaction at Stage 2			
Desired Outcome			
Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please list.			
Date		**Signature**	

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Request Received	

All functions of the complaints procedure must adhere to the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Please complete and return to the school office in a sealed envelope addressed to the Headteacher or relevant person as per Stage 2 of this policy for Written formal complaints

APPENDIX 4 – Complaints Register

C O M P L A I N T S R E G I S T E R

Stage 2: Formal Written Complaints

Date Received	**Name(s) of complainant**	**Date Acknowledged** (within 5 school days of receipt and Complaints Policy forwarded)	**Acknowledged By**	**Meeting Date** (within 10 school days of receipt)	**Response Date** (within 15 school days of receipt)	**Summary of Issue and Response**

ANNEX 1 - Matters excluded from scope of this policy

Excluded Matters	Signposting
Admissions	The process for challenging admissions decisions is set out in our admissions policy in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.
Child protection matters	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
Exclusions	The process for challenging exclusions decisions is set out in the DfE's statutory guidance and information can be found at https://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions
National Curriculum content	Please contact the Department for Education at www.education.gov.uk/contactus
School re-organisation proposals	Where concerns are not adequately addressed by the trust, complaints can be raised direct with the Department for Education.
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Certain complaints about staff may need to be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)	Concerns about statutory assessments of special educational needs should be raised direct with the local authority.
Whistleblowing	We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors. The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus Volunteer staff who have concerns should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of the complaint